

March 16, 2021

He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

The above verse is one of my favorite in the entire Bible for its uncomplicated simplicity. Two sentences reduce the essence of goodness into guidance for daily living. Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with your God. This text guards against the ‘rule-based’ legalism that can sometimes occur when one holds the ten commandments up as a bar for righteousness. It does this by including mercy as an antidote to justice. Act justly. That’s for **us** to apply to how **we live**. Love mercy. That’s for us to extend to others. Walk humbly with your God. That’s necessary because it is hard to extend mercy to one who is unworthy unless we allow the Lord to humble our proud spirit **with recognition of the mercy He has extended to us.**

To act justly and to love mercy also illuminates the other side to the last six commandments. They instruct us to honor our mother and our father, not to kill, commit adultery, steal, lie or covet – they do not include exceptions. Humanity is imperfect however, and if justice is the only thing to ever be considered, then we would all be running around exercising ‘an eye for an eye.’

The text does not read: **but to love justice, to love mercy.** To love both justice and mercy is a divine attribute that few mortal men appreciate, unless, however, the mercy is extended to them. The verse reads: **but to act justly.** This is an inward directive on how we should live our lives – our lives, not the lives of everyone else. Our focus should be on how **we live**, and Jesus gives us the perfect example.

The fact is, Jesus came to earth and every day He **lived justly**, all the while showering the people with mercy and kindness, healing whole villages through the power of God. **He acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly.** When the Pharisees brought him those who could not be justified, he extended mercy. His final act of ultimate humility was to extend mercy to each one of us: The mercy of redemption; unmerited pardon from our sins.

Micah 6:8 is a verse in forbearance, a call for how we should manage our life in an imperfect world. Live justly. Love Mercy. Walk humbly with our God.