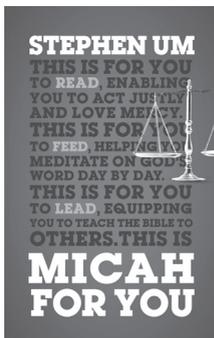




What does God require of us?

MICAH

by Stephen Um



Micah For You

If you are reading *Micah For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Micah For You*:

Study One → Ch 1 Study Four → Ch 6-7
Study Two → Ch 2-3 Study Five → Ch 8
Study Three → Ch 4-5 Study Six → Ch 9-10

Find out more about *Micah For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

What does God require of us?

The Good Book Guide to Micah

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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, moms and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ☞ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. The **Leader's Guide** contains **guidance for questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- ⋮ **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. ⋮ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with his concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God's word.

Why study Micah?

We long for justice.

The world is not the way we would like it to be. Exploitation tells us that something about this world is off. Oppression tells us that things are not the way they are supposed to be. And when we are honest, our hearts tell us that we are not the way we are supposed to be, or would like to be. We easily choose greed over generosity. We easily choose our comforts over others' needs.

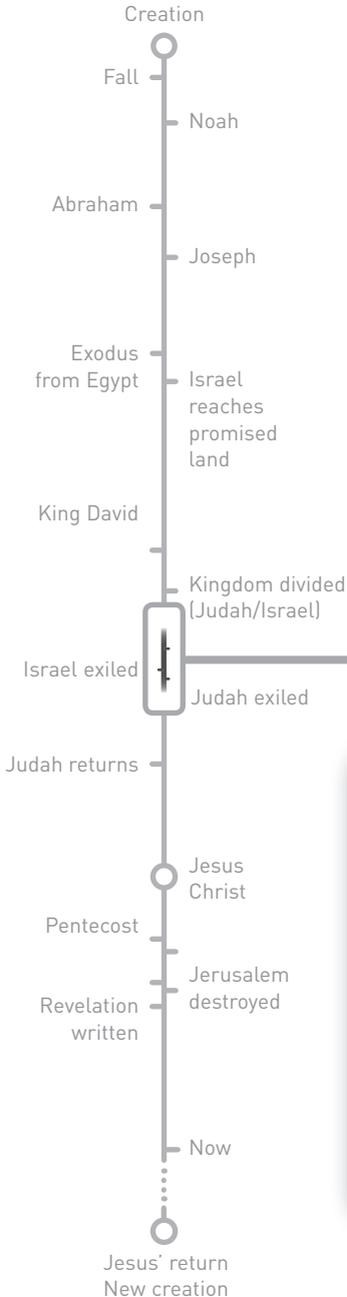
This longing for justice is not just a 21st-century reality. It's a human reality. Ancient people have always been, and modern people still are, exploring the ideas of fairness, mercy, and goodness. What should these look like? How do we experience them? How do we pursue them? What prevents us from experiencing these realities in every moment we are awake?

Micah—this Old Testament prophet sent to speak God's word to God's people—deals with these tough questions. And he tells us that God is a God who cares deeply about justice. He cares enough to judge injustice; to restore the world one day to complete justice; and to charge his people with doing good by pursuing justice:

"He has told 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?" (6 v 8)

This is a book that resonates with our desires to see goodness all around us. But when we take the time to read the entire book of Micah carefully, we realize that God is not simply giving us a homework assignment about justice. The message for us is not simply a call to action to do good. God wants us to know the *reason* and the *need* for doing good—for his glory and for the flourishing of his creation—and to find the *power* to do it. As we read this prophet in light of the coming of Jesus, we find that Micah can inspire and transform us to do the justice we yearn for, and love the kindness we long to see.

These six studies will thrill and challenge you as you see how to walk through life in a way that honors and pleases the God of consistent justice and overwhelming kindness.



BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the book of Hosea fit into the whole story of God's word?

MICAH c.750-686BC

- 930BC — Kingdom divided
- 740-681BC — Isaiah prophesying
- 722BC — Fall of Samaria
- 596BC — Fall of Jerusalem



1

Micah 1 v 1-16

THE END OF IDOLATRY



talkabout

1. How would you define idolatry, and how serious would you say it is?



investigate

▶ Read Micah 1 v 1

2. What does this opening verse tell us about this book, and its author?

DICTIONARY

Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (v 1): kings of Judah in the 8th century BC.

Samaria (v 1): the capital of the northern kingdom of God's people, named Israel. Jerusalem was capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.

▶ Read Micah 1 v 2-7

3. What picture of God do verses 2-4 give us?

DICTIONARY

High places (v 3): places where pagan gods were worshiped.

Transgression (v 5): sins.
Jacob (v 5): God's people, the Israelites.

- Why is God coming in this way (v 5)?

Verse 7 tells us the central sin of the nations of Israel and Judah. There are “idols” in both lands—false gods being worshiped among God’s people.

4. Look at what God will destroy in verse 7. What do these destructions suggest the Israelites have been making idols of?

The author Becky Manley Pippert writes, “Love destroys that which destroys the beloved.”

5. How does this explain why it is loving of God to destroy his people’s idols, even though that will be painful for them?



apply

6. What do the idols that Israel and Judah worshiped look like in your own culture?
- Worship of wealth

- Worship of sexual pleasure



God's people have not actively, definitively rejected the God of the Scriptures. They have deliberately, consciously added other objects of worship to their worship of him.

7. Why is this such an attractive option to God's people, now as then?



getting personal

An idol captures the hearts and imaginations of those who worship it.

Consider: What are those things for you? (If you do not know what your idols are, it is not that you have none, but that you worship them without even realizing it.)



investigate

▶ Read Micah 1 v 8-16

8. What is going to happen to the people (v 16)?

DICTIONARY

Lament (v 8):
expressing grief and
overwhelming sadness.

Verses 11-15 list out names of towns that are hard to pronounce. Why are they included? First of all, because Micah is tracing out the path of the Assyrian army, which ultimately ends up taking over Israel. These are all the places that its king, Sennacherib, will come to in order to take control over these regions. This is the path of the means of God's judgment.

Second, Micah is also trying to show that even though these cities have hopes based on their particular location, those things will not come to fruition:

For example, “Beth-le-aphrah” means the “house of dust” (v 10). Micah says to them, *Guess what. You’re going to ultimately roll yourselves into dust.*

“Shaphir” (v 11) means “beauty town,” and yet Micah tells them that they are going to live in nakedness and shame.

9. What point is Micah making about their idolatry?

10. How does Micah show the correct response to understanding the idolatrous nature of God’s people, and the judgment they deserve to face (v 8)?

➔ **apply**

11. **Read James 4 v 4-10.** What should “adulterous people” (v 4) who love idols do (v 8-10)?

DICTIONARY

Adulterous (James 4 v 1): unfaithful to God.

Enmity (v 4): opposition.

Grace (v 6): undeserved kindness.

- What does the Lord do when his people do this (v 6, 10)?



12. How can we foster a church community that is honest about idolatry, serious about its effects, and quick to repent and enjoy grace?



getting personal

Is this how you treat your own idolatry?

“He gives more grace.” How will this free you to repent right now... to mourn your sin right now... and to seek to change right now?



explore more

optional

▶ Read Psalm 1

What is the key to true flourishing—the antidote to and opposite of the idolatrous behavior in Micah’s day?



pray

Thank God:

- that he speaks so honestly to us about what we are like.
- that when we humble ourselves before him in confession and repentance, he does forgive us and lift us back up.

Ask God:

- use your answers to Questions Six and Twelve to shape your prayers.

