

THE ETHICAL TRIAD FOR CHILDREN

The Ethical Triad: Developing and Maintaining Ethical Integrity in Children

Pursuant to the Requirement for LEAD645: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Integrity

by

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Abstract

I have researched material based on the ethical triad found in Micah 6:8 and Matthew 23:23 and I will use the principles found in these passages (and others) to construct an ethical template for living. My desire is hopefully to lay an ethical foundation for living in the lives of these children that is based on key biblical texts and teaching. Additionally, I would like to emphasize that the purpose of these exercises is not purely academic; however, I will link key biblical principles to both Jewish and Christian thought and include, where possible, any academic research or understanding that I have gleaned from my research and reading in the development of this material.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to develop and teach ethics and morality to a group of children attending a Christian academy in Atlanta, Georgia. I will lead seven, thirty minute sessions on ethical values found primarily in Micah 6:8 during “chapel time.” During these occasions, I will develop our understanding of the godly ethical and moral values and how these values should shape our ethical behavior:

1. Session 1 (25 October 2012)
 - Introduce Micah 6:8
2. Session 2 (29 November 2012)
 - Act Justly Part One
3. Session 3 (20 December 2012)
 - Act Justly Part Two
4. Session 4 (31 January 2013)
 - Love Mercy Part One
5. Session 5 (28 February 2013)
 - Love Mercy Part Two
6. Session 6 (28 March 2013)
 - Walk Humbly Part One
7. Session 7 (2 May 2013)
 - Walk Humbly: Part Two

What I have written in these pages has been shared or will be shared shortly with the children over the next few months. The document is to serve as a guide and a basis for leading discussions and teaching about ethics and morals primarily from a Jewish and Christian

perspective. I also do not use an academic approach in my teaching, so some material referenced in the following pages is for developing my knowledge base and learning. Since I am working with children, I use a conversational style using a great many questions and illustrations in my teaching. Questions are sometimes spontaneous and may not be included in this material.

Chapter I

Session 1: Introduce Ethics and Morality found in Micah 6:8

In a moment, I would like to share with you the story of the “Good Samaritan.” However before I do that, I would like to ask you a few questions:

1. How do we know to do what is right?
2. How do we know, when we are doing the right thing?
3. Have you ever heard about ethics or morality?

Ethics “refers to judgments about whether human behavior is right or wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi).

- Judgment means considering something or making a decision about something
- When we make a decision to do something we oftentimes consider if it is the right or wrong thing to do – that’s ethics

Morals are “specific standards of right and wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi). What are a few things that we know we should not do?

- Do not lie
- Do not steal
- Do not murder

What are some things that we should do?

- Love God
- Love Neighbor as yourself
- Honor parents
- Do unto others as they would do unto you

Where do you think that we can best learn about doing what is right and not doing what is wrong?

Luke 10:25-17: Who is My Neighbor?

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

After reading the story of the Good Samaritan found in Luke, use the Good Samaritan Picture/Graphic to illustrate the story (See Figure 1) and may be obtained here:

<http://kmpblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Good-Samaritan.gif> Luke 10:25-17 (NIV, 1984):

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.”

³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man,

he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him,

passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and

when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of

him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins^l and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Summary of Major Commandments and Moral Teachings

In this story we see what righteousness or right behavior is and we learn several important moral values and a great ethical lesson – we learn how to do what is right.

Righteousness (right behavior or doing what is right) requires is to:

1. Love the Lord your God
2. Love our neighbor as yourself
3. Care for those around us in need

Who is My Neighbor? This is a great question. Frequently we consider those who live closest to us and most like us to be our neighbor.

- Show picture of Charlie Brown Characters (See Figure 2)
- Do you see yourself among the Charlie Brown Characters?
- Pick one. Who are you?
- Did anyone pick Pig Pen?
- Why not?

Think about these Questions:

1. Do we like people who are different from us?
2. Do we like people who are like us?

Explain the parable of Good Samaritan. In the parable, we see four men:

1. An injured man, who was beaten and robbed and half dead. Do we know who this man is?
2. A priest an important religious man – who might this man, be today?
3. A Levite, a man who served in the Jewish Temple – who might this man, be today?
4. A Samaritan, a man who was an outsider – who might this man, be today?

Scripture Teaches an Important Principle: Do Not Stand Idly By

We read in the Old Testament: *“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life”* or *“Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor”* (Leviticus 19:16b) (NIV, 1984).

We see an important moral principle here, an ethical value for us to follow and to practice. When we see someone – our neighbor in trouble, what are we to do?

WE DO NOT STAND IDLY BY. What do you think the phrase *“stand idly by”* means? Many people understand this Scripture to mean do not ignore people around you. Do not be a bystander.

When we see someone injured or in trouble the moral thing to do is to act – not stand by idly and “watch as something happens to someone else. It is your obligation to do something to help” (Delcau, 2012, p. 15)! What would you do, if you saw this injured man? What did each man in the story do?

1. The injured man did nothing. He was a victim
2. The priest did nothing even though by law he was to help someone in need

3. The Levite did nothing as well although he should
4. The Samaritan helped this man

In the story, who did the right thing? Who was the neighbor to the injured man?

