General Church Education



Family Lesson: Micah 6 What Does the Lord Require of You?

Family Talk	Level 3
Level 1	Level 4
Level 2	Level 5

Family Lesson 23 - A

What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6

Family Talk THE MINOR PROPHETS

Rev. Alfred Acton

If you page through the Old Testament, you will notice that at the very end of the Old Testament there 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. There are places in these prophets where this sense, which angels so much enjoy, shines forth. Such a place is found in the story we read this morning from the book of Micah, the sixth chapter, which you just heard.

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. Their sacrifices were supposed to be gifts to try to satisfy the Lord. People in his day did not understand real worship. Instead they worshiped with symbols and sacrifices. But Micah wanted them 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 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 that all the angels in heaven 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 again helps us to 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 can 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 gifts are what the Lord wants from everyone.

What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6 LEVEL 1 - RULES WORTH LIVING

Materials Needed Crayons Yarn or ribbon

In Old Testament times books were not like our books. Everything was written by hand on long pieces of paper. The paper was rolled up and called a scroll.

Say the three rules on the next page (or scroll). Make sure your child understands what each one means.

Color the scroll.

Then roll it up and tie it with some yarn or ribbon.





What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6 LEVEL 2 – THE MINOR PROPHETS

Ask your Mom or Dad to help you look in the table of contents of your copy of the Word. Find the last 12 books of the Old Testament. These books are named for the prophets who wrote them. They are called the "minor prophets." You probably don't hear their names very often. To help you get to know their names, list them below:

1	_ 7.
2	8.
3	9.
4	10.
5	11.
6 Now try the	12. WORD SEARCH on page 2
	word officer on page 2

WORD SEARCH

Find the names of the 12 minor prophets in the word search below. Color the squares for each name with a different color.

R	С	G	Р	Ζ	J	K	U	Ι	Ν	Ζ
A	J	L	Μ	J	Ο	E	L	В	D	E
Η	Ο	Α	J	L	Ν	Μ	Ζ	Р	G	С
E	Ζ	E	Р	Η	A	Ν	Ι	A	Η	Η
A	Μ	Ο	S	Α	Η	Ο	S	E	A	A
В	D	В	Ν	В	Ι	E	Μ	U	G	R
K	Μ	A	L	Α	С	Η	Ι	Ζ	G	Ι
Р	G	D	С	Κ	R	Η	С	S	A	A
E	Α	Ι	R	K	С	G	Α	Р	Ι	Η
Ζ	Ν	A	Η	U	Μ	K	Η	U	Ι	Ν
D	В	Η	Μ	K	L	J	A	E	S	0

page 2

page 3

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

R	С	G	Р	Ζ	J	K	U	Ι	Ν	Ζ
A	J	L	Μ	J	Ο	E	L	В	D	Е
Η	Ο	Α	J	L	Ν	Μ	Ζ	Р	G	С
E	Ζ	E	Р	Η	Α	Ν	Ι	Α	Η	Η
Α	Μ	Ο	S	А	Η	Ο	S	E	Α	Α
B	D	В	Ν	В	Ι	E	Μ	U	G	R
K	Μ	Α	L	А	С	Η	Ι	Ζ	G	Ι
Р	G	D	С	Κ	R	Η	С	S	Α	А
E	Α	Ι	R	Κ	С	G	Α	Р	Ι	Η
Ζ	Ν	Α	Η	U	Μ	K	Η	U	Ι	Ν
D	В	Η	Μ	Κ	L	J	A	E	S	0

What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6 **LEVEL 3 – KNOWING THE PROPHETS**

Activity #1: Memory Game — match the quotations with the pictures illustrating the quote.

Materials:

- Picture cards, each with the name of a prophet and the sequence number of that prophet
- Quotation cards that match the picture cards
- An answer sheet— quotation card references.

Cut out all 17 of the prophet picture cards on the following pages as well as the quotation cards. Each card should measure $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The quotations come from the prophets and are illustrated by the pictures.

Rules of Play:

- 1. Mix the picture cards and lay them out one by one, face down on a table. Mix the quotation cards and lay them out one by one, face down, on the same table but in a separate area from the picture cards.
- 2. The first player turns over two cards, one from the picture pile and one from the quotation pile, calls out the name of the prophet on the picture card and reads the quotation. If the quotation comes from that prophet, then the cards are a match and the player keeps them. If they are not a match, the player turns them face down again.
- 3. The turn goes to the next player, who also turns up two cards, says the name of the prophet and reads the quote.

