

# Leadership

## GODLY LEADERSHIP

Focal Verses • MICAH 3:1–3, 9–12; 6:6–8

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXAMINE God’s requirements for people and leaders; VALUE justice, kindness, and humility as key human virtues; and DECIDE to be just, kind, and humble people and leaders.

### In Focus

The Monday morning headlines in every newspaper and television news station reported about the alderman in a major urban city indicted on racketeering charges. He was charged with taking bribes and kickbacks from companies and individuals seeking to do business in the community at the expense of the alderman’s constituents—most of them members of his congregation. The news of the alderman came on the heels of reports that several clergy members across denominations in the country were charged with sexually molesting minors.

Pastor Jenkins felt he had to address these issues in real time. He was preparing to speak at the semi-annual meeting of denominational leaders. Pastor Jenkins took the opportunity to remind the leadership that they are expected to have higher standards, compassion, and respect for the people in their care. However, time and time again, greed and corruption have caused many to fall into a cesspool of crime and broken vows.

“Today, I want to remind you that God is not pleased when leaders refuse to lead by His standard and stand on His Word. Examine your own heart and actions to see if your motives in serving God and others are pleasing to Him. God does not want empty sacrifices but pure hearts that love Him and appreciate what He did on Calvary.”

*In what ways are people capable of giving “empty sacrifices” to the Lord? How does this impact our ability to lead others?*



### Keep in Mind

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”  
(Micah 6:8, KJV).

## Focal Verses

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**KJV** Micah 3:1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment?

2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

3 Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they

lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

6:6 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

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### The People, Places, and Times

**False Prophets.** While there were many true prophets in Israel, there were also false prophets. These false prophets often offered messages of hope and peace. These messages comforted the people without pointing out their sin or challenging them to repent from their evil ways. More importantly, the false prophets' messages were not messages from God to his people. But, their own thoughts and their own visions concerning the people. The false prophets became rich from the fees they charged for their services. These prophets chose to seek after money rather than speak God's truth to the people. They prophesied according to how much money their words might bring them. Often they would use pagan methods of divination or fortune-telling, which were strictly forbidden in the Law of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:9–14). The Lord

told Israel to evaluate false prophets to see if the message they had spoken came to pass (vv. 21–22) and if they enticed the people to worship idols (v. 20).

*What false prophets attempt to mislead the church today? How might profits corrupt a true prophet into a false one?*

### Background

Micah's prophecy began with a general announcement to Samaria and Jerusalem that God had a case to present against the nations of Israel and Judah. He then laid out the first of two series of judgments against the divided nation by describing the sins that they had committed against God as well as their fellow citizens (*See the division first mentioned in 1 Kings 11*). The Neo-Assyrian Empire was the most dominant and real threat to Jerusalem

during Micah's time. One of the many ways Jerusalem prepared for conflict was to strengthen the economy so they would have the necessary resources to fight off both foreign and domestic enemies. But as today's text suggests, the ways they pursued economic stability were immoral and did not align with the precepts of the Lord. Their stimulus plan was based on greed, exploitation, and senseless taxes, and as a result, moral corruption slowly crept in. The rulers and leaders convinced themselves that their methods of governing were necessary because of the impending dangers. The culture of corruption and abuse spread, and soon landowners began taking advantage of farmers. The poor were subjugated, and they had no social or economic power. Individually and collectively, the nation claimed to depend on God, whom they knew and believed to be the ultimate lover of justice; however, the leaders were cynical and perverted righteousness.

*What should we do as Christians when we see corruption in our political or religious leaders?*

### At-A-Glance

1. Leaders' Evil Desires (Micah 3:1-3)
2. Leaders' Corruption (vv. 9-12)
3. God's Call (6:6-8)

### In Depth

#### 1. Leaders' Evil Desires (Micah 3:1-3)

The leaders of Israel—including government leaders, priests, prophets, business leaders, and more—had turned their hearts from God's will. They had been given God's covenantal law and were supposed to be examples of righteous behavior for all those around them, yet they perverted what was right and used their position to take advantage of those they were supposed to lead. Israel's leaders neglected

their duties and led the people astray. Rather than protecting and instructing their citizens, they exploited and misled them. Micah uses the image of cannibalism to describe how the leaders fed off those they were called to protect. Jerusalem's leaders are being accused of increasing their power by using violence and oppression.

