**INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE**

**Kingdom Living**

**A Study of the Beatitudes**

**Week 6**

**Session Title: *Happy Are The Helpful***

**Focal Passage: Matthew 5:7; Micah 6:6-8**

**Central Teaching/Learning Aim:** The learner will be challenged to extend mercy to others with no strings attached.

1. **Hook**
2. **Read** (Matthew 5:7) out loud.

**Ask –** What does it mean to be merciful?

A merciful person forgives the guilty and had compassion for the needy and the suffering. A merciful person has compassion on others because they are sinful.

**Ask –** How would our world be different if people were merciful toward others?

**Next –** Share the following story:

**Murdered Florida Priest Appeals For Killer From Beyond The Grave**

A Florida priest murdered in 2016 has appealed from beyond the grave for his alleged killer to be shown mercy, reports the [BBC](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38813140). In a letter written 22 years before his murder, Reverend Rene Robert requested that whoever took his life be spared execution "no matter how heinous their crime or how much I may have suffered."

The body of 71-year-old Fr. Robert, of St Augustine, Florida, was found riddled with bullets in Georgia in April 2016. Authorities say he was killed days earlier by a man, Steven Murray, whom he had been trying to help for months. Mr. Murray, a repeat offender, had asked the priest for a lift in Jacksonville, Florida, before abducting and murdering him, authorities said. At the time of the trial, the prosecutor was pushing for the death penalty.

But in 1995, the priest had signed a "Declaration of Life" document, which was witnessed and notarized by a lawyer. Fr. Robert wrote, "I request that the person found guilty of homicide for my killing not be subject to or put in jeopardy of the death penalty under any circumstances."

Fr. Robert devoted his life to helping society's most troubled people, including convicts and the mentally afflicted, say friends. "He was well aware for the potential violence that might involve his ministry, but he cared for those people nonetheless," said Archbishop Wilton Gregory. During a court appearance, Mr. Murray appealed for forgiveness by noting Fr. Robert's own words: "If anybody loves Father Rene, they'll forgive me because he was a man of God, and forgiveness is forgiveness."

Staff writers, ["Slain Florida Priest Begs Mercy From Beyond Grave For Accused,"](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38813140) BBC.com (1-31-17)

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to show mercy toward others even if we have been harmed by them.

1. **Optional Method – Share** the following statistics compiled by Cyber Dialogue Market Researchers in New York City:

43 % Said they would try to physically hurt someone if they had hurt a relative.

17% Admitted they’d destroy property of a person that had angered them.

In dealing with spouses, loved ones or friends:

21% When they have a big fight stop talking to that person for a day or more.

31% Are stiff-lipped for an hour or so.

**“What’s Good for the Soul”**

*Forgive and forget.* Easier said than done, right? Well, now studies are showing forgiveness is not only good theology, but good medicine as well.

According to the latest medical and psychological research, forgiving is good for our souls–and our bodies. People who forgive:

* Benefit from better immune functioning and lower blood pressure.
* Have better mental health than people who do not forgive.
* Feel better physically.
* Have lower amounts of anger and fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression.
* Maintain more satisfying and long-lasting relationships.

“When we allow ourselves to feel like victims or sit around dreaming up how to retaliate against people who have hurt us, these thought patterns take a toll on our minds and bodies.” Says Michael McCullough, director of research for the National Institute for Healthcare Research and a co-author of *To Forgive is Human: How to Put Your Past in the Past.*

--Inter Varsity Press, quoted in Lifeline, Summer 1997

**Ask –** Without raising your hands, how many of you have tried to get revenge by physically harming another person? How many have given your spouse or best friend the silent treatment for more than a day? How does it feel to make things right?

**Read –** (Matthew 5:7 and Micah 6:6-8).

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to show mercy toward others even if we have been harmed by them.

1. **Optional Method – Share** the following

After 125 years, the infamous feud between the Hatfield’s and McCoy’s is finally history. Sixty descendants of the original clans gathered on Saturday, June 14, 2003, in Pikefield, Kentucky, to sign a document declaring an official end to more than a century of hatred and bloodshed.