The object is to remember the previous cards and try to make a match and get a pair. Players get to keep any "matched pairs." The winner is the one who has the most matching pairs.

Activity #2: Learn the names of the prophets in order

The picture cards are numbered from 1 to 17 in the sequence the prophets appear in the Word.

Use the cards to learn the prophets' names in order.

Activity #3: Make a Book of the Prophets

Materials:

• $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ Prophet pictures, with quotes and no sequencing numbers.

Procedure:

Choose your 6 favorite illustrated quotations included in this lesson. Color them and cut them out. Tape them together accordion style and display them.



Note: The prophet pictures included in this lesson are rendered by Marguerite Acton from illustrations of quotes created by students at the Kempton New Church School.

Answer Sheet for Memory Game – in order of appearance in the Word.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. (Isaiah 9:2)

I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. (Jeremiah 23:5)

He kindled a fire in Zion, and it has devoured its foundations. (Lamentations 4:11)

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them. (Ezekiel 34:23)

The king of the North shall come to the...king of the South. (Daniel 11:9)

He will come to us like the rain. (Hosea 6:3)

The hills shall flow with milk...A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord. (Joel 3:18)

They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them. (Amos 9:14)

But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance...The house of Jacob shall be a fire. (Obadiah 1:18)

And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:17)

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,...out of you shall come forth ...the One to be Ruler in Israel. (Micah 5:2)

The clouds are the dust of His feet...He rebukes the sea and makes it dry...The hills melt. (Nahum 1:3-5)

His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand. (Habakkuk 3:4)

And they shall trust in the Name of the Lord. (Zephaniah 3:12)

I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land. (Haggai 2:6)

Sing and rejoice...for behold...I will dwell in your midst. (Zechariah 2:10)

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. (Malachi 4:2)



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pages 1,0	He kindled a fire in Zion, and it has devoured its foundations.	He will come to us like the rain.
t 3, Quote Caras	I will raise to David a branch of righteousness.	The king of the North shall come to the king of the South.
vnat Does the Lora Require of You, Level 3, Quote Caras	The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.	I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them.

But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance The house of Jacob shall be a fire.	The clouds are the dust of His feet He rebukes the sea and makes it dry The hills melt.
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them.	But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,out of you shall come forth the One to be Ruler in Israel.
The hills shall flow with milk. A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord.	And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.





















The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. Malachi 4:2

What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6 LEVEL 4 – THE PROPHET MICAH

There is a quote in Micah chapter six (verse 8) that says what the Lord wants from us: to do justly; to love mercy; and to walk humbly with our God. What do these mean to us? How are we to do them?

Here are three situations for you to put your own endings on in two different ways. When you finish, talk about your endings with an adult and tell him why you think each ending fits the situation. There is space for you to write your answers down if you want to.

2. To Do Justly:

A friend calls and invites you over for the afternoon next Saturday. You happily accept the invitation. The next day your best friend calls and invites you over on the same Saturday afternoon to go to a movie that you really want to see, and to stay overnight. What would you tell your best friend and why would you say this if you were acting justly? unjustly?

Justly

Unjustly

2. TO LOVE MERCY:

You are taking care of a little child. The child's mother has asked you not to let her child have any candy while she is gone. You hear the child in the kitchen and when you get there you find the child about to take some candy from the candy jar. The child looks at you and says, "Please." What would you do and why to act mercifully?

Mercifully

Unmercifully

3. TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD:

Your classmates at school are all getting ready to leave school at the end of the day. One classmate who is not very popular pleads for someone to wait for him. Your popular friends are already leaving. You have to choose between looking "cool" with your popular friends and staying behind to wait for the unpopular student. What would you do, and why, if you want to act humbly? not humbly?

HUMBLY

NOT HUMBLY (overly proud)

What Does the Lord Require of You? Micah 6 LEVEL 5 – WITH WHAT SHALL I COME BEFORE THE LORD?

What does the Lord require of you?

In our lesson for today from the prophet, Micah, we heard Micah ask what is perhaps the most important question that you will ever be asked. The question is: What does the Lord require of you? As Micah put it, "With what shall I come before the Lord?" What kind of offering are you going to bring to the Lord? Micah's answer is clear. You are to bring to the Lord what is good. The Lord requires of you acts of life—doing what is just, loving mercy, and walking humbly with your God.

The Life of Charity

Notice that what the Lord is requiring is a good life. And yet the Lord does not **demand** this of you. You can't **earn** heaven by living a good life. What the Lord asks of you is to come before Him with a life of good as a gift; to give your love or share your love with others.