- The neighbor “cares” and shows “mercy” – we will talk more about mercy later
- The neighbor helps the man beaten
- The neighbor binds up wounds
- We learn that the neighbor loves those around them and cares for the needs of others
- Story of Panni Anna – I’m listening. Your words are not rushing past my ears (*Słucham. Twoje słowa nie biegną po moich uszach*).

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at Godly character and learning more about living morally doing what is right ethically, loving and caring for others around us and being humble. We will be using Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7 and Matthew 23:23 as our biblical foundation and from these verses, we will develop our outline for godly character. Below is an outline that we will use for develop our ethical understanding and for Godly Character:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness

Application Questions:

1. What would you do, if you see one of your classmates at school being mistreated – teased or bullied by another student?
2. What would you do, if you were riding in the car with your parents and you saw someone injured and lying on the ground?
3. How can you be a better neighbor to your fellow classmates?
4. How might you be a better neighbor to people living around you?

Figure 1: Good Samaritan Graphic



Figure 2: Charlie Brown Characters Graphic



Chapter II

Session 2: Act Justly Part One

Let us review: What are Ethics? Ethics “refers to judgments about whether human behavior is right or wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi).

- Judgment means considering something or making a decision about something
- Ethics concerns our behaviors, what we do, whether it is right or wrong
- When we make a decision to do something we oftentimes consider if it is right or wrong before doing it

Morals are “specific standards of right and wrong” (Johnson, 2012, p. xxi). We all know what inches, pounds and gallons are because these are standard measures of length, weight and volume. Twelve inches make up one foot, sixteen ounces make up a pound and four quarts comprise one gallon. We will be looking at Godly character – behavior that God desires. We will be learning more about living morally and doing what is right ethically. We will also learn about loving and caring for others around us and being humble and walking faithfully with God.

We will be using primarily Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7, and Matthew 23:23 as our outline. Who can find in their Bible: Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7 and Matthew 23:23? The first one to find the verses please raise your hand and I will call on you to read it. In Micah we read,

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8, NIV, 1984).

Micah gives us three major behaviors that God desires in us. These behaviors display God’s character. Jeremiah gives insight to what Micah’s passage means. Let us look at Jeremiah and read,

“If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever” (Jeremiah 7:5-7) (NIV, 1984).

Jesus says that we do well when we keep the Law; however, he emphasizes that we should not neglect the important matters of the Law: justice, mercy and faithfulness.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former” (Matthew 23:23) (NIV, 1984).

We see in these three passages three key values for living: acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly – humility (see chart below). Today we will look at acting justly. Let us look at our outline for godly character which introduces an Ethical Triad:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	“Preserving justice (hope)” Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	“Social compassion (charity)”
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Integrity having “leadership discipline (faith)”

An Ethical Triad: Sitting on a Three Legged Stool

The ethical triad is based on material derived from Dr. Thom Wolf. Dr. Thom is my mentor and working with me on my PhD. He has written about something that he calls “J-shaped spiritual capital” (Wolf, 2010). His work is based on the work of Theodore Malloch, a research professor at Yale University. Dr. Thom writes that Malloch “argues that historically, the spiritual capital of Protestant business persons focuses on the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The Jesus-shaped *worshipview*, says Malloch, yields a *worldview* triad of leadership discipline (*faith*), social compassion (*charity*), and persevering justice (*hope*)” (Wolf, 2010).

Instead of a Dr. Wolf’s worldview triad of faith, charity, and hope, I see these ethical values as an ethical triad.

What does God require of us in Micah 6:8? He requires us to act justly (justice), to love mercy (charity) and to walk humbly with God (faithfulness). From Matthew 23:23 we see how Jesus echoes this understanding in his interpretation of what he describes as “*the more important matters of the Law*.”

Illustration

I will use the analogy of a three legged stool to illustrate the ethical triad (See Figure 3 – taken from <http://www.clker.com/cliparts/V/w/6/X/c/q/three-legged-stool-outline-hi.png>).

Also, use three pens rubber banded together to illustrate point by removing one of the pens, showing how it cannot stand without the third leg. The importance of a three legged stool is that if you take away one of its legs it will fall over. From our ethical triad outlined above, we learn that we need the three elements found in Micah 6:8 and mirrored in Jeremiah 7:5-7 plus what

Jesus said in Matthew 23:23 in order to have a solid ethical foundation. Remove any one of these three ethical elements and our ethics will fail.

The First Leg: Act Justly

We learn from Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (2006) that the prophet Micah teaches us that “God’s primary demand of human beings is to act righteously [or justly]” (p. 14). Telushkin expounds and says that God does not require from us sacrifices or religious rituals; “rather, God’s most significant demands are justice, compassion, and humility” (p. 14). For this reason we should do justice. What is justice? The dictionary definition of justice is:

1. The quality of being fair and reasonable
2. The quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness: *to uphold the justice of a cause.*
3. The principle or ideal of just dealing or right action. Conformity to this principle or ideal: righteousness

How does the bible view or treat justice?

