

WHAT YOU CAN GIVE THE LORD

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*With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?*

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

*He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

(Micah 6:6-8)

If you page through the Old Testament, you will notice that at the very end of it are twelve short books. These books are called the “minor” prophets, not because they are unimportant, but because the books are all very short. One of these books, Obadiah, is only one page long! But just because they are short does not mean they are not important. These prophets all wrote the Word of God. The Lord was with them and told them exactly what they were to write. Sometimes He even moved their hands for them. This means that all these books have a spiritual sense, a sense that fills angels with delight when they hear it. And there are places in the books where this sense, which angels enjoy so much, shines forth so that we, too, can see it clearly. Such a place is found in the sixth chapter of the book of Micah.

Micah was talking to the children of Israel about a very, very important subject. He asked them, “With what shall you come before the Lord?” In Micah’s day people made animal sacrifices. These sacrifices were supposed to be gifts to try to satisfy the Lord. People in Micah’s day did not understand real worship. Instead they worshiped with symbols and sacrifices. But Micah wanted the people to see what real worship was. So he answered his own question: “You don’t need to worry about animal sacrifices. What you need to worry about is something else. It’s what you really need to give to the Lord.”

Think about that. What would you give to the Lord? You know that if you love someone you want to give them something that will make them happy. But what can you do or give to the Lord that will truly make Him happy? The fact is that there is something you can give to the Lord that will make Him very

happy. Micah gave the answer. It is an answer that all the angels in heaven understand and practice. So if we want to give this gift, which Micah taught us how to give, we can become like angels.

What is the gift? The gift, as Micah said, is “to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” The real gift that you can give the Lord is a gift of *love in action*—a gift of good love that is shown in the things you do as you work to make others happy.

But how do you “do justly”, “love mercy”, and “walk humbly with your God”? To do justly means to do what is right. In order to know what is right you need to read the Lord’s Word. There you will hear the Lord telling you how to live. The Lord gave us His Ten Commandments, things we should and shouldn’t do if we wish to live a good life. Also, in His New Testament, the Lord gave us Two Great Commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). This also helps us know how to live. Still further, while talking to His disciples, the Lord told them an important rule of life, a rule now known as the “Golden Rule.” “All things whatever you want men to do to you, do even so to them.” This, then, is how you “do justly”. You live a good life.

How do you “love mercy”? What is mercy? True mercy is doing what is best for someone. It is not just doing what they want you to do; it is doing the very best thing you can do for them. Sometimes it is hard to love mercy. Sometimes we simply want people to like us, and so we do what they *want* without thinking what is *best* for them. Just think if all you wanted was to eat candy. Would it be merciful for someone to let you eat and eat and eat candy until you got sick? Of course not, because you would get sick. It’s merciful, then, to do what is best, not to just do what someone thinks he wants.

Now, how do you “walk humbly with your God”? To walk means to live—to live a life of humility. Living a life of humility is most important. To be humble means to recognize that the Lord and His way of life are more important than our own selfish loves. To be humble is to acknowledge that others, and particularly the Lord, can show us how to live, that we don’t know everything ourselves and so need to follow the Lord.

“What does the Lord require of you?” was the question Micah asked. “He has shown you, O man, what is good.” That’s what the Lord wants. Listen to His Word and see what is good. Understand what is good—that is, what is described in the Ten Commandments—and obey them. Do what is just, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Lord. These are the gifts that the Lord wants from everyone.

Amen.