Most think the feuding between the McCoy’s of Kentucky and Hatfield’s of West Virginia began in 1878 when Randolph McCoy accused one of the Hatfield’s of stealing a hog. The Hatfield’s won the "hog war'' when a McCoy cousin sided with the opposing clan.

Feelings festered and other incidents occurred that finally resulted in the shooting death of Ellison Hatfield in 1882. Retaliation begat retaliation until the feud claimed 11 more family members over the next ten years. Subsequent conflicts between the two clans have involved court battles over timber rights and cemetery plots.

The treaty calling for peace reads: "We do hereby and formally declare an official end to all hostilities, implied, inferred, and real, between the families, now and forevermore. We ask by God's grace and love that we be forever remembered as those that bound together the hearts of two families to form a family of freedom in America."

Reo Hatfield, who first thought of the ceremony, said, "We're not saying you don't have to fight, because sometimes you do have to fight. But you don't have to fight forever.''

Although the treaty was largely symbolic, both the governor of Kentucky and the governor of West Virginia were present for the nationally televised ceremony.

Stephen Leon Alligood, "American Profile," CBS News.com (6-14-03)

**State –** What an example of forgiveness, overcoming 125 years of bickering and hate.

A study conducted by the University of Michigan and partly funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, found young adults aged 18-44 were less likely to forgive others than middle aged (45-64) and older adults (65 and up). Younger adults were also less likely to believe they had been forgiven by God. Why would this be so?

People who forgive reported decreased psychological distress, including fewer feelings of restlessness, hopelessness and nervousness.

Journal of Adult Development 2001, Dec. 31, 2001

**Read –** (Matthew 5:7 and Micah 6:6-8).

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to show mercy toward others even if we have been harmed by them.

1. **Optional Method – Movie Clip**

**Start: 01:11:10**

**Stop: 01:1:13:45**

**DVD scene 20**

**Synopsis: B**ased on a true story, the film Antwone Fisher, tells of a young man who grew up in an abusive foster home. Over the years, Antwone grew bitter towards his natural family for giving him up. By the time, he enlisted in the Navy, his anger got him into so many fist fights that he was sent to Navy psychologist Jerome Davenport (played by Denzel Washington), who becomes a father figure to Antwone.

After they have built trust with each other, Antwone shares a powerful poem with Davenport. At this critical juncture, his counselor raises the key issue that Antwone must deal with to find healing.

The conversation takes place just after the Thanksgiving meal at his counselor's house. Antwone gives Davenport a folded piece of paper, and Davenport reads it aloud thoughtfully.

"Who will cry for the little boy  
Lost and all alone?   
Who will cry for the little boy  
Abandoned without his own?   
Who will cry for the little boy?   
He cried himself to sleep.  
Who will cry for the little boy  
Who never had for keeps?   
Who will cry for the little boy   
Who walked the burning sand?   
Who will cry for the little boy   
The boy inside the man?   
Who will cry for the little boy  
Who knew well hurt and pain?  
Who will cry for the little boy  
Who died and died again?  
Who will cry for the little boy?  
A good boy he tried to be.  
Who will cry for the little boy  
Who cries inside of me?

Davenport says, "This is excellent, Antwone. You're good because your honest. You are more honest than most people. Even in your anger—the only thing you’re not honest with yourself about is your need to find your own family. Your natural family. You're upset with them because you feel they didn't come to your rescue. Maybe they didn't know.

Antwone replies bitterly, "How could they not have known?"

Davenport says, "That's the question you need to ask. 'Regard without ill will despite an offense.' That's Webster's definition of forgiveness."

Antwone says, "Why do I have to forgive?"

Davenport answers, "To free yourself, so you can get on with your life."

Antwone Fisher(2002) from 20th Century Fox; written by Antwone Fisher,

Directed by Denzel Washington

#### Display and State – The following quote:

Webster defines forgiveness – “Regard without ill will despite an offense.” Do you agree with Navy psychologist Jerome Davenport that you have to forgive to free yourself, so you can get on with your life?

Webster defines mercy – “Compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one’s power.”

Forgiveness and mercy go hand in hand.

**Read –** (Matthew 5:7 and Micah 6:6-8).

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to show mercy toward others even if we have been harmed by them.

