



Micah 6:8

***⁸He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?***

Tonight, I would like to direct our thoughts to the imperatives within this well-known verse from Micah 6:8. As we do this, I pray that our hearts would also be open as we invite God to search us and reveal anything that needs to change within us.

The first command is to “do justice”. I think it would be easier for us if we were commanded to “love justice”. If that were the command, we could keep justice in that strange and subtle place in our lives where we sometimes speak against injustice but never involve ourselves in practical ways of pursuing and promoting it. Doing justice requires acts of sacrificial love. It requires that we get involved, take action and assist those who are oppressed and vulnerable. God requires that we “do justice”.

Let's consider some important questions, related to the second imperative. Why are we told to "love kindness" rather than "do kindness"? Why did God choose to change things around in his instructions for justice and kindness? Do you love kindness? I'm not asking if you like it when others show kindness to you or if you love the concept of kindness. I'm not asking if you love doing kind things, on occasion, for those you love. I'm not asking if you like the good feelings one gets about themselves when others see them doing kind things. We could answer in the affirmative to all those things, while still being extremely selfish in our hearts. When God requires us to "love kindness", it is to prevent us from loving being seen as kind, while remaining selfish in our hearts. It is very hard to love kindness while simultaneously being self-centered. Do you love kindness? Loving kindness is a matter of the heart.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that "love is kind". Love and kindness are intertwined. If you love kindness, you also love people.

If we are honest, we can admit that it would be pretty easy to say that we love justice while never doing anything practical to promote justice. If we talk about how angry we are at injustice enough, people might really believe we love justice, even if nothing tangible is ever displayed. You could say you love justice but potentially get away with keeping your relationship with justice in the abstract.

It is different with kindness. It would be way more difficult to get away with saying we love kindness without some very measurable qualities appearing in our interactions with others. If we say we love kindness, it will be believable if we are patient, considerate, gentle, self-controlled and concerned about the welfare of others. On the other hand, it will not be believable if we are rude, combative, arrogant, impatient and only concerned about ourselves. Our relationship with kindness is nearly impossible to keep in the abstract. It plays out in too many visible and concrete ways. Kindness is not occasional acts of generosity or benevolence. Kindness is intertwined with love.

Finally, we consider the third imperative, "walk humbly". Wow! If we reflect on times of failure with "doing justice" and "loving kindness", it seems likely that it was the result of failing to "walk humbly". Obviously, the opposite of walking humbly is walking pridefully. Pride steals our love for others, love for kindness and concern about doing justice for hurting and oppressed people.

Just a quick look back on those times that someone received unkind words from us, times when we broke their trust, broke promises, broke their hearts, times when we did not do justice, we will notice a common root cause. These things happen when we fail to "walk humbly".

As God turns on the search light in our hearts, we often see areas where changes are necessary. As we walk humbly with him, he kindly leads us to times of repentance. These times of conviction are not for our condemnation but for our freedom. This is true because:

- God loves us in **kindness** – Ephesians 2:7
- God sent Jesus to do **justice** for us – Romans 3:26
- Jesus came and went to the cross in **humility** - Philippians 2:5-8
- God did this so we could know him and enjoy him forever – John 3:16

This helps us with the imperatives of Micah 6:8. God purchased this for us. He accomplishes this in us. He frees us and calls us to walk humbly with him, doing justice and loving kindness. That is what He requires of us and the world desperately needs in this hour.

You are loved

Tony