

# ***Living the Dream***

## ***Growing in God's Grace in 2023***

### **January 29, 2023**

**Overarching Theme:** 2023 – Living the Dream

**Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

**Core Point:** 2023 can be a year of living the dream of faithful discipleship as we take a step forward in following Jesus Christ.

**Reflect on this Scripture:** Micah 6:6-8 NRSV

*"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

**Commentary:**

There is hardly a more famous prophetic quotation from the Hebrew Bible than this one. Verse 8's ringing words have been spoken and sung in countless synagogues and churches since their utterance over 2,700 years ago. What more could possibly be said about such familiar language, language that has become a part of the vocabulary of the western world? But those of us who spend any time with the Bible have learned never to imagine that the last word about any of it has been spoken. So we look again and try to see what we have not yet seen.

As Micah calls out the people of God for their unfaithfulness, Israel does not admit guilt; it does not ask for forgiveness. It merely wants a way out; it wants to know what this angry God really wants from them. Perhaps our worship is wrong; perhaps we have not been serious enough in our acts of praise? "What do you want, YHWH? Burnt offerings, year-old calves, thousands of rams, tens of thousands of rivers of oil?" (6:6b-7a) Not enough? Not serious enough? Then,

"how about my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life?"(6:7b) ("soul" in NRSV)

It turns out that YHWH cares for none of these. Micah tells the unfaithful Israelites what their God really wants from them.

First, "do justice." This word is always one found in a court of law, but out of the mouth of God justice is always dictated by the concerns of those to whom justice is denied. Israel's evil actions against house and householder are the very essence of injustice. Such evil actions must stop.

Second, "love *hesed*." That Hebrew word is difficult to translate, but beyond all it appears to mean the unbreakable connection that YHWH has with the people. It is a relentless, lavish, everlasting covenant kind of loving-kindness that God wants in relationship with us.

Third, "walk humbly with your God," reads most translations, but however traditional that reading may be, the adverb can be misleading. The word might also mean "carefully," or "to give considered attention to another." We could read, then, "walk attentively with your God." We are to be careful to put God first and to live in conformity with God's will. Our life pilgrimage is likened to walk with God as our constant companion.

Adapted from <https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2011/01/justice-not-worship-john-c-holbert-1-20-2011>

### **Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. How do you respond to the assertion that "*God loves us as we are, but loves us too much to leave us as we are?*" Is unconditional love consistent with the Divine desire for us to grow up? Why or why not?
2. Is there a gap between where you currently are spiritually speaking and where you believe God wants you to be in order for you to live God's "dream" for your life? If you are willing, share that perceived 'gap' with your group.
3. Respond to this quote by Jim Rohn – "*Your life doesn't get better by chance, it gets better by change.*" Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. What is one life change that you might consider as you desire to *walk more attentively with God?*

### **Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Micah 6:8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?