1. In the Bible justice is focused on our actions toward others. We are to be fair in how we deal with other people. We are not lie, cheat or steal. In Deuteronomy 16:18-20 (NIV, 1984), we read,

“Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

2. If we seek justice, we help others, the oppressed and care for orphans and widows. In Isaiah 1:16b-17 (NIV, 1984), we read:

“Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.”

3. The Bible characterizes God as just and righteous and connects these attributes to his mercy. He is just (righteous) and acts mercifully on our behalf. In Isaiah 56:1 (NIV, 1984), we read,

This is what the Lord says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.”

4. The prophet Jeremiah proclaims in Jeremiah 9:23-24(NIV, 1984) that God delights in mercy, justice, and righteousness.

“Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness (mercy), justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.

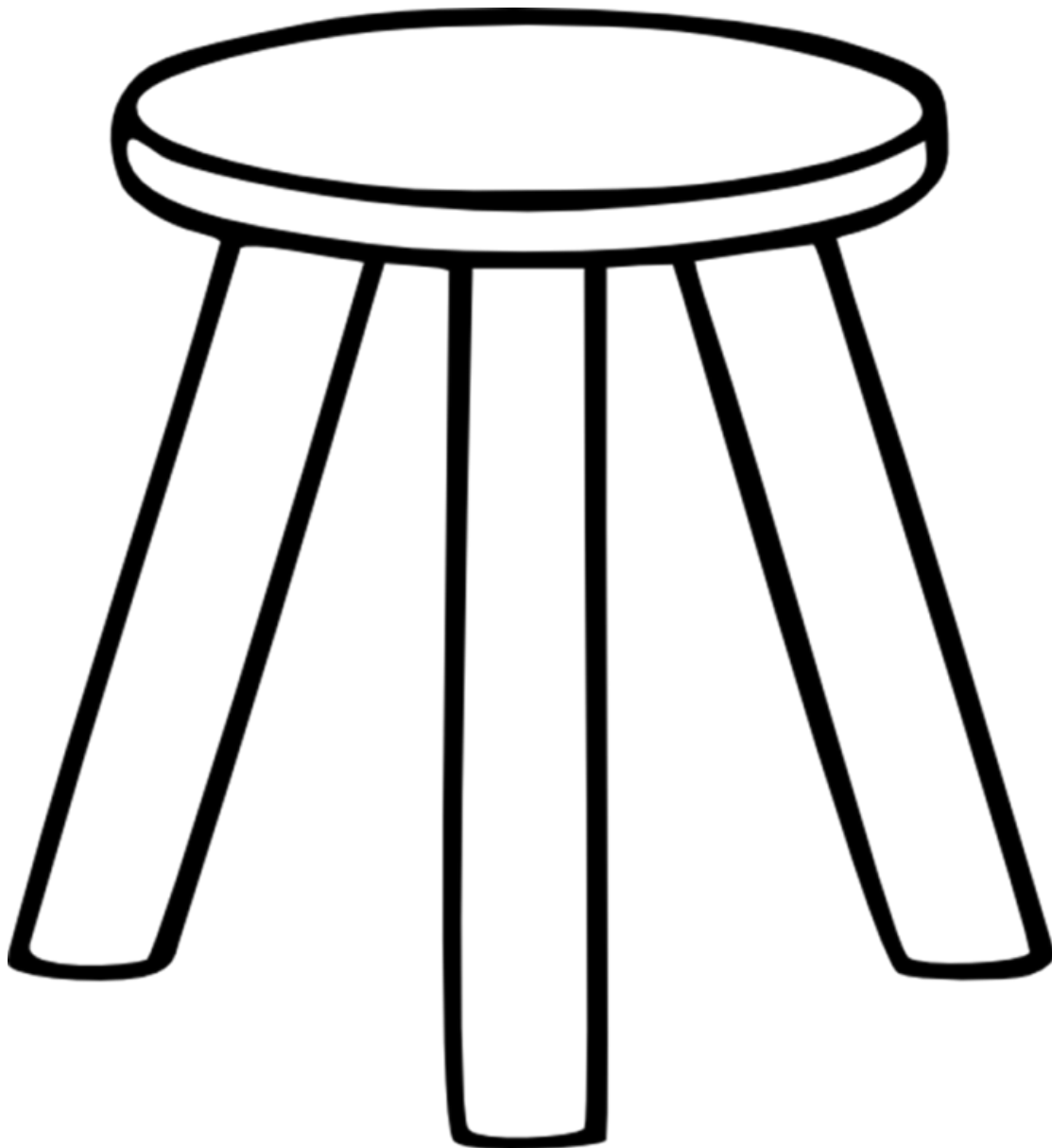
5. We also see in Hosea 6:6 (NIV, 1984) that God is not pleased by sacrifices but kindness.

For I desire mercy (kindness), not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Applications Questions for Consideration:

1. Why do you think that it is necessary to help others?
2. Who are the people we come in contact with on a daily basis?
3. Why do you think that justice and mercy go together?