1. **Book**

1. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.
2. **Look**
3. **Distribute** the handout “5 Steps to Freedom by Being Merciful.”
4. **Took**
5. **Place** members into prayer groups and display the following things to consider as they share and pray.
   1. How many of us have at least one person with whom we need to bestow mercy?
   2. What obstacles make this process difficult?
   3. Pray for the right opportunity. Pray that you can leave the results up to God. Pray for the strength to follow-through.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Teacher Copy

1. What cause and effect is presented in this Beatitude? (Matthew 5:7)

**[If you show mercy you will receive mercy from God.]**

1. What risks have you taken to extend mercy to others?
2. How have you seen an act of mercy lead to more mercy?
3. Extending mercy to others may be repaid with indifference or cruelty. How does that square when Jesus promised we would receive mercy?

**[We are not responsible for how others respond to our acts of mercy but God sees all and will bestow mercy in eternal life.]**

1. In (Ephesians 4:31) Paul lists symptoms of someone who is unmerciful. List these symptoms.
   1. **Bitterness**
   2. **Wrath**
   3. **Anger**
   4. **Clamor**
   5. **Slander**
   6. **Malice**
2. When one harbors any of these traits who is the victim?
3. What positive actions are listed in (Ephesians 4:32a)?
   1. **Be kind to one another**
   2. **Be tender-hearted**
4. According to (Ephesians 4:32b) why should we be people of forgiveness and mercy?

**[We are to forgive because God has forgiven us through Christ.]**

1. According to (Micah 6:8) what does God want from His children?
   1. **To promote justice**
   2. **To be faithful**
   3. **To live obediently**
2. This is a prescription for a successful life. How are you doing in each area?
3. When are you especially grateful for the mercy of God?
4. Who can you show mercy to this week?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Student Copy

1. What cause and effect is presented in this Beatitude? (Matthew 5:7)
2. What risks have you taken to extend mercy to others?
3. How have you seen an act of mercy lead to more mercy?
4. Extending mercy to others may be repaid with indifference or cruelty. How does that square when Jesus promised we would receive mercy?
5. In (Ephesians 4:31) Paul lists symptoms of someone who is unmerciful. List these symptoms.
6. When one harbors any of these traits who is the victim?
7. What positive actions are listed in (Ephesians 4:32a)?
8. According to (Ephesians 4:32b) why should we be people of forgiveness and mercy?
9. According to (Micah 6:8) what does God want from His children?
10. This is a prescription for a successful life. How are you doing in each area?
11. When are you especially grateful for the mercy of God?
12. Who can you show mercy to this week?

**5 Steps to Freedom By Being Merciful**

**Step 1** List those with whom you have had trouble extending mercy.

**Step 2** Write down what these individuals have done to you.

**Step 3** Make amends. List ways you can extend mercy. Call, e-mail, write, set an appointment, etc.

**Step 4** Accept forgiveness. Realize that when you ask for forgiveness from God it is done. Seek forgiveness from others and realize that you are not responsible for their reaction.

**Step 5** Praise God for His strength and generous mercy. Today is the day to make things right! Follow Through.

**THEE WORD FOR THE WEEK**

**Happy are the Holy**

**Matthew 5:8 with Psalm 24:1-5**

**Monday:** Read Matthew 5:8

* What does Jesus mean by pure in heart?
* The heart is hidden. It is not seen by anyone and is only felt by you. How often do you stay quiet about the things you are good at or proud of? How often are those same things what you draw attention to?

**Tuesday:** Read Psalms 24:1-2

* Everything we have is God’s, and so are we. What would it look like to acknowledge this statement on a daily basis?
* Does seeing everything as God’s change how we interact with people?

**Wednesday:** Read Psalms 24:3

* Hiking a mountain is not easy. Why does the Psalmist choose a difficult task to compare to going before the Lord?
* We often picture standing before the Lord as something we do after we die. What would it look like to stand before the Lord while we’re alive?

**Thursday:** Read Psalms 24:4

* What is the direct contrast between being someone with “clean hands and a pure heart” to someone who “lift[s] up his soul to what is false”?
* Think back to yesterday’s last question. If verse 4 is the list of requirements to stand before the Lord, would you be able to stand before him today? Would you even feel close?