#### 2. Leaders' Corruption (vv. 9-12)

Amid all of this, Micah stands up for justice by the power of the Spirit of the Lord. The prophet accuses leaders of not just disobedience but of hating justice and perverting the very meaning of righteousness. Micah says the leaders are attempting to build up the city, but at the expense of the poor. The false prophets are not the only corrupt citizens in Samaria and Jerusalem; leaders in almost every area of their society have gone astray. As a nation, and individually for many leaders, the focus quickly became prosperity by any means necessary. Despite the fact that the nation had adopted a culture of cheating, lying, stealing, and marginalizing the poor, they profess that their "growth and success" is due to their dependence on and protection by God. Micah ends by telling people that the city they are working so hard to build will ultimately be destroyed.

#### 3. God's Call (6:6-8)

What can Israel do to correct its broken relationship with God? Their immediate response would be to offer the traditional burnt offerings as sacrifices to God. The prophet points out that no matter how much they sacrifice, God won't be pleased. Even the offer of human sacrifice, which was customary of pagan sacrifice but prohibited by the covenant law (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5), is suggested to show how ridiculous and insulting their erroneous attempts were. Micah's prophecy, in keeping with other Israelite prophecies,

clearly indicates that the inward condition of one's heart and the importance of acting justly towards neighbors are of more concern to God than outward religiosity. God doesn't require outrageous sacrifice; He has already said what He requires. As communicated earlier in Micah's prophecy, God requires that His people would once again be a just society that loves mercy. He desires protection for the oppressed and poor. He desires that His people act mercifully toward one another. God requires that they (and we) continue to walk in covenant fellowship with Him.

### Search the Scriptures

1. Based on Micah's prophecy, what was the primary source of motivation for the Israelites during this period in Jerusalem (3:11)?
2. What outward religious activities did Israel think would please God (6:6-7)?
3. What sacrifices does God require (6:8)?

### Discuss the Meaning

1. What makes a leader corrupt? Be sure to consider thoughts, words, and actions.
2. Micah's message to the people indicated that God is more concerned with the inward state of one's heart than outward shows of piety. What causes us to try to look outwardly spiritual while secretly knowing that we're out of step with God's will?

### Liberating Lesson

We live in a polarized society today where injustice abounds. Children are separated from their families. People go without food and shelter. People are persecuted for their beliefs and behaviors. God's faithful people know, however, that God will restore true justice to the land. They realize that no matter what others do, they must continue in their faith with just actions, love, and humility.

### Application for Activation

Can you think of a modern leader (male or female) who models justice and humility? List and discuss God's requirements for people and leaders. Have participants write a litany of commitment to become just, kind, and humble people and leaders. If you can share this litany in a worship service, be sure to include acts of appreciation for leaders in the congregation whose lives demonstrate what God requires.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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**Sources:**

Achtemeier, Paul J., ed. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1996. 680, 888.  
Smith, Ralph L. *Micah–Malachi. Word Biblical Commentary*. Waco, TX: World Books Publishers, 1984. 32–34.  
Waltke, Bruce K. *A Commentary on Micah*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2007. 181–183.

## Say It Correctly

Jebusite. **JEB**-you-site  
Tyropoeon. **TIE**-row-**PEE**-on.  
Hinnun. **HIN**-num

## Daily Bible Readings

**DAY 176**

Jeremiah 35–37  
Psalm 73:1–9

**DAY 177**

Jeremiah 38–41  
Psalm 73:10–14

**DAY 178**

Jeremiah 42–45  
Psalm 73:15–28

**DAY 179**

Jeremiah 46–48  
Psalm 74:1–8

**DAY 180**

Jeremiah 49–50  
Psalm 74:9–17

**DAY 181**

Jeremiah 51–52  
Psalm 74:18–23

**DAY 182**

Lamentations 1–3  
Psalm 75:1–5

## Notes

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