Figure 3: Three Legged Stool Graphic:



Chapter III

Session 3: Act Justly Part Two

Let us review the Ethical Triad and Godly Character. Remember that we have been learning about and discussing ethics. Ethics are standards of behavior, while morals are standards of right and wrong. We have also talked about three key ethical practices that are necessary for us to form a strong ethical foundation – one that God requires and one in which he delights: justice, mercy and humility. Please recall that we are using an outline for developing our ethical understanding. We have called the ethical foundation that we are developing our ethical triad, which is based on godly character. We have discussed in our earlier session that godly character is based on Micah 6:8, Jeremiah 7:5-7 and Matthew 23:23.

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	“Preserving justice (hope)” Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	“Social compassion (charity)”
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Integrity having “leadership discipline (faith)”

Today we will continue with our discussion of the first leg of our ethical stool about acting justly.

The Value of Community

We live as individuals within a community. Even though we are individuals, not one of us lives alone as if we live on a deserted island. We are surrounded by other people: family, friends, and neighbors and, yes, even classmates. From the Bible we learn that God created us to live together. He said, *“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him”* (Genesis 2:18) (NIV, 1984), so God made man a companion, a woman to be his wife and helpmate. We can see that God made human beings to live in community. God chose Moses to write in the Book of Genesis the account of the creation of man and woman in the Bible. The Jewish people call the first five books of the Bible, the Torah or Law.

From this verse and other sources, Jewish people view themselves collectively as one large community in which they care for one another. The Talmud, a Jewish religious text teaches, *“Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh,”* which means that *“All Jews (or all the people of Israel) are responsible for one another”* (Delcau, 2012). Remember that we talked about last time that we are to love God and love others. The Bible teaches us to:

1. *“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength”* (Deuteronomy 6:5) (NIV, 1984).
2. *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD”* (Leviticus 19:18) (NIV, 1984).

Much of what Jews understand about ethics is derived from their understanding of God. We live in God’s creation not alone but with God and each other. What this means is that we are to “care for other people in the same way as we care about ourselves” (Delcau, 2012). This is our social responsibility. In Hebrew, the word for responsibility is called *areyvut*. Social responsibility is an integral component of community. Therefore with this understanding in

mind, we must “be kind and generous to everyone, especially [to] people who do not have as much as we have” (Delcau, 2012). If we understand our social responsibility, we will act justly toward one another and do the right thing.

The Jewish people draw their understanding of social responsibility from the example of Moses as we see written in the Talmud (Ta'anit 11a):

When the community is in trouble do not say, “I will go home and eat and drink and all will be well with me.” . . . Rather, involve yourself in the community’s distress . . . as was demonstrated by Moses. In this way Moses said, “Since Israel is in trouble, I will share their burden.” Anyone who shares a community’s distress will be rewarded and will witness the community’s consolation.

What are some ways that we can care for our community? Is there a community project in which you can be involved? What kind of community project would you like to do?

Three Major Ethical Concepts (Academic Theories)

Interestingly, caring for community along with several other ethical values is not unique among Jews as we see that many ethical theories have been introduced and discussed by the academic community. What is a theory? A theory is an idea that attempts to explain something and how to do it. A good example of a theory is the theory of gravity: what goes up must come down. I would like to introduce to you three major ethical ideas (theories) that resonate with Micah 6:8 (these ideas will be introduced partially):

1. Altruism is caring for other people and is akin to love of neighbor. We can see that altruism closely mirrors loving mercy from Micah 6:8.

- Altruism demonstrates care toward people in need and generally does not expect anything in return.
 - It is considered by many to be “the ultimate ethical standard” (Johnson, 2012, p. 170).
 - In the next sessions, we will look at two closely associated Jewish views of charity (*tzedakah*) and acts of loving-kindness (*gemilut chasadim*).
2. Communitarianism or caring for community is seen when members of the community share concern for “their fellow citizens” (Johnson, 2012, p. 164).
- I believe that the communitarianism ethical theory grows out of the Jewish understanding of social or collective responsibility because “*All Jews are responsible for one another*” (Babylonian Talmud Shavuot 39a).
 - We see this ethic expressed by Jews taking care of each other collectively or socially.
 - From our first session, do you recall: “*Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor*” (Leviticus 19:16) (NIV, 1984)? This verse is not about murder or when someone is injured but is understood to be social responsibility requiring us to act when someone is in need.
3. Doing What is Right – Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher described what is called the categorical imperative of doing what is right no matter what. Clearly this understanding is founded upon the Jewish ethic from Micah 6:8 of “acting justly” and agrees with the biblical value of justice – doing what is right.
- Some people disagree with the universal nature of Kant’s argument because he asserts that “there are universal principles that should be followed in every situation” (Johnson, 2012, p. 160).

- I think that Kant's ethical strategy is grounded in justice or righteousness (justice – doing what is right) that is required of God.

Application Questions:

1. What is social responsibility?
2. What are some good ways to be socially responsible about our community?
3. If we do what is right, do you think that there will be any consequences for us personally?
4. Will someone not like us or possibly be mad at us for not doing what they want?
5. Should we do what is best for personally or should we also consider the needs of others?

