

READ THE TEXT

A young woman, married for ten years, sat in the counselor’s office.

With tearful eyes, she anguished about the deterioration of her marriage...

“My husband doesn’t understand,” she told the counselor,
how much LITTLE THINGS mean to me.

He buys me expensive gifts...and once a year he takes me to
a ski resort. But in between, there’s NOTHING!

He doesn’t hold the door for me the way he used to.
He won’t help me clean off the dinner table.
He never thanks me for a meal, or tells me I look pretty.

All these LITTLE THINGS are killing our relationship.”

You know it as well as she... LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT!

Not only in marriage, but in every one of life’s relationships.

Common courtesies like a thank-you note,
a few moments spent helping in a tedious task,
or some patient listening even when other duties call.

For in between the MOMENTOUS occasions of life – the birthdays, the
anniversaries, the weddings and graduations – there are a lot of
ORDINARY DAYS
filled with those little things that mean so much.

The poet William Wordsworth went so far as to call it
**“The best portion of a good man’s life – the little, nameless
unremembered acts of kindness and of love.”**

The Bible tells us that God also cares about the “little things.”

Long ago He gave the prophet Micah a list of what He expects from us.
A deceptively simple list of “little things”...

**“He has shown 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.”**

DO JUSTICE! God says...

The words of this great verse (Micah 6:8) are engraved in stone on the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D. C.

Justice was important 2700 years ago, and it is still important NOW!

Justice is the ordering and maintaining of proper and honest relationships with our fellow man.

We all expect our leaders to live and act “justly.”
We expect honesty. We want integrity. Creeds and deeds in sync.

We’re rightly distressed to discover
South Carolina’s governor lying about an affair with a woman in
South America,
Washington, DC’s mayor using cocaine in a hotel room,
or an Illinois police chief taking bribes from criminals.

We expect our leaders to do THE RIGHT THING, the JUST thing.

But does God expect any LESS from the rest of us?

I’m not thinking of lofty matters, but of the most ordinary things.
Of honesty and fair dealing in everyday relationships.

God has His eye on the “little, nameless, unremembered acts” by which we treat each other fairly or unfairly...

whether or not we fill in our tax forms honestly
whether or not we do a thorough job for a customer, even if the customer won’t know the difference,
whether or not we tell the store clerk she gave us too much change.

Would you say those are LITTLE THINGS?

Perhaps so, but they mean much to God, so He says “Do justice!”

To this He adds a second little thing: “LOVE KINDNESS!” He commands.

God’s people are called to be KIND:

When I was a student at Concordia Sr. College in Ft. Wayne,
there was a woman who came each day to the reflecting pond to feed the ducks.
How they scurried quacking toward her when she appeared! We called her
“the Duck Lady”. Nobody paid her to do it. She just had a kind heart for them.

Yes, we are to be KIND to animals.

But how much more to PEOPLE, who are made in the image of God!

Real kindness is the sort given to people who never say thanks,
and may not even deserve it!

I will never forget the day
my FATHER went out of his way to escort a drunk driver home.

On the way he flashed his lights at oncoming cars to warn them to be careful.
At one intersection he got out of the car, went up, and told the drunk driver
that he was going to follow him home to make sure he got there safely.

When at last the man reached his driveway and got out of his car, I remember
how he turned and cursed at my father. Dad took it quietly. He drove home
without comment or complaint.

My father got no award. The incident never made the newspaper. But it made
a mighty impression on me.

Such kindnesses keep our world from falling apart...it has happened to you, hasn't it?
the fellow who stopped to help you change a tire in the rain
the nurse in the emergency room who smiled and calmed you down
the neighbor who found your missing dog and brought him back to you.

God loves KINDNESS. Especially in the little things.

Do we?

The prophet Micah spoke these words to an audience of people who had failed
miserably at both JUSTICE and KINDNESS.

They were outwardly religious, but their religion was only skin deep, a thin
whitewash that covered a selfish, greedy lifestyle.

What about US?

We think of our church as a FRIENDLY church.

Are we each doing our part to make it so for people who visit on a Sunday?

And what of our GROUPS...

Quilters, youth group, bell choir, Dorcas, men's breakfast, and more?

How do we treat one another – speak about one another –
when our backs are turned?

Friend, what does this passage say to you personally?

Someone said that “Character is the way we act when we think no one is looking.”

When no one is watching you, are you just? truthful? kind?

As I hear this passage, I remember times when I was not kind at all,
but ill-tempered and rude...

times when I did helpful things, but with clenched teeth,
despising how someone lived or even looked!

I remember times when I was not just – when I ducked my responsibilities,
or lied to cover my tracks.

Look carefully into the mirror of God's Word, friend.

Do you see such things in yourself?

If so, what can we DO?

Micah's audience had the idea that a heavy dose of religion would offset any
lack of personal integrity.

“Give God some RELIGION! That's what He likes... worship services!
Large sacrifices!”

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings?

**Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with 10,000s
of rivers of oil?**

People still do that.

In the church I served in Akron, Ohio, there was a man who never came to church,
but regularly sent in a large check.

Members of his family expressed concern that he was living a morally questionable life. They worried about him.

One night I went to visit him. I attempted to invite him back to church and to living an upright, godly life. He was non-committal about both.

But as I was leaving, he followed me to the car, and through my open window he thrust a \$100 bill.

Is that what it takes? Some great thing? A BIG OFFERING?

How much, do you suppose, would it actually cost to pay the debt we owe God?

\$100? \$1000? More....?

Shall I, Micah asks, give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

No, says the Lord. NO.

I have already done that great thing!

Already I have given my firstborn, my only-begotten Son.

The Great Thing, that Sacrifice of Blood, I have already done for you.
But there is one more LITTLE THING I ask of you...

“Walk humbly with your God.”

There is no other way for sinful people to walk.

It must be HUMBLY.

Aware that everything I would dare bring God was not mine at all,
but HIS already!

Humbly.

Aware that I can bring Him nothing but my sins and ask Him for pardon.

WALK HUMBLY WITH ME, says God, and I will show you....

NO! I will give you that kindness and that justice I require from you.

When Jesus came, there came with Him both JUSTICE and KINDNESS
from God...

Justice? He kept the Law as we could not.
Kindness? He showed such love as none could have dared imagine.
By His death he paid our debt, and Justice was satisfied.

What a WONDER that God would do such things for us!

WALK HUMBLY, then. WALK HUMBLY with your God.

Ask that Jesus come and live inside of you in all these ordinary days
and work in you to do those LITTLE THINGS
that matter so much.

Those who live that way are transformed, and they in turn transform their world.

Booker T. Washington, the famous black educator who was also
a humble believer in Christ, took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute
in Alabama many years ago.

One afternoon he was walking through an all-white neighborhood in the city
when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing Mr.
Washington by sight, she called him over and asked him if he would
like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood.

Washington rolled up his sleeves and proceeded to do the work she asked.
After he had carried it into the house, he declined the money and went on
his way.

But a neighbor girl recognized him and ran to tell the woman who it was
that had chopped her wood.

Frightfully embarrassed, the woman went the next day to Booker T.
Washington's office at the Institute and apologized profusely. But he
replied gently,

"It's all right. I enjoy physical labor now and then. Besides, it
is a delight to do something for a friend."

A LITTLE THING, was it?

Perhaps.

But it is in the little things that God is often at work.

It was with little things – a manger and a cross – that He redeemed us.

It is in little things – water, bread and wine, spoken words, and the neighbor in need – that He comes to us now.

And it is with little things – those “little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love – that we may make this sad world REJOICE!

**What does the Lord require of you
but to do justice
and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?**

In the name of Jesus. Amen.