No Tolerance for Corrupt Officials
Micah 3:5-12
SS Lesson for 07/12/2015

Devotional Scripture: Matt 7:15-23

OUTLINE

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON
Key Verse: Micah 3:8
Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
  From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

CORRUPTION OF FALSE PROPHETS (MICAH 3:5-7)
  Leading people astray (5)
    Astray by wicked men (Deut 13:12-15)
    Astray by false prophets (Mark 13:22)
    Astray by those within the congregational church (Acts 20:30)
    Astray by the lustful desires of sinful human nature (2 Peter 2:18-19)
  No spiritual insight (6)
    No spiritual insight because of not having the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14)
    No spiritual insight because of not being able to spiritually hear (John 8:43)
    No spiritual insight because of not being one of God's sheep (John 10:26-27)
    No spiritual insight because of being blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4)
  No word from God (7)
    No word from God because of not being able to bear it (John 16:12)
    No word from God because of sin in life (1 Pet 2:1-2)
    No word from God because of tradition and nullifying God's word (Matt 15:5-6)

JUDGMENT OF FALSE PROPHETS (MICAH 3:8-12)
  Judgment using the power of God (8)
    Using God's power because only God can judge (Ps 75:7)
    Using God's power because God's judges are righteous (Ps 96:13)
    Using God's power because the spiritual are not subject to man's judgment (1 Cor 2:15)
    Using God's power because God exposes motives (1 Cor 4:5)
  Judgment for perversion of justice (9)
    Perversion of justice by withholding justice from aliens, fatherless and widows (Deut 27:19)
    Perversion of justice by not judging uprightly (Ps 58:1-2)
    Perversion of justice by not pleading or defending the case of the poor (Jer 5:28)
  Judgment for bribery (10-11)
    Judgment for bribery because of acquitting the guilty (Isa 5:22-23)
    Judgment for bribery without the fear of God (2 Chron 19:7)
    Judgment for bribery in secret (Prov 17:23)
  Judgment for ruining people and their cities (12)
    Ruining through being complacent (Zeph 1:12-13)
    Ruining through killing those who God has sent (Luke 13:34-35)
    Ruining through sin throughout the country (Jer 17:3)
    Ruining through not listening to God (Jer 35:17)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM DAVID GUZIK
  CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
  PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR
Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines how there should be No Tolerance for Corrupt Officials. The study's aim is to show that avoiding false messages from false prophets is essential to a righteous and fruitful walk with the Lord. The study's application is to demonstrate how we can prepare ourselves to avoid the false messages and obey the true ones of our day.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Micah 3:8

But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Judgment on the False Prophets (3:5-8)

Rather than serving as shepherds of the nation, caring for them, and leading them properly, the false prophets were leading the people astray. These leaders were giving the people false hope by telling them they would not be punished by God, that there would be no calamity. If someone paid the false shepherds well (if one feeds them) they would pronounce peace on him. In other words they told a person what he wanted to hear for a price (cf. v. 11). On the other hand if one did not feed them (i.e., pay the prophets their price) they were ready to oppose him (to wage war against him). The prophets were concerned with their own welfare rather than the nation’s welfare. Materialism was their master (cf. v. 11). Because the false prophets were not leading the people correctly and were taking advantage of them materially, these leaders would be shamed and humiliated. Night would come over them, the sun would set for those prophets, and darkness would come even in the daytime. Nightfall pictures impending doom. When that devastation would come, the prophets would have no visions or divination. They had been counseling the people to go on living as they had been, thinking that God surely would not judge His own nation. But suddenly judgment would come. And when it did, the people would ask the prophets why it came, and they would be unable to explain it. The seers (which corresponds in Heb. to “visions” in v. 6) would be totally ashamed (cf. Zech. 13:4). And the diviners (which corresponds in Heb. to “divination” in Micah 3:6; on the Heb. word qāsam, “to divine,” see Deut. 18:10) would be disgraced (cf. Micah 2:6). The prophets would cover their faces in humiliation, realizing they had no answer from God (cf. 3:4). The people would then see that the prophets were not true prophets after all. Because God would hide His face (v. 4) the false shepherds would “cover their faces”! Micah warned the people and leaders about impending judgment so that they would see the folly of their ways and turn back to God. This true prophet warned them of the coming doom in hope that they would change their ways. In contrast with the leaders (vv. 1-4) and false prophets (vv. 5-7), who had not been speaking God’s message, Micah, filled with God’s power, spoke with the authority of the Spirit of the Lord in denouncing the people’s sins and predicting judgment. Micah’s words, he said, were with justice because God is just in carrying out His judgment against the covenant people. And Micah’s words had might because God is totally capable of carrying out His sentence against His people. The leaders, however, dealt unjustly (cf. vv. 9-10) and their prophets had no spiritual strength. Micah declared the transgression and the sin (cf. 1:5; 6:7; 7:18) of the nation (on Jacob and Israel as synonyms; cf. 3:1, 9, for the entire nation). Micah could see from God’s perspective what was going on in the nation. Because she was not living according to God’s covenant standards, He had to punish her.