Chapter IV

Session 4: Love Mercy Part One

Let us review the Ethical Triad and Godly Character. Recall that we have been learning about and discussing ethics. Ethics are standards of behavior, while morals are standards of right and wrong. We have also talked about three key ethical practices that are necessary for us to form a strong ethical foundation – one that God requires and one in which he delights: justice, mercy and humility. Please recall that we have developed an outline that we have been using for understanding and developing an ethical triad based on godly character as seen primarily in Micah 6:8:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Concept	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	Kant's "Do what is right"	"Preserving justice (hope)" Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	Altruism Communitarianism	"Social compassion (charity)"
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness		Integrity having "leadership discipline (faith)"

In this session we will be looking at mercy – the second leg of our ethical triad.

The Second Leg: Love Mercy

What does mercy mean? Mercy means to be “compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; *also*: lenient or compassionate treatment <begged for *mercy*>” (Webster, 2012). Compassionate treatment of others is an ethic or care, which we know from our last session as altruism. Altruism demonstrates care toward people in need and generally does not expect anything in return. Before we can develop further the role that mercy plays in our ethical triad, we need to understand how the Bible views mercy. Oftentimes, we equate mercy with forgiveness. Someone once defined mercy “as us not getting what we deserve.” To some degree this understanding is true but there is more to the meaning of mercy. At its core biblically, mercy is God stepping in and helping us. Mercy is God doing something for us that we cannot do for ourselves. Mercy is God’s effort to save us from sin. Mercy is not our effort. It is God’s effort. God’s mercy is driven by his loving-kindness toward us.

Did you know that Jesus Christ was a rabbi, who gave us great insight about God and what he desires from us? Jesus teaches us about mercy in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. He also teaches us about pride and humility, which we will look at in our last two sessions (6 and 7). For now we need to understand what Jesus has to teach us about mercy and forgiveness. Let us look at Luke 18:9-14:

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

First of all, the Pharisee was an important and prominent religious figure in Jewish society. On the other hand, the tax collector was an outcast in Jewish society, just like the Good Samaritan was. In a Bible study on this parable, Jennifer Walker (2000) writes:

Tax collectors were especially loathed in Jesus’ time. They were notoriously dishonest and were viewed as traitors. Tax collectors were mostly Jews working for Rome or Herod. In the Bible, tax collectors are frequently associated with sinners, pagans, and prostitutes.

The tax collector approaches God in humility – with a sense of distance. Walker (2000) says:

In contrast, the tax collector does not stand in the center where people could hear him. He does not look up to heaven, as was customary. He does not boast about his virtues, as the Pharisee did, but prays a prayer of repentance. He beats his breast, because he is so distressed about his sins. The tax collector then cries out for God to have mercy on him. He realizes that he is a sinner and asks [for] forgiveness.

This sense of helplessness in the tax collector produces a humble attitude, which allows him to take a sober look at how he truly stands before God. We need to do the same. As I mentioned, we will come back to humility later in the last two sessions; however, it is critical for us to understand who we are before God and others. Scripture says, “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment*” (Romans 12:3) (NIV, 1984). We need to look at ourselves like the tax collector did:

1. He doesn’t congratulate himself
2. He doesn’t give a summary of his good deeds
3. He sees himself soberly as one needing God’s forgiveness
4. He asks God for mercy

The Pharisee thought of others as sinners, but not himself. The tax collector thinks of himself alone as the sinner and not of anyone else. The only thing the tax collector asked for from God was mercy – “God, have mercy on me *the* sinner.” Mercy assumes the one asking for mercy cannot save himself, cannot earn forgiveness, cannot earn mercy, but *needs mercy*. By realizing his helplessness, the tax collector humbled himself – this is humility. By asking for mercy, this tax collector is appealing to God’s **compassion** to forgive. Jesus is saying that when a person like this tax collector realizes his or her need and cries out to God for mercy – God help me! God hears and responds to them in their need in loving-kindness. What does Jesus mean by this story?

1. We need to be humble, we need humility before God and others
2. We need to see ourselves as we truly are before God and others
3. We need God’s mercy, his forgiveness
4. We need God’s mercy, his loving-kindness

In Psalm 86:5, we read, “*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness [mercy] to all who call upon You*” (NASB, 1995). Notice that God is good, ready to forgive because of his “abundant” loving-kindness. Once more, we see that God’s mercy is loving-kindness.

Remember our story about the Good Samaritan? The Good Samaritan shows us that mercy is loving-kindness and reflects God’s loving-kindness because the Good Samaritan cared for – displayed loving-kindness to the needs of a stranger – his neighbor. Now we are ready to connect the idea of loving-kindness to our ethical triad of “loving mercy” (compassion). Compassion is “an orientation that puts others ahead of self;” more so, this type of orientation focusing on others distinguishes “ethical leaders from their unethical colleagues” (Johnson,

2012, p. 89). When we care for others around us in our community or demonstrate compassion towards our community, we express the ethical ideas of altruism and communitarianism:

1. Altruism is caring for other people and is akin to love of neighbor. We can see that altruism closely mirrors kindness or compassion for others.
 - It is closely linked to the concept of loving-kindness or mercy seen in Micah 6:8.
2. Communitarianism or caring for community is seen when members of the community “shoulder their responsibility and seek the common good” by sharing concern for “their fellow citizens” (Johnson, 2012, p. 164).
 - Members of the community must in turn care, show concern for or “have significant obligations to their fellow citizens” (Johnson, 2012, p. 164).
 - Communitarianism is somewhat controversial because, it looks at society – what is best for the community and does not consider solely what is best for the needs of the individual.