**Friday:** Read Psalms 24:5

* Here we see God’s promise again to bless those who can go before Him with a pure heart, because of the salvation He has given us.
* There is a promise of both blessing and vindication for those with clean hands and pure hearts. How does God vindicate his people?
* How great is it to serve a God who wants to bless us so much and has created the way for us to stand before Him to receive that blessing now?

**EXEGETICAL ~ THEOLOGICAL ~ PEDAGOGICAL**

**Note**: In Matthew 5-7 Jesus taught the way of true righteousness (see 5:20 with 7:13-14). True righteousness (how to be “right” before the holy God) is not a man centered, works-generated product of following “religious rules” (5:20). Rather, true righteousness requires a change of attitude and behavior that results from God doing a supernatural work in the character of a true believer. And only those in whom God “works out” His supernatural work of salvation can know what it means to be blessed/happy. With God’s help, we can reflect His righteous character in our thinking and doing so as to enjoy the blessings He intends for His Kingdom subjects.

Here is Jesus’ party platform, His administrative insights, His Kingdom manifesto. When we accept His rule, we can be 100% sure of our salvation/ deliverance into His Kingdom – not because we can justify ourselves, but because we realize we can’t; not because we are well, but because we realize we are sick; not because we are rich (materially or spiritually), but because we realize we are spiritually impoverished, and, therefore, humbly receive God’s commands and promises.

Today, in Matthew 5:7 Jesus teaches that Kingdom subjects who have, in the past, received God’s merciful compassion and help in abundance and who, in imitation of His merciful character, extend mercy/compassion/loyalty/help to others, will continue to receive merciful compassion from God . . . in this life and in the hereafter. In a world culture that promotes immediate gratification and entitlement, Jesus’ Kingdom subjects view life from an eternal perspective and seek to give as God has given to them. King Jesus’ ways are truly counterculture.

“The first four Beatitudes are entirely inner principles, dealing with how you see yourself before God. This fifth Beatitude, while also being an inner attitude, begins to reach out and touch others. This is the fruit of the other four. When we are broken as beggars in our spirit, when we are mournful and meek and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, being merciful to others will be the result” (MacArthur, J. *The Beatitudes*, 129-130).

(**Exegetical**: What it meant to the Jewish believers back **THEN**)

**THE KINGDOM SUBJECT WHO SEEKS TO FULFILL THE LORD’S DESIRE,**

**DEMONSTRATING MERCIFUL COMPASSION TOWARD OTHERS . . .**

**WILL HIM/HERSELF CONTINUE TO BE SHOWN MERCY BY GOD**,

(Matthew 5:7; Micah 6:6-8).

1. **The reason those who practiced merciful compassion/expressed pity toward others/helped those in need would be blessed/happy/ completely whole/in a state of shalom, according to King Jesus’ instruction regarding the character of His kingdom subjects** . . . **was because they would be shown merciful compassion/extended pity/helped in their time of need**, (Matthew 5:7).

**Note**: “The first four beatitudes express in one way or another our dependence on God; the next three the outworking of that dependence. This beatitude is relatively straightforward: people who show mercy on others will themselves be the recipients of mercy. The adjective for *merciful* (found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Heb. 2:17) means those whose bent is to show mercy, not those who engage in an occasional merciful impulse. Such people will receive mercy, a truth we often observe in this life. But Jesus is surely referring basically to an eschatological truth. There are people who show by their habitual merciful deeds that they have responded to God’s love and are living by his grace. They will receive mercy on the last day” (Morris, L. [*The Gospel According to Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcmatt?ref=Bible.Mt5.6&off=57&ctx=ude+to+uprightness.+~Matthew+uses+the+ver), 100).

1. CLAIM: **King Jesus’ claim regarding those who practiced merciful compassion/expressed pity toward others/helped those in need** . . . **was that they would be blessed/happy/completely whole/in a state of shalom**.
2. CHARACTER: **The character trait demonstrated in the lives of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was merciful compassion/pity toward others/ helping those in need**.

