

Humility and Discretion in Micah 6:8

Haftarah [Balak](#) ([Micah/Michoh/Michah 5:6-6:8](#)) 5782 B"H

וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשׁוּר
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ חֵטְתִּים
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשׁוּר
וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ חֵטְתִּים

וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיֵּלְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:

Walking “humbly” with God

The Hebrew word “[צָנָה](#)” *tzana* occurs only twice in the Hebrew Scriptures (“Old Testament”).

You will find a form of the word in both the above passage which is [Micah 6:8](#) as well as in [Proverbs 11:2](#):

[“When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with the humble is wisdom.” Proverbs 11:2](#)

Tzana is usually translated in English as “humble.” [Strong’s Hebrew Concordance](#) defines *tzana* as “to be modest or humble.” Accordingly, I will highlight how the NKJV, NRSV, and TLV all choose to translate this word as “humbly”:

[Micah 6:8 New King James Version](#)

[“He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8 NKJV](#), emphasis added

Micah 6:8 New Revised Standard Version

“He has told you, O mortal, 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?” Micah 6:8 NRSV,
emphasis added

Micah 6:8 Tree of Life Version

“He has told you, humanity, what is good,
and what *ADONAI* is seeking from you:
Only to practice justice, to love mercy,
and to walk **humbly** with your God.” Micah 6:8 TLV, emphasis
added

Walking “discreetly” with God

With this much agreement by Christian translators, can't we just be happy with their translation and move on with our day?

Well, sure. But that would be boring.

Let me instead point out a nuance that captured my attention while studying this passage and I hope sparks your thoughts, too!

The *Complete Tanakh* translation used by the Orthodox Jewish *Chabad* movement translates this word differently. Rather than humble, they chose to translate *tzana* as “discreet”:

Micah 6:8 Complete Tanakh

He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD demands of you; but to do justice, to love loving-kindness, and to walk **discreetly** with your God. Micah 6:8, Complete Tanakh, emphasis added

Could it be that the Jewish translation is closer to the

original meaning?

Many of the Orthodox Jewish folks are more fluent in Hebrew having studied and spoken it much longer than those of us who are able to read and translate, but who are not necessarily as familiar with the language's deepest nuances.

To be humble requires a degree of discretion, does it not? Let's think about what it would mean to add more discretion to our walk with the LORD.

What about Bold Professions of Faith?

It is generally easy in the United States to make bold professions of our faith without fear of persecution or retribution.

We are able to wear Christian t-shirts, carry a Bible in a cute case, preach openly and testify to those who would listen.

Do you realize how incredibly blessed we are that our car radios can access multiple Christian stations? Those radio stations aren't censored and no one is getting prison time for sharing the Gospel message. Not so in other countries, my friend.

Here in the U.S., we have a tendency to *boast* of our evangelistic efforts. "How many" people attended the tent revival. "How many" people got saved last week. We focus on numbers and we pat ourselves on the back when we baptize new followers of Messiah.

Some of that is ok. After all in [Galatians 6:14](#), Rabbi Sha'ul (Paul) exhorts us to boast in the cross. *But are we boasting of our LORD or boasting of our own efforts?*

What we should strive for is a bold profession of faith *coupled with humility.*

Were it not for the LORD . . .

Justice, Mercy, and *Discretion*

I grew up in a very liberal “church.” They were not ashamed to tell you that they believed the Gospel in a nutshell is summarized by [Micah 6:8](#). While this verse is wonderful, the *Gospel* requires the understanding that God’s Son came, died, and rose again for us.

Their abrasive social justice campaigns always cited this verse, and I kid you not, one “Easter Sunday” they advertised “Health and Wellness Sunday” and completely ignored the Resurrection.

Yeah, it was weird.

I bring this up because we need to understand the type of justice that Micah is talking about.

What many call “social justice” today is an aberration to true, Godly justice.

Micah exhorts us to seek the type of justice that will honor God. We are to love mercy so that we are balanced in our decision-making and demonstrate God-honoring kindness.

Humility goes right along with that, but so does being discrete.

I can wear my faith (literally) on my sleeve, but *what changes when I am more discrete about it?*

Messiah Jesus taught discretion: [“But when you do tzedakah \(charity/good deeds\), do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing...” Matthew 6:3](#)

Won't my inner conversation with my LORD be even more personal, more intimate?

Won't my boasting shift from my own achievements to what He has accomplished?

*What happens when I **don't** make it obvious that I am a believer? Is there a segment of people I could actually reach better if they didn't know from the outset that I am a follower of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ) the Anointed One?*

On the other hand, we do not want to be overly discreet so as to muddle our testimony, cause confusion, or inadvertently damage our testimonies! It is no secret that most strict Jewish communities are very closed to the outside world. "Walking discreetly with God" takes on a different sense in those communities such that their observance is so inward it seems on the outside that they have very little sense of welcome to nonJews (even though hospitality is actually a very strong part of Judaism!).

As in all things, there must be balance.

The Secret Place of the Most High

There is something to be said about dwelling in the "secret place" of the Most High. Throughout Scripture, the "secret place" is also translated as "shelter," "refuge," or being "concealed," by God.

["He who dwells in the shelter of Elyon,
will abide in the shadow of Shaddai." Psalm 91:1](#)

The LORD covers us, in such a way that could be described as "discreet." We are invited into the secret place, the place of His holiness, covered and protected in His love.

So let us learn to walk justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly *and* discreetly with Him.

How will we do that?

By being in relationship with the LORD God Almighty and His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ. We must be filled by His Holy Spirit so we can truly live in justice, mercy, and humility.

So I encourage you today, seek Him with all your heart! Allow the LORD to teach you and guide you in all of His ways so you may know Him and make Him known! Shalom!

Related:

[Tzedek, Tzadik, & Tzedakah: Matthew 6:3-4 through a Hebraic lens](#)