We need to pause a moment and consider the outcome of unethical behavior. Leaders who are unethical, place their own interests first and “are more likely to control and manipulate followers” subverting group goals and outcomes (Johnson, 2012, p. 89).

Application Questions:

1. Can you explain what mercy is? Why do you think it is important to understand mercy?
2. When you do something good for someone else what do you expect to happen?
3. Can you explain the difference between altruism (caring for others) and loving-kindness?
4. How can you show concern for our community?

Chapter V

Session 5: Love Mercy Part Two

Let us review the Ethical Triad and Godly Character. Recall that we have been learning about and discussing ethics. Ethics are standards of behavior, while morals are standards of right and wrong. We have also talked about three key ethical practices that are necessary for us to form a strong ethical foundation – one that God requires and one in which he delights: justice, mercy and humility. Once more let us recall that we have developed an outline that we have been using for understanding and developing an ethical triad based on godly character as seen primarily in Micah 6:8:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Concept	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	Kant's "Do what is right"	"Preserving justice (hope)" Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	Altruism Communitarianism	"Social compassion (charity)"
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Humility Integrity	Integrity having "leadership discipline (faith)"

Today we will continue with our discussion of the second leg of our ethical stool about loving mercy.

Mercy in Micah 6:8

In the Micah 6:8, we see that mercy is derived from the Hebrew work, *chesed*, which means treating others with kindness, literally loving-kindness. This type of kindness shows concern or care for others; furthermore, we understand this sort of kindness as compassion. The Jewish Talmud considers compassion to be “the hallmark of an ethical person” and it “is *the* defining characteristic of being a Jew” (Telushkin, 2006, p. 20). By being merciful or compassionate, we demonstrate that we care for what was important to someone else, which could be an injustice, a misdeed, or an emotional pain. The best way to show compassion is through a loving deed – an act of kindness in an attempt to make right what was wrong. In so doing, we are able to display the character and heart of God. Recall that God “saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5) – his kindness toward us.

Mercy: Caring/Charity/Loving-kindness

Our understanding of charity begins in the Bible and comes to us from the Jewish people, whom God used to write his Word to us. *Tzedakah* (charity) is derived from the Hebrew word *tzadik*, “meaning righteousness, fairness or justice” and “refers to the religious obligation to perform charity, and philanthropic acts, which Judaism emphasizes, are important parts of living a spiritual life” (Wikipedia, 2012). We see that this ethical consideration is mirrored in altruism. However, the Jewish concept of *gemilut chasadim* expresses a much deeper concern for those around us through acts of loving-kindness. In the Babylonian Talmud (Sukkot 49b) we read that

“Our Rabbis taught that *gemilut chasadim* (acts of loving kindness) is greater than *tzedakah* (charity) in three ways (Telushkin, 1994, p. 24):

1. Charity is done with one’s money, while loving-kindness may be done with one’s money or with one’s person [e.g., spending time with a sick person].
2. Charity is given only to the poor, while loving-kindness may be given both to the poor and the rich [e.g., consoling one who is in mourning or depressed].
3. Charity is given only to the living, while loving-kindness may be shown to both the living and the dead [e.g., by arranging a proper burial for a person who died indigent].

The major difference as Jews view the difference between charity and acts of loving-kindness rests on the concept of repayment. When considering the burial of the dead *gemilut chasadim* (loving-kindness) it is viewed as “par excellence because it necessarily is done without any hope that the ‘recipient’ will repay the good deed” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 25). Furthermore, Telushkin (1994) indicates that a rabbi, Haffetz Hayyim, considered *gemilut chasadim* as “any good deed that one does for another without getting something in return (*Ahavat Chesed*)” (Telushkin, 1994, p. 25).

While reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Telushkin (2009) realized another distinction between charity and kindness. Charity may be done whenever “an opportunity presents itself, while kindness can be done at any time” (p. 138), when in 1944 Anne Frank writes in her diary,

How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment before making the world better. We can start now slowly changing the world! . . . You can always, always, always give something, even if it is only kindness. Give, give again, don’t lose courage. Keep it up and go on giving. No one has ever become poor from giving.

Do you know who Anne Frank was? She was a little Jewish girl, who lived in the Netherlands near Amsterdam, who was a victim of the Holocaust. Anne hid with her family from the Nazi occupiers in a secret room eventually being betrayed and transported to a German concentration

camp toward the end of the Second World War. Sadly, Anne died of typhus in March 1945, a few months prior to the end of the war. Considering Anne's words about kindness and giving as a means to make the world a better place, do you think that even as a teenager that she had a good ethical foundation?