**Note**: ”’Merciful’ embraces the characteristics of being generous, forgiving others, having compassion for the suffering, and providing healing of every kind. The link between our mercy and God’s mercy anticipates 6:12, 14–15. Like vv. 3–6 this Beatitude echoes a key prophetic theme (cf. Mic 6:8). In light of Exod 34:6, mercy may be God’s most fundamental attribute” (Blomberg, C. [*Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac22?ref=Bible.Mt5.6&off=170&ctx=or+food+met%2c+but+it+~goes+on+to+include+a), 100).

“The importance of *mercy*, and its reciprocal nature, is stressed in Matthew (6:12, 14–15; 9:13; 12:7; 18:21–35; 23:23). For the reciprocal principle cf. Psalm 18:25–26.

“The appeal for *mercy* (*eleēson*) is repeated in 15:22; 17:15; 20:30–31, in each case asking for practical help; cf. also 18:33, and the regular use of *eleēmosynē* for ‘alms’. Mercy is not an emotion, but a practical response to need. The fact that not only here but also in 15:22; 20:30–31 it is linked with *Son of David* (see above, p. 46) suggests that such ‘mercy’ was expected to characterize the Davidic Messiah, and 11:4–5, with its use of Isaiah 35:5–6 and 61:1, indicates that there was sufficient popular awareness of the Messiah’s healing role to justify this explicit appeal” (France, R. T. [*Matthew: an Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc61mtus?ref=Bible.Mt5.3-10&off=2114&ctx=+clearly+different.%0a~%E2%80%98Blessed%E2%80%99+is+a+misle), 116, 176).

“The best illustration that this is no valid human platitude (‘magnanimous human virtue’),” but a divine attribute, “is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He was the most merciful human being who ever lived.” Yet, “Two merciless systems Roman and Judaic, united to kill Him. No, mercy as talked about here is not some human virtue that brings its own reward.

“God is the source of mercy, but only for the people moving through the four preceding Beatitudes” (MacArthur, 132, 131, 133, 141).

“Kingdom servants must reflect in their own hearts the heart of the king”

(Weber, S. K. [*Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/hntc61mt?ref=Bible.Mt5.7&off=5&ctx=rov.+8:22%E2%80%9336.)%0a5:7.+~Kingdom+servants+mus), Vol. 1, 59).

1. CAUSE: **The reason Jesus’ Kingdom subjects, demonstrating merciful compassion/expressing pity toward others/helping those in need would be blessed** . . . **was because they would be shown merciful compassion, extended pity, given help in their time of need**,

**Note**: “Beautiful is the connection between this and the preceding beatitude. The one has a natural tendency to beget the other. As for the words, they seem directly fetched from Ps 18:25, ‘With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful.’ Not that our mercifulness comes absolutely first. On the contrary, our Lord Himself expressly teaches us that God’s method is to awaken in us compassion towards our fellow men by His own exercise of it, in so stupendous a way and measure, towards ourselves. In the parable of the unmerciful debtor, the servant to whom his lord forgave ten thousand talents was naturally expected to exercise the small measure of the same compassion required for forgiving his fellow servant’s debt of a hundred pence; and it is only when, instead of this, he relentlessly imprisoned him till he should pay it up, that his lord’s indignation was roused, and he who was designed for a vessel of mercy is treated as a vessel of wrath (Mt 18:23–35). ‘According to the view given in Scripture,’ says Trench most justly, ‘the Christian stands in a middle point, between a mercy received and a mercy yet needed.’ Sometimes the first is urged upon him as an argument for showing mercy—‘forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you’ (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32): sometimes the last—‘Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy’; ‘Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven’ (Lu 6:37; Jam 5:9). And thus, while he is ever to look back on the mercy received as the source and motive of the mercy which he shows, he also looks forward to the mercy which he yet needs, and which he is assured that the merciful—according to what Bengel beautifully calls the *benigna talio* (‘the gracious requital’) of the kingdom of God—shall receive, as a new provocation to its abundant exercise. The foretastes and beginnings of this judicial recompense are richly experienced here below: its perfection is reserved for that day when . . . the King shall say, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and thirsty, and a stranger, and naked, and sick, and in prison, and ye ministered unto Me.’ Yes, thus He acted towards us while on earth, even laying down His life for us; and He will not, He cannot disown, in the merciful, the image of Himself” Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jfbcomm?ref=Bible.Mt5.7&off=57&ctx=+shall+obtain+mercy%E2%80%94~Beautiful+is+the+con). Vol. 2, 18).

