

"MAJORING IN THE MINORS: EXPLORING THE MINOR PROPHETS" FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 7

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "THREE NOT-SO-SIMPLE THINGS"

OPENING PRAYER

Most gracious Father, you have shown us the way to be made right with you without keeping the requirements of the law, and that is by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of your glorious standard. Thank you that through your love for us you gave your one and only son, Jesus, who sacrificed his life by shedding his blood to open eternity's door to us. (Taken from Romans 3:21-26.) Therefore, it is in his name we always pray. Amen.

CONNECTING QUESTION

Growing up, what was the most difficult house or family rule for you to follow? What was the punishment for breaking it? How many second chances did you receive?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Aloud & Meditate on God's Word: Micah 1:1-5a, 6:1-8; Matthew 20:23-26

WATCH VIDEO

Video Presenter: Nick Stevens

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.

1. In seven short chapters, Micah presented the true picture of God – the almighty Lord who hates sin and loves the sinner. Much of the book is devoted to describing God's judgment on Israel (the northern kingdom), on Judah (the southern kingdom), and in fact, on all the earth. List the offenses God saw. (See Micah 1:5, 2:2, 2:8-9, 11, 3:1-5, 9-11, 6:12, 7:2.) What perspective does the prophet Isaiah give for those who have offended God (Isaiah 1:16-18)? How do his words apply to you?
2. In the midst of the overwhelming predictions of destruction, Micah gave hope and consolation by describing the Lord's love, because judgment comes only after countless opportunities to repent and return to God in obedience and worship. The Father promised to deliver a small minority who continued to follow him. Who will lead the remnant? (See Micah 2:12-13 and 5:2-4.) Describe the hope you find in these two verses. (Questions 1 and 2 taken from NLT Commentary on Micah.)
3. "But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don't take yourself too seriously – take God seriously" (Micah 6:8 The Message). Read other translations of this verse. What concrete examples do the following verses give of how you can "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God"? (Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Psalm 34:12-

15; Romans 12:21; Philippians 2:3-4; James 1:27) How would you write Micah 6:8 in your own words, expressing your desire to be obedient to God's calling for your life?

4. Read John 6:28-29. What does Jesus say about the kind of work God requires of his followers? How do Jesus' and Micah's words in 6:8 compare (e.g., similar, dovetail, different focus, etc.)? Discuss.
5. What did you learn about the requirement and cost of fulfilling the Father's commands in Micah 6:8 with Jesus' explanation in Matthew 20:22-28? What cost are you willing to pay?
6. The prophet concludes his book in Micah 7:18-20 with a summary of the Lord's steadfast love and compassion. Which attributes and actions of God in this passage will you praise him for? What hope does Micah 7:19 give you? "God buries our sins in the depths of the sea and then puts up a sign that reads, 'No fishing allowed'." (Corrie ten Boom)

ONLY THE REQUIREMENTS

"God's covenant love and promise are more powerful than human evil." (The Bible Project on Micah)

Meditate on the following verses this week: Psalm 19:1-9, 14; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 17:7-8; and Matthew 5:14-16.

Can you state with confidence that a just and merciful God delivers his people from darkness and sin? Through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, how can his covenant people, you included, reflect the Lord's expectations? What are three (or more) "not-so-simple" ways where you will step out in faith to "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"? (Matthew 5:16 NIV)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for not giving up on us when we fall short and for always abiding with us as we seek to do the "three not-so-simple things" listed in Micah 6:8. We know that this journey of your making leads us to be reflections of your heart. It prompts us to share your goodness, commit to justice for all, and extend loving kindness to our neighbors every day. Most humble Savior, continue to teach us how to demonstrate humility as we walk in your ways. We want to care for others, forgive easily and freely, and be compassionate to those who are in difficult valleys. Most importantly, we want others to see only you in everything we say and do. We pray in your praise-worthy name now and forever. Amen.

Our Father...

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