Judgment on All the Naive Leaders (3:9-12)

Because Micah was filled with the Spirit of the Lord (v. 8), he boldly confronted the leaders about their sins and the eventual outcome. He first called on the leaders and rulers (cf. v. 1) to listen to him (hear this). Micah did not say if the leaders listened or responded to him, but apparently they did not, for no major change is recorded about them. Micah then described what their leadership was like (vv. 9b-11).
They despised (tā‘āb, a strong word meaning “to abhor or regard as an abomination”) justice (cf. vv. 1-3) and distorted (āqāṣ, “twisted”) all that is right (lit., “all that is straight”). Of course a ruler over God’s people was supposed to be just and equitable, like God Himself. A leader was to desire righteous behavior in his own life and in the lives of his people. Instead of this, these rulers deliberately perverted uprightness. They even encouraged and took part in bloodshed and wickedness in the city of Jerusalem, where justice and righteousness should have reigned. Zion and Jerusalem are used together in Micah as synonyms four times (3:10; 12; 4:2; 8). Micah noted that the leaders...priests, and prophets were always out for money (cf. 7:3) and yet had the audacity to say that God was still with them and that therefore the nation would not face destruction (cf. 2:6). (Tell fortunes translates, qāsam, “to divine”; cf. 3:6-7 and Deut. 18:10.) To be influenced by bribery violated God’s command in Deuteronomy 16:19. Destruction would come on the nation because of you, that is, the leaders. This does not suggest that the people were guiltless, and that only the leaders were sinning. Probably the leaders were leading the people into wicked behavior and therefore the whole nation was guilty before God. Zion (Jerusalem; cf. 3:10; 4:2, 8) would be plowed like a field, turned over, and overthrown. It would be in ruins (a heap of rubble; cf. 1:6). Even the temple hill would be overgrown with thicket (weeds).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Toward the end of his outstanding baseball career, Babe Ruth began to entertain the idea of managing a team. One possibility was the New York Yankees, for whom he had played many great seasons. But Ruth had a reputation for wild and undisciplined behavior off the field. So when he approached Yankees’ owner Jacob Ruppert about the manager’s job, he was asked, “You can’t manage yourself, [Ruth]. How do you expect to manage others?” Such a problem among those who would be leaders is nothing new. The leaders of God’s people in Micah’s day had shown no self-discipline in shaping their lives after God’s holy standards. These frauds even dared to use the Lord’s name to support their agendas, claiming that any threat of disaster or judgment should not be taken seriously. This problem could not go unfronted. Leadership is an important topic and receives significant attention in many churches today, as it should. While the New Testament is our primary guide in training and setting standards for church leaders, Old Testament prophets like Micah also have much wisdom to offer concerning leadership.

Micah 3 begins with a verbal “grabbing by the lapel” to get the attention of the leaders of God’s people. The prophet describes them as those “who hate good and love evil” (Micah 3:2), a direct contrast with another prophet’s command to “hate evil, love good” (Amos 5:15). Micah didn’t stop there. He took his critique a step further, characterizing the leaders as vicious cannibals “who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; who eat my people’s flesh” (Micah 3:2, 3). So savage were these individuals in their callous treatment of others that only a metaphor as gruesome as cannibalism would do. Lest we become put off by such language or view it as limited to the world of the Old Testament, consider Paul’s warning in Galatians 5:15: “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” This warning was not addressed to church leaders only but to everyone in the churches in Galatia. Only God himself knows how many churches have been damaged, in some cases irreparably, by such cannibalism.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Corruption of False Prophets (Micah 3:5-7)

5 Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets Who make my people stray; Who chant "Peace" While they chew with their teeth, But who prepare war against him Who puts nothing into their mouths:
6 "Therefore you shall have night without vision, And you shall have darkness without divination; The sun shall go down on the prophets, And the day shall be dark for them.
7 So the seers shall be ashamed, And the diviners abashed; Indeed they shall all cover their lips; For there is no answer from God."

