

Why You May Be God's Answer to a Prophetic Prayer

“‘With what should I come before the Lord, and bow down 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 thousand 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 man, 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?” (Mic. 6:6-8).

I have come back to this passage many times over the years, but the most recent time, my heart kept asking questions of God.

It's interesting that the first two verses here question God about the way to offer ourselves to Him in ways that are pleasing and acceptable to Him. It's clear that God is not looking for sacrifices that are external. He requires a very different kind of internal sacrifice lived out in ways that please Him: Christlikeness. Micah is describing the very lifestyle of Jesus.

I'm one of those people who wants to do as much good as possible; however, sometimes I get paralyzed by all of my options. There is also a difference between doing good and being good. God, of course, asks us for both. I felt compelled to focus on the three things mentioned in this passage in Micah 6 that God has told me are good and that He requires of me.

1. Do justice.

If you are like me, you hate injustice wherever you encounter it. But it is everywhere. There are so many inequalities in

the world. I have been passionate about so many different justice issues that I get paralyzed into inactivity because I don't know which one to focus on. I'm passionate about justice for the unborn. I'm passionate about stopping human trafficking. I'm also passionate about the injustice done to so many families because of government regulations that keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty and dependence. So I spent time in prayer asking God to help me to see what this looks like in my context.

What does doing justice look like, Father? How do you want me to demonstrate justice in my circle of influence? There are so many ways. Show me how to focus where You have gifted me to serve You.

As I spent time seeking to know more fully how I could fulfill this requirement of God, I had a sense that He wanted a sacrifice of my time and my finances in this area. He showed me two things I have had intimate connectivity with in my own family: advocacy for the elderly and disabled and somehow working with others to fix a very broken mental health system.

Of course! Two very important injustices that need to be righted. Can I do this singlehandedly? Of course not, but God flooded passion into my heart because of experiences I have had in the past several years with family members and others like them.

Show me how to be obedient in these areas, Lord. You have shown me what is good, now help me to do justice in effective ways.

I began writing down what I was sensing I should do. God gave me the names of several people to get with to think and pray through these issues. It's a start.

Of course, God doesn't want me to focus on these issues to the exclusion of all other issues. If I see unfairness, I should always speak up and speak out. I will try to spend more time

throughout my life seeking how God wants to use me to “do justice” for His kingdom’s sake.

2. Love kindness.

What does it mean to love kindness, Lord? How do I demonstrate that to You? In some versions, the word is mercy. I already love to do things for people. But God, how do You want me to offer You a sacrifice of kindness? Lead me.

God has shown me in the past to ask a very simple question that many people ask every day: “Lord, who needs a touch from You today? Draw my attention to the people I am to show kindness to.”

Of course, I am always to be kind, but I find I often waste a lot of my discretionary time on dim pursuits rather than kingdom-minded acts of compassion. If I am a good listener, I often find names of people popping into my mind who need to be shown the kindness and mercy of Jesus. It’s always my choice to act upon this, of course. But, if I ignore these impulses from the Lord, I am not only robbing others of a blessing but also myself.

One other aspect of kindness, the truly sacrificial part, was that God wanted me to sacrifice my need to be right and my urge to have self-righteous anger. Sometimes biting my tongue is the best way to love kindness.

3. Walk humbly with your God.

What does it truly look like to walk humbly with You, O Lord?

“Sacrifice your pride,” is what came to me in this season of prayer. As much as I dislike thinking of myself as filled with pride, I am just that! I want everyone to like me. I am sometimes self-righteous in ways that keep me from demonstrating the love and compassion of Christ to those I may disagree with. I have spoken harshly when I should have just kept quiet because I just had to get my opinion out there.

Can you relate to that? It is so easy to think we are walking in humility until we ask God to show us how we are not. God has asked me to give up pride-filled attitudes and my rights to some of my more unlovely opinions. The enemy will go after me in this area if I am not continually diligent. He knows where my weaknesses are.

Learning to Engage God in Relational Prayer

The questions and interactions I have had with God in the midst of the book of Micah demonstrate what I call “relational prayer.” I express a need based on His word to me and ask Him to respond: *Father, please give me Your strategy and not my own ideas. Help me to show others what You are up to so that I might point them in the direction of the gospel of Jesus Christ!*

If you try this method, God will likely not speak to you in the same way He does me. Also, He will likely give you very different answers to your questions. Why? Because He needs to do a work in each of us in different ways so that we are prepared and equipped to do what He calls us to step into. There is much kingdom work to be done, and each of us has a part. He will not tell us all to do the same things or to change in the same ways. He will teach each of us a life of obedience that reflects Jesus in whatever ways He sees that we need His guidance.

You may want to ask: “How do you know you are hearing the voice of God?” Here is the way I test what I hear. First, I ask myself, “Does what I think I am hearing line up with the character of Jesus?” and “Does what I think I hear agree with the Word of God?” If the answer is no, then I will not act on what I hear.

Do I hear an audible voice? No. I trust the Holy Spirit to speak what is on the heart of God to my own limited spirit. This is the cycle of prayer I practice. Prayer originates in

the heart of God. The Holy Spirit knows the mind and heart of God and makes God's wishes known to me. My part is to receive what the Holy Spirit gives me and pray the heart of God into my life and the lives of others by taking these prayers back into the presence of the Father through Jesus Christ, the Son.

What a blessing to be involved in prayer with the Trinity. Prayer is not merely a spiritual exercise. It is spiritual life! It is carrying out the purposes of God on earth. If you will engage God in relational prayer, He will use you to do amazing kingdom work, transforming you into the likeness of His Son. This is prayer as everyday life! {eoa}

Kim Butts *is the co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries.*