

## JUSTICE

***“Justice is taking personal responsibility to uphold what is pure, right, and true”***

*“He has showed you, O man, 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*

On our Character Council website, the virtue of JUSTICE is opposed by the vice of corruption. When I think of corruption I think of people looking out for “Number One”. Bribes are taken to pad the corrupted one’s own wallet. Preferences are given to certain people based on how that particular connection reflects on or benefits the corrupted one’s self. Decisions are based solely on “How does this benefit me?”

But JUSTICE? JUSTICE is focused on what is pure, right, and true – regardless of how it affects ourselves. The prophet Micah admonishes us in the Old Testament that the Lord REQUIRES us “to act justly”. Our focus is not to be on ourselves, but on what is right. How can we do that? Not on our own! Left to our own devices, everyone seeks their own way. The prophet Isaiah said, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;” (53:6a) But Micah tells us that God has shown us what is good. When we humble ourselves and follow His example, we see the corruption and injustice around us and are able to respond with JUSTICE.

I find it interesting that God chose to pair JUSTICE with mercy and humility in this verse. It’s important that in our pursuit of JUSTICE we don’t become judgmental. What better example of JUSTICE coupled with mercy and humility do we have than Jesus? In the 8th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, a woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus by the teachers of the law and Pharisees. The Law said that such a woman was to be stoned to death. But Jesus said, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” (8:7) The woman’s accusers went away, and Jesus said to the woman,

“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” (8:10b-11)

Jesus approached the woman with mercy. He asked her accusers to humbly look at her sin in the context of their own. Then He dealt with the corruption in the woman’s life and told her to “leave her life of sin.” He didn’t condone what she was doing. He called her out of the life she was leading. The difference between the woman’s

accusers and Jesus? The woman's accusers came in judgment. Jesus' approach was to pursue JUSTICE by seeking restoration.

What better example of this approach did Jesus give than when He died on the cross for each of our sins. In that act alone He took personal responsibility to uphold what was pure, right, and true and restored those who accept that gift to right relationship with God.

As you see the corruption and injustice around you, how do you respond? Are you judgmental or do you humble yourself and see the mistakes you've made in your life and seek to show mercy in your pursuit of JUSTICE?