In light of these considerations, I would say that instead of altruism, I would follow the Jewish ethical idea or understanding of *gemilut chasadim* and practice loving-kindness or compassion as my ethical construct to make decisions because it keeps us from expecting to be repaid for our kindness. By understanding this type of kindness, we are able to understand God's compassion for us and thereby direct this kind of compassion (loving kindness) toward others in our community. Wolf (2010) calls this "social compassion."

Application Questions:

1. Can you explain what mercy is?
2. Why do you think it is important to understand mercy?
3. How can you practice charity?
4. Can you think of need in our community that we might be able to meet?
5. What would be a good project to meet this need?

Chapter VI

Session 6: Walking Humbly (Humility) Part One

Let us review the Ethical Triad and Godly Character. Recall that we have been learning about and discussing ethics. Ethics are standards of behavior, while morals are standards of right and wrong. We have also talked about three key ethical practices that are necessary for us to form a strong ethical foundation – one that God requires and one in which he delights: justice, mercy and humility. We have developed an outline that we have been using for understanding and developing an ethical triad based on godly character as seen primarily in Micah 6:8:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Concept	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	Justice	Kant’s “Do what is right”	“Preserving justice (hope)” Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	Mercy	Altruism Communitarianism	“Social compassion (charity)”
Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Humility Integrity	Integrity having “leadership discipline (faith)”

Today we will focus on the third and final leg of our ethical stool – our ethical foundation by discussing what it means to “walk humbly” with God or humility.

The Third Leg: Walk Humbly

Humility and Integrity

Doing what is right or what the Bible defines as righteousness demonstrates integrity of character, which I believe is also described and inferred in Micah 6:8 by “walking humbly.” The way we “walk” or live our lives reveals our character. Integrity is best seen by truthfulness in our dealings. When leaders accept bribes, do what is best for them or lie to or mislead others, we see a lack of integrity. I believe that people universally desire to see right actions in corrupt times. It is critical to note that integrity plays a role in encouraging leaders “to be true to themselves” and their values, while humility causes leaders to consider their limitations that “might keep them from taking action” (Johnson, 2012, p. 246). Both of these character traits play a vital part in shaping and defining our personal ethics.

Academic researchers such as Morris, Brotheridge and Urbanski “argue that true humility strikes a balance between having an overly low and having an overly high opinion of the self;” moreover, this type of understanding does not mean that we have “low self-esteem, as many people think, or of underestimating our abilities” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88). Furthermore, we see in Johnson (2012) that humility is made up of three basic elements (p. 88):

1. Self-awareness – “a humble leader can objectively assess her or his strengths and limitations”
2. Openness – is a result of “knowing one’s weaknesses” and having humility “means being open to new ideas and knowledge”
3. Transcendence (exceeding in excellence) – transcendent leaders realize “that there is a power greater than the self,” which keeps them from “developing an inflated view of their importance” and enables them to appreciate “the worth and contributions of others”

We see from Johnson (2012) also that understanding the power that humility has on people is important because humility impacts how they behave ethically in a powerful way. He points out that “humble leaders are less likely to be corrupted by power, claim excessive privileges, engage in fraud, abuse followers, and pursue selfish goals” (p. 88). Lastly, humble leaders are “more willing to serve others” and practice servant leadership by “putting the needs of followers first while acting as role models” (p. 88).

Pride and Humility

Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector that we discussed in our last session? Let us return to it and consider what Jesus has to say about pride and humility. What does the prayer of the Pharisee show us?

1. The Pharisee prayed about himself – he was grateful to God for his own virtues. He confessed his virtues, not his sin. The sense of his prayer is, “Thank you God, because I am so great!” He seems to be saying to God thank you God that I am not like other men. I am not evil like them – as they are “robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like *this tax collector!!!*”
2. The Pharisee was confident of his own righteousness before God. What the Pharisee did not realize, however, was that simply because he did not do these things was no guarantee that he was more loved or accepted by God than those he despised.
3. He trusted in his own goodness, his good deeds or works to make himself right with God. He says, “Look at what I do God . . . , I fast”
 - Fasting means to not eat food for religious reasons. “Fasting was often done as an act of contrition, humility, or sorrow” (Evans, 1990, p. 271).

4. The Pharisee says, “I fast not just once a year as the law requires, but I fast twice a week. I fast 104 times more than I am required! God can’t you see what a great religious person I am!”

Jesus is saying that this man kept the external laws – those laws that people could see. He went even beyond what the Law required, but his standard of goodness or righteousness is *himself* based upon his own effort and, *not* upon God.

Remember that we are focusing on what God requires – not what we can do. It is important for us to consider that our ethical behavior should arise out of internal character – our integrity; being ethical does not make us good, but it expresses our character and should point to the source of goodness – God. The Pharisee trusted in himself and in what he could do. He was righteous in his own eyes and blind. He could not see himself as he really was. For this reason, he was full of himself (pride) and his own goodness and as a result, he did not think that he needed anything from God, especially God’s mercy.

Application Questions:

1. How would you define integrity? How do you think that being true to our convictions (values) helps us to behave ethically?
2. Are you more willing to serve or do you wish to be served?
3. What type of relationship do pride and humility have?
4. How can we ensure that our ethical behavior flows from our internal character (values)?