Lenski, R. C. H. [*The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lenski01?ref=Bible.Mt5.6&off=2407&ctx=nouncing+righteous.%0a~%E2%80%9CShall+be+filled%E2%80%9D+is), 190).

(MacArthur, 123).

1. CHARGE: **The implied charge to/expectation of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was that they would practice merciful compassion/express pity toward others/help those in need**.
2. Micah’s announcement of what YHWH pronounced as good/required of any and every Israelite . . . did not prescribe the sacrificing of animals, oil, or even children, but prescribed 1) doing justice, i.e., what is right; 2) loving mercy, i.e., valuing covenant loyalty; and 3) living with humility/ careful obedience before their God, (Micah 6:6-8).

**Note: “**The pericope opens with the imperative *šimʿû*, Micah’s call to the Israelites to ‘Listen to’ or ‘Hear’ what the Lord is saying (an active participle in Hebrew) to his people. . . . In v. 1 the covenant Lord summons the vassal people of his kingdom to appear in court and present their case or defense in the presence of the mountains as witnesses.

“’Stand up’ here means ‘Get ready to speak’ or ‘Stand up to defend yourself in court.’ The people are told to ‘plead your case’ or ‘make your defense’. . . And they are to do so ‘before the mountains’ and ‘hills.’ ‘Inanimate objects were called on as third-party witnesses because of their enduring nature and because they were witnesses to his covenant (see Deut 32:1; Josh 24:27). . . . The Lord wants them to hear his accusation of his people, his case against them, and the charges he is bringing against Israel. . . . Concerning the reference to Israel as ‘his people,’ ‘It is because Israel is God’s people that her sin is so heinous, and that God condescends to plead with her.’

“Now the Lord presents his case against his people. . . . He begins by asking questions that are reminiscent of ‘What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it?’ (Isa 5:4) and ‘I have not burdened you … nor wearied you’ (Isa 43:23) . . . He then tells his people to answer him, but since the questions are followed by embarrassing silence, he himself provides the answer by reminding them of what he has done for them. Far from ‘burdening’ them, he has expressed his providential care for them at many times, in different ways, and through different leaders and mediators. He refers to these expressions as his ‘righteous acts’ (v. 5).

“First (v. 4), he redeemed them (i.e., their ancestors) from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. . . . Second, he gave them competent human leaders. . . . Third (v. 5), the Lord turned their enemies’ curses into blessings. . . . Fourth, the Lord also exhorted his people to ‘remember’ how he brought them from the plains of Moab into Canaan. Shittim was Israel’s last encampment east of the Jordan River (Josh 3:1); Gilgal was their first stop west of the Jordan (Josh 4:19).

“These saving deeds of the Lord demonstrated his righteous character. He was in the right; they were the ones who were in the wrong. In fact, in view of all that their Suzerain had done for them, the people of his kingdom should have rendered total allegiance and full commitment to him and to the terms of his covenant with them. Instead, they were unfaithful, rebellious covenant-breakers. The Great King, on the other hand, has been completely faithful” (Barker, K. L. [*Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac20?ref=Bible.Mic6.1-2&off=6&ctx=6:1%E2%80%932+~The+pericope+opens+with+the+impera), Vol. 20, 108–111).

1. The question the forgetful and disobedient Israelites asked in response to YHWH’s legal/courtroom challenge/charge against their faithlessness . . . asked how/with what they should approach/bow down before the God of Heaven: wasn’t it with burnt offerings of year old calves, (6:6).
2. The question the forgetful and disobedient Israelites asked in response to YHWH’s legal/courtroom challenge/charge against their faithlessness . . . asked how/with what they might please/delight and gain atonement for their sin; could it be with thousands of rams or ten thousand streams of oil or, perhaps, their firstborn children, (6:7).
3. **Micah’s announcement of what YHWH pronounced as good/required of any and every Israelite** . . . **prescribed 1) doing justice, i.e., what is right; 2) loving mercy, i.e., valuing covenant loyalty; and 3) living with humility/careful obedience before their God**, (6:8).

