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## **WEEK THREE: WHAT DOES GOD WANT?**

### *Appetizer*

Today we're going to begin our lesson by making some cookies. We don't want to make just any old cookies. We're going to kick it up a notch by making cookies that have something in them for everyone so that we make the **best cookie ever!** As with any good cooking show, we started the process a little early. As you can see, every great cookie needs to start with chocolate-chip cookie mix.

(Teachers: Bring out a big glass bowl filled with chocolate-chip cookie mix and a little milk. The milk will help you stir the mix. Then add the following items. Involve the students in this process by asking them whether they fall into these groups. You can alter the list of ingredients; just add as many crazy things as you can. Stir the mixture after each ingredient is added.)

For people who have a sweet tooth, let's add caramel and M&Ms and whipped cream.

For people who like salty and spicy food, let's add salt, hot sauce, some Cajun spices, and Easy Cheese.

For people who put them on everything, let's add ranch dressing and ketchup.

For people who want to be culturally diverse, let's add sour cream, salsa, and soy sauce.

For people who are health nuts, let's add lettuce, an apple, and a Slim-Fast bar.

For rednecks, let's add some barbecue sauce.

And for people who are just plain weird, let's add guacamole, relish, and cottage cheese.

(Teachers: Once you have added all this stuff, ask the students who wants to actually eat the cookie. If you're really brave, take a bite yourself.)

Of course, this is not the way we make cookies. Who wants to eat a cookie with lettuce in it? It turns out that trying to satisfy all of our desires with one cookie doesn't satisfy us in the end. The same is true in our lives. While not many of us would ever make a cookie like this, a whole lot of us try to live our lives this way. We cram our lives full of our own desires and constantly try to satisfy our own cravings as we do what we want when we want. But if we do this, we shouldn't be surprised when our lives turn out like this cookie batter.

This week in *Snack Pack*, we talked about how we can live life a different way by following what God wants. I think we'll find that His recipe for life is better than anything we could come up with on our own.

### *Main Course*

The Israelites had turned their backs on God. One way they did this was by treating other people wrongly. So God called the prophet Micah to tell the Israelites to live their lives differently, not according to their own cravings but according to God's will. In today's verse, Micah told the people what God wanted them to do.

## Read Micah 6:8

So what does God want? The first thing is that He wants the best from us. We call that **worship**. Worship is what we do when we sing, but even more it's what we do when we live. We all worship something. Whatever is most important to us, whatever our greatest desire or No. 1 priority is, is really our god. For some of us, that may be a sport. For some of us, it may be music. For some of us, it may be ourselves.

God wants us to worship Him. He wants us to walk with Him, act like Him, and love like Him. Micah tells us three ways we can do this. First, we **act justly**. This simply means that we do what's right. Second, we **love mercy**. This means that we live a life filled with grace, forgiveness, and love. Third, we **walk humbly**. This means that we build a relationship with God and recognize that He is God, and we are not. As a result, we will listen to His voice and follow where He leads. As we do these three things, we give God our best and follow His recipe for our lives.

Most of us would say we worship God with our mouths. But can we say we worship Him with the way we live? Maybe this tongue-twister will help us remember that worship is much more about the way we live than about what we say or sing. Say this with me:

*"Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."*

So God wants our worship - He wants the best from us. Most of us are probably used to hearing this. But there's another thing that God wants from us, one that sometimes gets left out. When we give God our best, we open our lives to receive His best. God wants the best **from** us, and He also wants the best **for** us. That's why we should **trust** Him.

God is the author of life. He knows the best way for us to live our lives, and He wants us to get in on His best for our lives. For us to do this, we have to learn to trust His heart. The greatest sin that the Israelites committed in Micah's time was failing to do this. They thought that they had to look out for themselves and their own interests. But God wanted them to trust His way and His heart for them.

We can think about this by looking at a nickel and a dime. You may not have ever thought about it, but it's pretty strange that a dime is worth more than a nickel. The nickel is bigger, it weighs more, and it flips better. If you asked a toddler or someone from a foreign land which coin they wanted, they'd probably pick the nickel, because it's bigger and shinier. But the dime is really worth more.

This picture reminds us that what we see isn't always true. A dime is worth double what a nickel is worth. But too many times in our lives, we choose the nickel over the dime and sell out our lives for less than God's best. We do this by living our lives by what we want and value. But God wants us to live a different way of life, one that doesn't always look bigger or shinier. It's not natural for us to live this way, but in the end it is better.

## *Dessert*

(Teachers: Hold up the cookie mix again.)

This is what our lives usually end up looking like when we try to live our own way. But God wants us to live a different way - the way we find in Micah 6:8, the way of worship and trust. What does God want from you? He wants the best from you - worship - and He wants the best for you - trust. Today, we're going to live out worship and trust by giving you a real cookie. As you eat it, remember what life can be like when you act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

(Teachers: Serve each student a real cookie as you conclude this lesson.)