Chapter VII

Session 7: Walking Humbly (Humility) Part Two

For the last time, let us review the Ethical Triad and Godly Character. Recall that we have been learning about and discussing ethics. Ethics are standards of behavior, while morals are standards of right and wrong. We have also talked about three key ethical practices that are necessary for us to form a strong ethical foundation – one that God requires and one in which he delights: justice, mercy and humility. We have developed an outline that we have been using for understanding and developing an ethical triad based on godly character as seen primarily in Micah 6:8:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Matthew 23:23	Ethical Concept	Ethical Worldview (Wolf, 2010)
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Walk humbly	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	Faithfulness	Humility Integrity	Integrity having "leadership discipline (faith)"

Today we will finish our discussion of the third leg of our ethical stool – our ethical foundation by concluding our discussion about “walking humbly” with God.

Biblical Concepts of Humility

In Numbers 12:3, we read that *“Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth”* (NIV, 1984). Humility was “the only virtue the Torah attributes to its greatest hero” and accordingly underscores “the importance of humility in the Jewish tradition” (Telushkin, 2006, p. 210). In addition we see that Telushkin (2006) says that humility is a frequent theme in the Bible; humility is so important, that Micah the prophet (Micah 6:8) “commends one who walks ‘humbly with God,’ as fulfilling one of the three most important demands God makes of us (the other two, as we have seen, are “doing justice and loving kindness” – mercy). As we have seen in our last time together, a lack of humility leads to an absence of ethics and unethical behavior in which others suffer.

Oftentimes in Scripture we see arrogance pitted against humility. For example in the encounter between Moses and Pharaoh, “Pharaoh is the epitome of arrogance” (Telushkin, 2006, p. 211). We see clearly the arrogance of Pharaoh in his response to Moses’ pleas to release the Israelite slaves, when he says: *“Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go”* (Exodus 5:2) (NIV, 1984)? Moreover, the Pharaoh resists proudly to the point that Moses and Aaron say to him, *“This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me’”* (Exodus 10:3) (NIV, 1984)?

Biblical Humility and Academia

Telushkin (2006) defines humility as “not regarding ourselves as more important than other people” and he adds, “It implies judging ourselves not in comparison with others but in light of our capabilities” (p. 212). This conclusion echoes the concept of humility and self-awareness which enables us objectively to assess “strengths and limitations” (Johnson, 2012, p.

88). We have also seen the scriptural admonition: “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment*” (Romans 12:3) (NIV, 1984).

Interestingly we see that Telushkin (2006) points to moderation “in pursuing a path between arrogance and humility,” citing the great Jewish religious teacher Maimonides, who said in *Laws and Character Development*: “one should move away from the one extreme [i.e. of arrogance] and adopt the other [extreme of humility]” (p. 211). As we learned in our last session, we see this understanding reflected in the research of Morris, Brotheridge and Urbanski, who argued “that true humility strikes a balance between having an overly low and having an overly high opinion of the self.”

The Three Sources of Humility

Finally, Telushkin (2006, p. 213) identifies three sources of humility, which amazingly relate to what academic researchers and ethical theorists have proposed, which are:

1. “An ongoing awareness of God: ‘*I am always mindful of the Lord’s presence*’ (Psalms 16:8)”
2. “The awareness that every human being with whom we interact is created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), and therefore is as valuable as we ourselves”
3. “. . . Suffering, which can make even self-confident people aware that they are not the masters of their fate”

We can connect the “ongoing awareness of God” to an idea we covered in our last session. We need to realize “that there is a power greater than the self” – greater than us, which will keep us from “developing an inflated view . . . [of our own] importance;” it will enable us to appreciate “the worth and contributions of others” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88) because we understand that

everyone is “created in the image of God.” Finally, Telushkin points out that we are not masters of our fate, which reinforces self-awareness that allows us to be humble and thereby able to be objective and see our “strengths and limitations,” because being mindful of “one’s weaknesses” and allows us to be “open to new ideas and knowledge” (Johnson, 2012, p. 88).

Questions for Application:

1. Can you define humility in your own words?
2. Can you explain why being humble leads to good ethics?
3. Why is important to walk humbly with God?
4. Is it important to you to be aware of God’s presence?
5. Do we value what other people have to say?

Discussion

Teaching children ethics is a challenging task. Even though, I have made an attempt to make this document “scholarly,” I have tried to make it as simple as possible. I have already used this material on two occasions (Introducing Micah 6:8 and Session One) and simplified the information presented here for their benefit. Hopefully, I have been able to produce material that will ensure the development a solid ethical foundation by focusing on a simple ethical triad. The ethical triad is based on the biblical values that God honors in Micah 6:8 of acting justly, loving mercy (kindness) and walking humbly with God. Integrity and humility also play critical roles in developing an ethical life. I have included critical and vital ethical theories and attempted to connect them with biblical understanding where applicable. I also used the parables of Jesus as a basis for giving insight to major ethical values. The Jewish influence to the discipline of ethics is immeasurable, as they have helped us to understand the requirements of God, worked out over time in the context of life. We owe the Jewish people a great deal as they are the source of everything that we know about God and what he requires of us.

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