

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

What does God ask of Us? 5/25/22

God has shown you, O mortal, 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)

What do you want to be when you grow up? What are you going to study at university? If you want to achieve your dream job, you need to – study hard, be diligent, work out every day, network, read serious books, talk with someone who's been there. Our parents, teachers, counselors, mentors give us all sorts of advice, repeat instructions they'd received, shares pitfall from their experiences, offer encouragement, they lay out the path and the traps. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Our first response may be, "I don't want to grow up." Or "I don't know yet." We may think of what is expected of us or what we want to do. Some of us feel inadequate because we don't know or we don't think it's possible, so why try. Some give a religious answer, "Whatever God wants." Which is what we really want, but you can't steer a ship in dry dock. You can't just sit there and hope a Fortune 500 company job drops in your lap - with nothing done on your part. That's unrealistic.

What does our parent want for us? What does society ask of us? What does the universe expect of us? What does the LORD require of us? God wants us to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with Godself.

Life often throws us a curve ball, which is ok if you've practiced with them, but most likely we are taken by surprise. Maybe we can hit it out of the park and maybe it'll be a swing and a miss. But the game goes on.

The bully picks on us. The teacher tosses out a pop quiz. The job is more difficult than we expected. But sometimes the ball connects. God is in His heaven, and all is right in the world. Sometimes we have a good day, things go our way. We cannot control what happens to us. We can control how we react to it. We are called to bring love into those times of difficulty as much as into our times of joy. We often ponder this call, how can I love a bully, how can I show love into what I don't understand?

Maybe that's why the command to love is short on words. Micah tells us we were created to treat others fairly, we are to forgive others as God forgives us, and to walk with God. This is what God expects of us. Sounds simple, but also sounds difficult. How can I? I was treated unfairly, and I want revenge. In fact, I won't sleep until I get even. Till I hurt them back. Till I achieve victory.

Life. How do we get through it? Well, we find we have to work to get ahead, we have to work to keep up. We need to be honest, treat others as we would like to be treated. Serving others, doing for another, makes us feel good. If everybody faced life with the same mantra – wouldn't the world be a better place? We'd all have a Pepsi, and we would live in peace.

Life isn't fair. Stuff happens – unexpected, unfair, uncontrollable. But if we can show the character of God, it would defuse the situation, cause others to step back and rethink, it would go a long way toward showing the love of God. Good character on our part counts toward the common good of all.

What do you want to be when you grow up? How do you want to be remembered? May you leave behind a legacy of love. For having been an instrument of fairness. For having cared for others. May God's peace be within you and may you be an instrument of His peace in our world.

Please pray with me. God of peace, help us to see how You want us to live. Help us to reflect Your love to those with whom we share this world. Give us a heart to treat others fairly, to work for justice for all, to show kindness and love toward others. May we be respectful to You, in all we do and say. **Amen.**