

Daily Devotional, November 2, 2021 Humility at the Top of My List

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 (NIV)

For the longest time I've been a list-maker. I have lists of things to do, lists of things to get at the grocery store, lists of notes to send, lists of deadlines for various activities. You get the idea. These are all made in order for me to keep from forgetting important things. Sometimes it seems that I have so many lists that I make a list of my lists. And while some of you will just shake your heads at that, I know there are a few of you who will understand and celebrate with me this next statement: There is enormous joy and relief when I can cross something off my list.

One of the dangers of living this way (and there are several) is that if I'm not careful, I can reduce my faith to a checklist of things to do. Read my Bible—check. Pray—check. Give my tithes to the church—check. Support the needs of the underprivileged—check. But God does not want my faith to be about a checklist. He wants my heart. He wants an ongoing, living, vibrant relationship with me and not just behaviors that I can check off on a list as if I am working on some merit system.

There is a danger in reducing this passage from Micah to a checklist, as well. We can read it and think, "Oh good! There are only three things I have to do. I can handle that!" But if we look carefully at what the prophet Micah says is required of us, we do not find things to check off on any list. Instead, we find behaviors that we should carry out continuously, unceasingly.

"To love justice" means that each day I intentionally build my life around the priorities of bringing Godly-focused justice in my life and in my world. "To love mercy" means that I live each day with an attitude of seeking the good in others, caring for their hurts, and celebrating in their victories. It means accepting my own forgiveness through Christ and extending forgiveness to others. And "to walk humbly with God" is a daily endeavor, a lifestyle, a mindset of seeing and knowing that all I am is a servant to others in obedience to my relationship with God. I can't check that off of any list. Instead, I seek to grow and mature in my relationship with God, asking God to help me to walk humbly with Him, receiving the wisdom and direction and grace that God wants to pour into my life.

As I've grown older, I still make my checklists, but I've also learned to set the checklists aside sometimes and embrace living each day as God leads. It is not easy for someone like me, but what a joy it can be when I can let go of those checklists, turn to God, and simply say, "With Your help, I'd like to walk humbly with You today."

Prayer: Gracious God, with your help, I'd like to walk humbly with you today. Help me to find opportunities to act justly and opportunities to love mercy. Help me to welcome your loving and gracious presence in each moment of every day. In the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.