

**Summer 2010 Newsletter**  
**Detroit Bible Students**  
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*“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;  
What doth the LORD require of thee,  
but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God?”  
Micah 6:8*



## A Formula for Godliness

Many ethical challenges face the Christian in today's world. Is it merely enough to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” to be a true Christian and to be pleasing to God? Most Christians realize that some reformation of life is necessary once they have accepted Jesus, but a great many churches also assert that a simple declaration of faith is all that is needed for salvation. What is the Scriptural position? Our lead text gives the basic foundation of a life that is pleasing to God.

In what way are we to “do **justice**?” The dictionary definition of justice is: 1. the quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness, or 2. the moral principle determining just conduct and conformity to this principle as manifested in conduct; just conduct, dealing, or treatment. Simply stated, justice is doing what is right and equitable in any situation.

Laws are made by governments to govern behavior. Without law to define acceptable behavior, justice cannot exist. So, what law is the Christian subject to? We are fortunate to live in a country in which lawmakers have striven to benefit the people as best they can. Not all are so fortunate. But regardless, the Apostle Paul told the followers of Christ to “be subject to the higher powers.” (Romans 13:1) Therefore, the Christian must first be law-abiding within his community. But there is also a higher law spoken of in the Scriptures that takes first precedence with the Christian—God's law. That law is found in the Bible and is the Christian's guide in all aspects of life.

As Christians we are to be governed by the Golden Rule; “Do unto others and you would have others do unto you.” As our Lord put it, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

(Matthew 22:39) Proverbs 21:3 tells us, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice." Let us each examine all our dealings with our fellow man and ask ourselves, "have we been just?" When faced with difficulty would we welcome help yet do we complain when we might have to share some of our privileges to help others in need? Do we gossip or make unflattering comments about others? At work do we try to get ahead by pulling down our co-workers? When a clerk makes a mistake in a store, do we point it out or go away thinking we "really lucked out?" If we have suffered an injustice, do we seek revenge?

The Psalmist says: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the LORD: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm 1:1,2) Of himself Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," (Matthew 4:34) and "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (Matthew 5:30) Therefore, in order to do justly, the Christian must seek the law of God in the Scriptures to govern his life and then do his best to live in accordance with that law.

**Mercy** is defined as "compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; benevolence, mildness, tenderness of heart." In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) Proverbs 3:3,4 says: "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Mercy towards others, implying consideration for their failings and sufferings, is an ennobling grace, a part of the image of God. Truth here stands for sincerity, pureness and uprightness of dealing in all our affairs. To "bind them about thy neck" signifies that these are to be esteemed as jewels and ornaments of character carefully guarded from loss and always in sight.

Every right-minded person recognizes mercy as a very proper and very desirable quality. All realize the need for Divine mercy for themselves. All should also realize that the Divine purpose is that only those who show mercy to others will themselves receive mercy at the Lord's hands.

(Matthew 7:2) Man was originally created with God-likeness of character, but over six-thousand years of sin and degradation since the expulsion from Eden have nearly obliterated this divine law from the heart of humanity. Selfishness and greed have become predominant. Therefore, it is necessary for the child of God to rewrite these graces of truth and mercy upon his heart.

Love and mercy are closely akin. Mercy has sometimes been defined as "love in action." The Lord told us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:44, 45)

To "love mercy" is to delight in yielding personal rights and privileges in the interest of others, where no principles are involved. It implies readiness to forgive the faults of others—a disinclination to be too exacting in respect to others, as well as a desire to be very exacting in respect to *our* treatment of others. Jesus would have all of his disciples copy God who is "kind to the unthankful and to the evil." (Luke 6:35) By God's mercy Jesus was sent to ransom Adam's condemned and dying race from the power of the grave. (Romans 5:8) By his mercy God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) By God's grace and mercy he will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." (Ephesians 1:10) By God's mercy we are promised that "the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:10; Revelation 21:4) "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22,23)

**Humility** is a quality not often rewarded in the world today. Pride and vainglory govern man and humility is condemned as weakness. It takes a truly strong character to fight against this trend and truly walk humbly before God. Even those who profess to be the servants of God clothe themselves in titles of distinction and look upon the Lord's people as their personal flocks. How far

from our Lord's example! When none of his disciples thought to do the humble service of washing the feet of the others, Jesus himself took water and washed his disciples' feet. He told them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:14,15) The Lord was not establishing a showy ritual to be performed once a year; he was demonstrating the grace of humility which his followers should put on as a element of character. Without humility we cannot bring the greatest amount of glory to God. Without humility, we cannot joyfully serve our fellow man. Without humility we cannot have a realistic sense of our own talents and those of others. "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

Pride is a self-centered preoccupation with and overestimation of one's own importance, abilities, or achievements. This results in an unwillingness to submit to God and general insensitivity to others. The arch enemy of God and man is Satan whose original lie "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4) led to the present reign of sin and death that has resulted in the suffering in the world today. Satan's sin of pride is recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14 where we read, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us of seven things that the Lord hates. The first on the list is "a proud look." The fallen human nature craves recognition and praise. We must be constantly on the look out for any pride creeping into our hearts. No one really wants to see their shortcomings, but in order to be pleasing to God we must have the strength and integrity to examine ourselves honestly and purge out any stirrings of pride.

True humility, however, is not an abject, groveling, self-despising spirit; it is a sober estimate of ourselves as God sees us. It is proper to recognize our own talents and be thankful for them, but we should never let this recognition make us feel better than others or forget to give God the honor for endowing them upon us. Whenever we detect the beginnings of pride in ourselves, we should remember our Lord who "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6)

## OTHERS

Lord, help me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way  
That even when I kneel to pray  
My prayers will be for Others

Help me in all the work I do  
To ever be sincere and true  
And know that all I do for You  
Must needs be done for Others.

Let Self be crucified and slain  
And buried deep, and all in vain  
May efforts be to rise again  
Unless to live for Others.

And when my work on earth is done  
Any my new work in heaven begun  
May I forget the crown I've won  
While thinking still of Others.

Others, Lord, yes, Others  
Let this my motto be;  
Help me to live for Others  
That I may live like Thee.

--Charles D. Meigs--

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## CORRECTION!

The web address for our past newsletters was incorrectly written in our last newsletter. The correct address is:  
[Biblenewsletter.org](http://Biblenewsletter.org)