



WEEK 2 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY SHAWN JOHNSON

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

Moment of honesty, do you watch reality TV? If so, what do you tend to watch and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our new series entitled, "True North."

In leadership lingo, there is a well-known term used when we talk about living with integrity and staying the course. We like to say that we are headed..."True North." Regardless what happens around us, despite what changes we see and differing opinions we hear, the real leader stays the true course. So how do we know if we are headed true north?

America is known as a land of opportunity. We are known as the country with the bravest military in the world, a self-sacrificing people who believe in freedom and just causes around the world. Some of the finest people you will ever meet wear the uniform, have a badge on their chest, standing ready to respond in our fire stations or prepare the lesson in classrooms across this great land.

America has been a beacon of light for so many in the world, a country where people can come regardless of race and be welcomed with great opportunity to work hard, get an education, and contribute as an American citizen. We are a country made up of generations of immigrants who came here for religious freedom and opportunity. Belief in God, personal responsibility, and morality was, for the most part, important to society and reflected in the memoirs of our founding fathers and in the Declaration of Independence. Prayer was commonplace in the halls of Congress, in judicial backrooms and in schools. Some generations lost sight of what was most important, while others championed great and godly causes. Over time, we have seen an eroding of moral values, personal responsibility, and care for our neighbors; at times it feels like we have lost our moral compass.

This week Shawn talked about the Supreme Court. Not the one in Washington, but the real Supreme Court: God himself. Regardless of what is happening around us, there truly is a God who sees, knows, and has the supreme power to intervene. God is the ultimate judge and very

much in complete control. We have so much happening in this country right now such as the presidential election, the recent Iran deal, tense foreign policy decisions, planned parenthood selling baby parts, racial violence, shootings, cop killings, mistrust of the government, legalized marijuana, new gay marriage laws, mass shootings and increasing healthcare costs. If that weren't enough, the average family also has to worry about their kid's safety from predators, what is being taught in schools, and trying to afford that next pair of shoes for their growing kids in a difficult economy. Sometimes it feels like too much and we wonder what to do as a Christ follower. Is the problem the world out there or do we, God's people, need to take ownership as well?

In Micah, God's people were in a similar situation when God intervened and spoke directly to his people. As we read the story, it unfolds like a court drama, where God calls out his people in front of all of creation. It was not easy for the people of God to hear the indictment, but they needed to hear it.

Let's read Micah 6:1-5

Why do you think God began with asking the people to 'arise, plead your case' before all of creation?

God reminds his people of how he has done miracles in their lives. Why is it so important to remember the great works God has done in our lives?

Are you a glass-half-full or half-empty kind of person? In other words, do you tend to remember God's faithfulness or are you prone to think about all that is going wrong around you?

GROW

In Micah 6, God brings up three specific instances where the entire nation was in serious trouble. First, the Lord brings up the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt, when God sent Moses and then plagues on Egypt until Pharaoh changed the law and let God's people go free. Even with the law changed, this leader decided to pursue and kill the Israelites, but God performed a miracle and crushed the army by closing up the Red Sea around them. The people didn't need better policy; they needed a miracle.

Next, God has his people remember Balak, the king of Moab, who wanted to destroy the Israelites. But God got involved and saved his people. Then finally, God brings up the time the entire Israelite people were completely stuck at the bank of the Jordan River. They couldn't cross to the Promised Land because the river was in the flood stage, but God miraculously dammed the river up stream and delivered his people when it seemed there was no hope.

Listen to what God told Joshua before he led them into the Promised Land.

Read Joshua 1:9

According to this verse, why should we not fear or be discouraged?

Why are God's people continually commanded to 'not be afraid'?

Do you feel that trying to follow Christ is discouraging in today's culture?

MOVE

Let's get to the conclusion of this court drama we find in Micah. God interrogates his people and reminds them of his faithfulness to them because he is the good shepherd. His people remember these specific instances and then respond.

Read Micah 6:6-8

According to *The New American Commentary: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*:

This verse stands as the motto of the alcove of religion in the reading room of the Congressional Library in Washington." Politicians have quoted it often in their election campaigns (if only more would practice it!). Numerous accolades have been showered on it. For example, von Rad says, "This is the quintessence of the commandments as the prophets understood them."¹⁷ J. M. P. Smith calls it "the finest summary of the content of practical religion to be found in the OT." And Boadt observes, "The rabbis who commented on this verse in the early centuries of the Christian era called it a one-line summary of the whole Law.

Why is this verse so crucial for the people of God to remember in today's society?

We are called by God to love in three primary ways in response to God's redemptive acts in our lives: Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly. Given all we have talked about today, which one of these do you feel that you most need to start doing?

What is one change you can make this week to begin to honor what God has asked us to do in Micah 6:8?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the struggles that people might be facing today. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Micah 6:8

He 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.