**Note**: “The Lord through Micah now announces to Israel (Judah) what he does require (‘man’ here represents corporate Israel). He does not desire ritual sacrifices divorced from a changed life—a life given over completely to the covenant Lord. Rather, his people must change their ways and actions (Jer 7:3, 5–7). Furthermore, he had already revealed what he requires and ‘what is good.’ Where? In passages like Deut 10:12–13:

And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.

“Three requirements are specified in v. 8. First, they must ‘act justly. Boice points out, ‘To act justly is most important, for it does not mean merely to talk about justice or to get other people to act justly. It means to do the just thing yourself.’ Second, they must ‘love mercy.’ The Hebrew for ‘mercy’ is *ḥesed*, which essentially and primarily means ‘faithful covenant love.’ Third, they must ‘walk humbly’ with their God (‘your God’ is relational covenant terminology and is the counterpart to ‘my people’ in v. 3). ‘Walk’ means to ‘live’ in a certain way, but the Hebrew for ‘humbly’ is difficult because it is not the usual word for humility. It almost certainly does not mean ‘humbly.’ Probably the NIrV is as accurate as any version. Here is its rendering of the entire verse: ‘People of Israel, the Lord has shown you what is good. / He has told you what he requires of you. / You must treat people fairly. / You must love others faithfully. / And you must be very careful to live / the way your God wants you to.’ So ‘walk humbly’ would be better rendered ‘walk carefully (with your God),’ which ultimately means ‘be careful to live the way your God wants you to’” (Barker, 113–114).

“The piety that God approves consists of three elements: a strict adherence to that which is equitable in all dealings with our fellowmen; a heart determined to do them good; and diligent care to live in close and intimate fellowship with God” (Feinberg, C. L. *The Minor Prophets*, 179).

“What, then, is Micah’s (and the Lord’s) point? Here is how Kaiser concludes his study of vv. 6–8:

Thus this saying is not an invitation, in lieu of the gospel, to save oneself by kindly acts of equity and fairness. Nor is it an attack on the forms of sacrifices and cultic acts mentioned in the tabernacle and temple instructions. It was instead a call for the natural consequence of truly forgiven men and women to demonstrate the reality of their faith by living it out in the marketplace. Such living would be accompanied with acts and deeds of mercy, justice and giving of oneself for the orphan, the widow and the poor” (Barker, 115).

(**Theological**: What it means for God’s people **ALWAYS**)

**MERCIFUL LIVING** . . . **BEGETS GOD’S MERCIFUL BLESSING**,

**EXTENDING COMPASSION** . . . **BEGETS GOD’S COMPASSION**,

**HELPING OTHERS** . . . **BEGETS GOD’S HELP**,

(Matthew 5:7; Micah 6:6-8)

1. **Living justly, mercifully, and obediently** . . . **fulfills the Lord’s requirements for everyone,** (Micah 6:6-8).
2. **Merciful compassion expressed toward others** . . . **results in being shown merciful compassion**, (Matthew 5:7).

(**Pedagogical**: What it means for us **TODAY**)

**HELP THE NEEDY**,

(Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 5:7)

1. Remembering God’s past faithfulness evokes our present faithfulness, (Micah 6:1-5).
2. God wants more than our Sunday morning ritual “worship,” (6:6-7).
3. God desires – as acts of true worship . . .
4. God delights when you treat people fairly, (6:8a).
5. God delights when you help the needy, (6:8b).
6. God delights when you live the way He wants you to, (6:8c).
7. Experience God’s merciful compassion (help) as you offer merciful compassion (help) to others, (Matthew 5:7).
8. CLAIM: Kingdom subjects are blessed, happy, whole, in shalom.
9. CHARACTER: Happy Kingdom subjects extend merciful compassion to others (see Matthew 18:23-35).

“Death fixes for eternity the character we develop in our time.

1. CAUSE: Merciful compassion is promised to those who extend merciful compassion to others.
2. CHARGE: **HELP THE NEEDY**.
3. God has helped you, is helping you, and will help you.
4. Remembering God’s help shows you how to help others.
5. Be like Jesus: extend merciful compassion to/ **HELP THE NEEDY**.
   1. Help the financially, materially, and physically needy.
   2. Help the emotionally, socially, and relationally needy.
   3. Help the spiritually needy.