

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**COFFEEHOUSE FIVE**  
**COUNTER CULTURE**  
**WHAT IS JUSTICE?**  
**MICAH 6:6-8**  
**11/12/2017**

### MAIN POINT

The Lord rejects disingenuous displays of worship, while He embraces lifestyles of justice, faithfulness, and humility.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Share a time when you tried to impress another person. What did you do? Did your efforts succeed?**

**In what ways do we often “perform” for other people to make ourselves look good? How do these “performances” affect our local church community?**

The section heading for Micah 6:1-8 titles this passage, “God’s Lawsuit Against Judah.” Verses 1-5 dictate God’s “case” against the nation of Judah, detailing God’s faithful acts of deliverance while noting the unfaithfulness of His people. In verses 6-7 Micah details the people’s defense, in which they offer extravagant sacrifices to God in a show of outward obedience, a show that implied that God’s standards were impossibly high. Verse 8 reminds readers that God is not impressed by overabundant gifts—all He requires from His people is a humble heart and a faithful lifestyle. In studying the conclusion of this “lawsuit” against the people of God we learn that God is after our hearts, not our behavior.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MICAH 6:6-7.**

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**What do the people of God seem to be asking in this verse?**

**Review God’s statement to Judah in Micah 6:3-5. What is He asking His people in verse 3? Does their response in verse 6 seem like an adequate answer? Why or why not?**

In verses 1-5, God reminded His people about all the faithful acts He did for them in the past. He asks, perhaps rhetorically, what He has done to warrant their unfaithfulness. (The answer, of course, is nothing—God is always faithful, even when we are unfaithful.)

In verse 6, the people of God are requesting specific details about what kind of sacrifice would be most pleasing to Him. The terms “burnt offerings” and “year-old calves” (CSB) refer to the commonly accepted perfect sacrifices according to

the law of the covenant. At first glance, it seems that the people are genuine in their efforts to please God. Yet consider what their response actually implies.

In actuality, the context of the people's question is one of ingratitude and obligation. The people ask what they owe God in return for His benevolent acts. It calls to mind how we might respond to a bill collector, asking, "What do I owe you?" as we dig through our wallet or purse searching for change.

On the surface, it seems like the people are concerned with the details of the sacrifice to please God; rather, they are in it to appease themselves. They are in it to save their own skin—their questions are asked out of guilt, and thus out of self-centered concern for their own penance. They are fixated on the amount required, when they should be focused on the One to whom they are speaking. Their response reflects a wish to placate their Lord without doing anything more than going through the motions.

**Given what we just learned, why is it important that we read Micah 6:6 within the context of the chapter's previous 5 verses?**

**What are some ways we "go through the motions" in our daily walk with God? What about at church?**

Micah continues the people's statements in response to God—in verse 7, their proposed gifts become even more extravagant.

**What do the people offer to sacrifice to God in verse 7?**

**In what ways do the gifts in verse 7 seem to be exaggerated offerings? Why do you think Micah phrased the people's response in this way?**

**Is it wrong to worship God with extravagant, creative, or high-end means? Why or why not?**

**How do we know when we are depending upon those means to appease God, rather than to worship Him? Why must our worship always entail a "heart check"?**

Note that scholars read the phrases "thousands of rams" and "ten thousand streams of oil" (CSB) as examples of hyperbole, or an exaggeration intended to make a point. Even the offerings of "my firstborn" and "the offspring of my body" seem like an exaggeration. Although this practice has Old Testament significance, the people seem to suggest here that God is asking for too much as payment for their transgressions and sins.

**Consider the tone of the questions: "Would the LORD be pleased with?" and "Should I give?" (CSB). What does the tone of these questions imply?**

**Consider how action-focused the people's responses are. If they had, in fact, sacrificed all the things listed in verses 6-7, do you think it would have set them right with God? Why or why not?**

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MICAH 6:8.**

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Scholars consider Micah 6:8 to be a beautifully succinct summary of the law of the Old Testament. In response to the people's exaggerated list of offerings, God reminded them that what He requires is not gifts or actions, but a renewed and faithful heart. In verse 8, God provides His people with three commands: "to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" (CSB). None of these are extravagant gifts; rather, each of these is a command to alter our attitude and heart. The renewal of our hearts is a difficult process, but it is essential for genuine worship.

**As a group, discuss each command individually. What does it mean to "act justly"? "love faithfulness"? "walk**

humbly with [our] God”?

Read Matthew 23:23 and compare Jesus’ condemnation of the religious leaders’ hypocrisy with Micah’s calling out of the people of Judah. In what ways are Jesus’ and Micah’s messages similar? How are they different?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Why do God’s people often need the reminder that our hearts, not our actions, are the true test of our faithfulness?**

**In what areas of life do you go through the motions rather than put in the hard work of preparing your heart for worship? What life adjustments can you make this week to develop a heart of pure and genuine obedience?**

**How do the commands found in Micah 6:8 translate into community service? In what ways could your group participate in an activity or ministry that fights for justice and mercy for underprivileged groups? that encourages faithfulness and humility among Christians? that reaches out to nonbelievers or the less fortunate in your community? As a group, commit to seeking out at least one of these opportunities this month.**

## PRAY

Close in prayer, thanking God that all He asks in return for our salvation is our love and devotion to Him. Ask God to help your group serve Him with a pure heart and selfless motives.

## COMMENTARY

### MICAH 6:6-8

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6:1-5 Micah was to plead God’s case, calling the mountains and hills as witnesses as he brought serious charges of covenant unfaithfulness against the people (v. 1). God reminded them of His righteous acts toward them in the past. He rescued them from Egypt, gave them trustworthy leaders such as Moses and Joshua, foiled the schemes of the enemy, and miraculously led them across the Jordan River. The people were to remember and acknowledge His righteous acts.

6:6-7 The people complained that God’s demands were unreasonable. Even to bring offerings, sacrifices, or their firstborn son would not satisfy God’s requirements.

6:8 The people already knew the good things that God required (see Ps. 14:1,3; 37:3). God’s interest was not in the offering but the offerer. A person’s character and behavior mattered more to God than any gift they might bring. People were to act justly under God’s standards. They were to love faithfulness, treating one another with love and mercy. They were to walk humbly with God as their constant companion (Gen. 6:9), conforming their lives to His will.