In the Writings we learn how to practice the life of good. This life is described in the Writings as the life of charity. How do you do what is charitable? The answer is given in several places, but today we want to look at the answer as it is found in *The True Christian Religion*. In this work Swedenborg describes the life of charity under four general headings as follows:

- 1) **Charity itself** is acting justly and faithfully in the office, business, and employment in which a man is engaged, and with those with whom he has any dealings;
- 2) The **benefactions of charity** are giving to the poor, and relieving the needy, but with prudence;
- 3) There are **duties of charity**, some public, some domestic, and some private; and
- 4) The **diversions of charity** are dinners, suppers, and social gatherings.

Application

- 1. Below are descriptions of these acts of charity as given in *The True Christian Religion.* Read each section.
- 2. Answer the questions on pages 6, 7, and 8.

CHARITY ITSELF IS ACTING JUSTLY AND FAITHFULLY IN THE OFFICE, BUSINESS, AND EMPLOYMENT IN WHICH A MAN IS ENGAGED, AND WITH THOSE WITH WHOM HE HAS ANY DEALINGS.

422. Charity itself is acting justly and faithfully in the office, business, and employment in which a man is engaged, because all that such a man [homo] does is of use to society, and use is good; and good in a sense abstracted from person is the neighbor. (That not a single man only, but also a lesser community, and even a man's country, is the neighbor, has been shown above.) Take, for example, a king who sets his subjects an example of well-doing, who wishes them to live according to the laws of justice, rewards those who so live, regards every one according to his merits, protects his subjects against injury and invasion, acts the part of a father to his kingdom, and consults the general prosperity of his people; in his heart there is charity, and his deeds are good works. The priest who teaches truth from the Word, and thereby leads to good of life, and so to heaven, because he consults the good of the souls of those of his church, is eminently in the exercise of charity. The judge who judges according to law and justice, and not for reward, friendship and relationship, consults the good of society and of each individual; of society because it is thereby kept in obedience to law and in the fear of transgressing it; and of the individual because justice thereby triumphs over injustice. The merchant who acts from honesty and not from deceit, consults the good of his neighbor with whom he has business. It is the same with a common or skilled workman, if he does his work rightly and honestly, and not fraudulently and deceitfully. It is the same with all others, as with captains and sailors, with farmers and servants.

423. This is charity itself, because charity may be defined as doing good to the neighbor daily and continually, not only to the neighbor individually, but also to the neighbor collectively; and this can be done only through what is good and just in the office, business, and employment in which a man is engaged, and with those with whom he has any dealings; for this is one's daily work, and when he is not doing it it still occupies his mind continually, and he has it in thought and intention.

THE BENEFACTIONS OF CHARITY ARE GIVING TO THE POOR AND RELIEVING THE NEEDY, BUT WITH PRUDENCE.

425. We must distinguish between the obligations of charity and its benefactions. By the obligations of charity those exercises of it that proceed directly from charity itself are meant. These, as has just been shown, relate primarily to one's occupation. But benefactions mean such acts of assistance as are given apart from these obligations. These are called benefactions because doing them is a matter of free choice and pleasure; and when done they are regarded by the recipient simply as benefactions, and are bestowed according to the reasons and intentions that the benefactor has in mind. In common belief charity is nothing else than giving to the poor, relieving the needy, caring for widows and orphans, contributing to the building of hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, orphans' homes, and especially to churches, and to their decorations and income. But most of these things are not properly matters of charity, but extraneous to it. Those who make charity itself to consist in such benefactions must needs claim merit for these works; and although they may profess with their lips that they do not wish them to be considered meritorious still a belief in their merit lurks within.

428. Those who are by nature compassionate, and do not make their natural compassion spiritual by putting it in practice in accordance with genuine charity, believe that charity consists in giving to every poor person, and relieving every one who is in want, without first inquiring whether the poor or needy person is good or bad; for they say that this is not necessary, since God regards only the aid and alms. But after death these are clearly distinguished and set apart from those who have done the beneficent works of charity from prudence; for those who have done them from that blind idea of charity, then do good to bad and good alike, and with the aid of what is done for them the wicked do evil and thereby injure the good. Such benefactions are partly to blame for the injury done to the good. For doing good to an evil-doer is like giving bread to the devil, which he turns into poison; for in the hands of the devil all bread is poison, or if it is not, he turns it into poison by using good deeds as allurements to evil. It is also like handing to an enemy a sword with which he may kill someone; or like giving the shepherd's staff to a wolfish man to guide the sheep to pasture, who, after he has obtained it, drives them away from the pasture to a desert, and there slaughters them; or like giving public authority to a robber, who studies and watches for plunder only, according to the richness and abundance of which he dispenses the laws and executes judgments.