Leading people astray (5)

Astray by wicked men (Deut 13:12-15)
12 If you hear it said about one of the towns the Lord your God is giving you to live in 13 that wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods you have not known), 14 then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, 15 you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.

Astray by false prophets (Mark 13:22)
22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect — if that were possible.

Astray by those within the congregational church (Acts 20:30)
30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

Astray by the lustful desires of sinful human nature (2 Peter 2:18-19)
18 For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity — for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

No spiritual insight (6)

No spiritual insight because of not having the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14)
14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

No spiritual insight because of not being able to spiritually hear (John 8:43)
43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

No spiritual insight because of not being one of God's sheep (John 10:26-27)
26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

No spiritual insight because of being blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4)
4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

No word from God (7)

No word from God because of not being able to bear it (John 16:12)
12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.
No word from God because of sin in life (1 Pet 2:1-2)

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

No word from God because of tradition and nullifying God's word (Matt 15:5-6)

5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' 6 he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Judgment of False Prophets (Micah 3:8-12)

8 But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin.
9 Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity,
10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity:
11 Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest

Judgment using the power of God (8)

Using God's power because only God can judge (Ps 75:7)

7 But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.

Using God's power because God's judges are righteous (Ps 96:13)

13 they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.

Using God's power because the spiritual are not subject to man's judgment (1 Cor 2:15)

15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

Using God's power because God exposes motives (1 Cor 4:5)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Judgment for perversion of justice (9)

Perversion of justice by withholding justice from aliens, fatherless and widows (Deut 27:19)

19 "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Perversion of justice by not judging uprightly (Ps 58:1-2)

1 Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge uprightly among men? 2 No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth.
Perversion of justice by not pleading or defending the case of the poor (Jer 5:28)

28 Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor.

Judgment for bribery (10-11)

Judgment for bribery because of acquitting the guilty (Isa 5:22-23)

22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.

Judgment for bribery without the fear of God (2 Chron 19:7)

7 Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.

Judgment for bribery in secret (Prov 17:23)

23 A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice.

Judgment for ruining people and their cities (12)

Ruin through being complacent (Zeph 1:12-13)

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.' 13 Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. They will build houses but not live in them; they will plant vineyards but not drink the wine.

Ruin through killing those who God has sent (Luke 13:34-35)

34 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Ruin through sin throughout the country (Jer 17:3)

3 My mountain in the land and your wealth and all your treasures I will give away as plunder, together with your high places, because of sin throughout your country.

Ruin through not listening to God (Jer 35:17)

17 "Therefore, this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from David Guzik

A. God against the princes of His people.

1. (1-3) The violence of leaders against Gods people.

And I said: Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.
a. **Hear now, O heads of Jacob**: Previously, Micah addressed his comments to Gods people in general. Now he specifically speaks to their leaders, because they have both a special responsibility and accountability before God.

b. **You who hate good and love evil**: If this description isn’t bad enough, Micah goes on to illustrate how terribly the leaders of Israel and Judah use the people - as if they were cannibals feasting on the people of God.

i. Since the grinding poverty of the poor was leading them into an early grave, the prophet, in a sustained metaphor, depicts the magistrates responsible for creating these conditions as acting like cannibals. This grotesque figure aims to awaken the conscience of the reprobates. (Waltke)

ii. This reminds us the people never exist for the sake of the leaders, but leaders are there for the sake of the people. A leader should never serve Gods people dominated by the question, What is in it for me? When they do, they are like the cannibalistic leaders described by Micah.

2. (4) Gods judgment of silence against corrupt leaders.

Then they will cry to the LORD, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds.

a. **Then they will cry to the LORD, but He will not hear them**: This is one example of Gods judgment against the corrupt leaders. When they cry out for Gods help, He will remain silent.

b. **He will even hide His face from them at that time**: One aspect of the blessing pronounced by the priests of Israel was asked the LORD to make His face shine upon you (Numbers 6:25). Here, Micah promises the opposite of this blessing - that God would even hide His face from them at that time.

B. **God against the false prophets to His people**.

1. (5-7) The sin and promised judgment of false prophets.

Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant Peace while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths: Therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God.

a. **The prophets who make my people stray**: Micah returns to a previous theme first mentioned in Micah 2:11 - the false prophets who bring hollow comfort and pretend peace to Gods people.

b. **The sun shall go down on the prophets**: Through Micah, God announces that He will bring the false prophets into complete confusion and disrepute. They will have no answer from God and therefore they shall be ashamed.

