

Do the Right Thing!

The title of this article is derived from a movie written, directed, and produced by filmmaker Spike Lee in 1989. The film, "Do the Right Thing," examined violence and its harmful effects, challenging viewers to engage in honorable behavior reminding them in its final clip that "the time is always right to do the right thing."

To "do the right thing" is rooted in the fact that each and every day we're faced with decisions whose outcomes should reflect sound judgment, positive character, moral decency, and equitable justice. Hence, our treatment of others, management of the environment, responses to social issues, and daily life choices ranging from "Who should I vote for?" to "How should I relate to others" should always reflect "doing the right thing."

The Biblical admonition to "do the right thing" can be found in the words of Micah 6:8, "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." Let's examine these three directives.

1) Do Justly.

Put simply, to do justly is to do things right, and do the right things. God cares about fairness. God cares about equity. God cares about women being treated with the same dignity and respect as men. God cares about people being judged by the content of their character as opposed to the color of their skin. God cares about those who have no medical insurance and can't afford to get medical care. God cares about the economically disadvantaged. God cares about domestic abuse and violence. God cares about the disabled and the disenfranchised. God cares about all the people who are adversely affected in our broken world. God cares about social justice. God cares about black lives, white lives, red lives, yellow lives, blue lives, and all lives. So in harmony with God's will and way, act with fairness, integrity, and honesty. Love and treat everyone right. Do justly.

2) Love mercy.

Micah 6:8 doesn't say, "have mercy," but rather it says "love mercy." There's a difference between having mercy and loving mercy. And one way of describing this difference is that we shouldn't perform acts of kindness from a sense of compulsion, which is having mercy. But, we should do them out of love, which means you love mercy.

Loving mercy is seen in the actions of the Good Samaritan.¹ Loving mercy is seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son.² Loving mercy is seen in the women caught in the very act of adultery.³ Jesus said "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."⁴

Mercy is favor, kindness, and compassion. When we love mercy, we love kindness. When we love mercy, we love compassion.

God expects us to love and get along with one another. He expects us to "do the right thing" and love mercy by demonstrating it towards others.

3) Walk humbly with God.

The first two directives in Micah 6:8, "do justly and love mercy," deal primarily with how we treat one another, but the third directive, "walk humbly with God," reveals our relationship with God. And the right relationship with God always begins with humility not arrogance.

God expects us to walk humbly with Him. Now that may sound easy, but it's hard because we're arrogant, prideful, legends in our own minds, and have big egos. Too often, we think it is God's role to make us happy, do our bidding,

and answer our prayers in the way we want. But we are to serve and glorify God.⁵ The apostle Paul says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”⁶

Whenever you walk with someone, three things must be true. Number one, you must be going in the same direction. You can’t walk with someone and be going in the opposite direction. And you will never learn to walk with God until you know which way God’s going and then you change your course to match His. Number two, when you walk with someone you’ve got to be going at the same pace. In order to walk humbly with God, you must match God’s pace, God’s speed, and God’s tempo. Stop getting ahead of God and stop falling behind God. Walk with God.

Number three, whenever you walk with someone, you always have to be headed to the same destination, which means, if you want true fellowship with God, make sure you’re going where He’s going. Make sure you reach the ultimate destination where He will be, and that’s eternal life with Him.

May our lives, both now and in the future, always reflect these three directives, and may we always “do the right thing!”

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*All scriptural texts are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

1 Luke 10:25-37.

2 Luke 15:11-32.

3 John 8:1-11

4 Matthew 5:7

5 1 Samuel 12:24, Psalm 86:12, and Revelation 14:7.

6 Ephesians 2:8-9



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