

THE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION

In the Old Testament, the book of Micah gives us the teaching from God about the true nature of religion. We do well to pay attention to it, for a Positive Spiritual Attitude (PSA) can be obtained by following these great words. Micah says (in chapter 6, verse 8), "he has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (NASB)

Within this one verse we find the three relationships that man has and must keep in proper perspective if he is to develop spiritually. Of these three we cannot do just one, or just, two and be pleasing to God. Jehovah requires that all three be done, for as the verse says, "He has told you, O man, what, is good." There can be no excuse for our not being pleasing to God for He has told us what we need to know to obtain.

First of all Micah says that God requires us to "do justice." This phrase is a backdrop to Matthew, chapter 7 where Jesus expressed the "golden rule." He stated in the sermon on the mount that "whatever you want others to do for you, so do for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Man's relationship with himself is in view here. We must be at peace with ourselves to be at peace with others, and to be at peace with God. Liking ourselves is essential in keeping the second commandment (Mt. 22:39), for we are to "love our neighbor as yourself." If we don't love ourselves we can't love our neighbor, and can't do justice to others. A good self-concept, which can be achieved by becoming a Christian, is the first element in our three-fold formula of the true nature of religion.

Secondly, Micah said to "love kindness" and this has to do with our relationship to others. Our Lord said in Ac. 20:35 that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." If we love kindness then our life's attitude and ambition will be such that we want the best for others. Paul said in Galatians 6 :10 that we "are to do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith." True happiness comes when we can put the needs of others before our own and help meet those needs. The true nature of religion says that we will love kindness and in so doing let our feelings be known In our service to those in need. This is the second avenue in our three-fold formula.

Thirdly, we see that Micah told us to "walk humbly with your God." This doesn't mean that we can pick and choose the god we want to serve but that we realize that Jehovah God is the only true God and because of that we will want to humble ourselves before Him. First Peter 5:5 says that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." By recognizing that all we are, have, and hope to be is due to God's blessings and eternal power, we will have the right attitude to begin serving Him as sovereign Lord. Any time that pride enters the picture, self is on the throne of our life and not God.

Man's relationship to himself, to others, and to God is the three-fold nature of true religion. As we develop in these three areas, we will be pleasing to God and accomplishing the good work that He wants us to do (Eph. 2:10). Practice these three avenues in your life, work on all three every day according to His perfect pattern in the New Testament, and you will be doing what the Lord requires.