THERE ARE DUTIES OF CHARITY, SOME PUBLIC, SOME DOMESTIC, AND SOME PRIVATE

429. The benefactions of charity and the duties of charity are distinct, like the things done from choice and the things done from compulsion. But by the duties of charity official duties in a kingdom or state are not meant— as the duties of a minister to minister, of a judge to judge, and so on—but the duties of every one whatever his employment may be. Thus these duties are from a different origin, and flow forth from a different will, and are therefore done from charity by those who have charity, and on the other hand from no charity by those who have no charity.

430. The public duties of charity are especially the payment of tribute and taxes, which ought not to be confounded with official duties. Those who are spiritual pay these with one disposition of heart, and those who are merely natural with another. The spiritual pay them from good will, because they are collected for the preservation of their country, and for its protection and the protection of the church, also for the administration of government by officials and governors, to whom salaries and stipends must be paid from the public treasury. Those, therefore, to whom their country and also the church are the neighbor, pay their taxes willingly and cheerfully, and regard it as iniquitous to deceive or defraud. But those to whom their country and the church are not the neighbor pay them unwillingly and with resistance; and at every opportunity defraud and withhold; for to such their own household and their own flesh are the neighbor.

431. The domestic duties of charity are those of the husband toward the wife, and of the wife toward the husband, of fathers and mothers toward their children, and of children towards their fathers and mothers, also the duties of masters and mistresses towards servants, male and female, and of the latter towards the former. These duties, because they are the duties of education and management at home, are so numerous that if recounted they would fill a volume.

432. The private duties of charity are also numerous such as the payment of wages to workmen, the payment of interest, the fulfillment of contracts, the guarding of securities, and so on, some of which are duties enforced by statute law, some by common law, and some by moral law. These duties also are discharged by those who are in charity from one state of mind, and by those who are not in charity from another state of mind. Those who are in charity perform them justly and faithfully; for it is a precept of charity that every one should act justly and faithfully toward all with whom he has any business or dealing (on which above, n. 422-425). But those who are not in charity discharge these same duties very differently.

page 5

THE DIVERSIONS OF CHARITY ARE DINNERS, SUPPERS, AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS

433. It is known that dinners and suppers are everywhere customary, and are given for various purposes, and that with most they are given for the sake of friendship, relationship, enjoyment, gain and remuneration; also that they are employed for corrupting men and drawing them over to certain parties; and that among the great they are given for the sake of honor, and in kings' palaces for splendor. But dinners and suppers of charity are given only among those who are in mutual love from similarity of faith. With the Christians of the primitive church dinners and suppers had no other object; they were called Feasts, and were given both in order that they might heartily enjoy themselves, and at the same time be drawn together.

434. There are at this day assemblies of friendship, which regard as an end the delights of sociability, the exhilaration of the mind by conversation, the consequent expansion of the feelings and the liberation of imprisoned thoughts, and thus the rekindling of the sensual faculties and the renewal of their state. But as yet there are no gatherings of charity; for the Lord says: "In the end of the age, (that is, at the end of the church), iniquity will be multiplied and charity will grow cold" (*Mattew* 24:12). This is because the church has not yet acknowledged the Lord God the Savior as the God of heaven and earth, and gone to Him directly, from whom alone genuine charity goes forth and flows in. But social gatherings where friendship emulating charity does not bring minds together, are nothing but pretences of friendship, deceptive attestations of mutual love, seductive insinuations into favor, and sacrifices offered to the delights of the body, especially the sensual, whereby people are carried away like ships by sails and favoring currents, while sycophants and hypocrites stand in the stern and hold the helm.

WORKSHEET FOR MICAH 6

1. In your own words describe what is meant by:

A. Charity Itself:

B. The Benefactions of Charity:

C. The Duties of Charity:

D. The Diversions of Charity:

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page 6

page 7

2. Give an example of how a person your age can practice:

A. Charity Itself:

B. The Benefactions of Charity:

C. The Duties of Charity:

D. The Diversions of Charity:

For the following questions you can either write the answers, or use the questions for discussion with your parents or group.

3. If you are a really charitable person, can you skip the diversions of charity and practice just the other three?

4. Can a really charitable person skip one of the four aspects of charity and still be charitable? Why?

5. What happens if you take the series from the bottom to the top in terms of emphasis, rather than from the top to the bottom. In other words, what happens if diversions are more important than charity itself to you?

6. What happens to charity if you change the order of the series some other way?