2. (8) Micahs confidence as a true prophet of God.

But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

a. **I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD**: In contrast to the coming shame of the false prophets, Micah has a justified confidence in the LORD who called Him as a prophet. Because he knows God and is close to God and His word, Micah knows that he is full of power by the Spirit of the LORD.

i. Micah also knew that the power came by the Spirit of the LORD, not by anything in Micah. The power also came from justice and might, because Micah knew he was on the side of God's word and Gods strength.
ii. We must have the Holy Spirit, and if we have him not, all our machinery will stand still; or if it goes on, it will produce no effect whatever. I heard of a Christian man whose mill-wheel was noticed to be in motion on a certain Sunday. The people going to worship greatly wondered at; but one who went by set their minds at rest by pointing out that the wheel was only turning idly round, because the water, by accident, was allowed to flow over it. But the man said, It is very like our minister and his sermons. There is no work being done, but the wheel goes round, clickety click, clickety click, though it is not grinding anything. Therein it also greatly resembles many an organization for spiritual service: the water is passing over it, glittering as it flows; but the outside motion does not join on to any human need, nor produce any practical result, and nothing comes of the click and hum. (Spurgeon)

b. To declare to Jacob his transgression: Like most prophets in the Old Testament, Micah's job was to expose the sin of God's people.

i. We might say that under the New Covenant, prophets have a somewhat different calling. Under the Old Covenant, the law was not written on the heart of the believer and the Holy Spirit did not indwell each believer in the same way as under the New Covenant.

ii. Therefore, there was a greater need for the convicting work of the Spirit of God coming from the outside, from prophets such as Micah. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul described the ministry of the prophet like this: But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men (1 Corinthians 14:3). This certainly doesn't mean that under the New Covenant prophecy will never be used to expose sin, but it certainly isn't its central purpose.

3. (9-12) Unrepentant Jerusalem will share Samaria's fate of destruction.

Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us. Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.

a. Now hear this . . . who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: In this chapter, Micah first spoke to the judges, then to the prophets - now he speaks to the princes, you heads of the house of Jacob. The rulers of Jerusalem were not much better than the rulers of Israel, and could expect similar judgment unless they repented.

b. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us: The leaders of Jerusalem had a false confidence in religious ritual and form. All the while, judgment was appointed for Jerusalem unless they repented.

i. The great thing about the Prophet Micah was that he was listened to. Hosea was ignored, and so was Amos. They threw Jeremiah in jail for his prophetic message of coming judgment. In contrast, King Hezekiah and the leadership of Judah listened to the Prophet Micah.

ii. Jeremiah 26:17-19 describes how even a hundred years later the impact of Micah was remembered: Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.

iii. He was heard in the days of Hezekiah. A revival followed. Then, one hundred years later, his words were still remembered, and the memory of what happened earlier was used of God to spare the life of Jeremiah. (Boice)

(Adapted from URL: http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/view.cgi?bk=32&ch=3)
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Micah’s words about corrupt, deficient leadership can bring to mind troubling applications to today’s society. We see evidence of corruption almost daily on every level—locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally—and in many areas (church, school, and workplace, etc.). How can we as followers of Jesus make a difference? Where do we start? Three suggestions can be offered. First, pray. Paul’s instructions to Timothy is the model: “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). Paul wrote in a time of corruption among government officials. These included the evil Roman emperor Nero, who was likely in power when Paul wrote his letter to Timothy. Even so, Paul encouraged prayer for all in authority that we as Christians may be able to fulfill our God-appointed ministry of living lives pleasing to him. Such lives can witness to others of God’s grace and generate questions from those who want to know more about “the reason for the hope that [we] have” (1 Peter 3:15). Second, work with them. It is all too easy to criticize leaders instead of finding creative, constructive ways to build relationships and work with them without compromising Christian principles. Read Daniel 1 and observe how that man and his friends determined a way, without becoming belligerent or obnoxious in the process of doing so, to avoid the king’s decree about what food to eat, (Daniel 1:8-16). There is indeed a time to confront leaders who are in the wrong (Daniel 3:16-18; Acts 4:19; 5:29). Knowing when to cooperate and when to confront requires discernment. Third, become one of them. Serving in positions of leadership on a local, state, or national level is not the calling for everyone. But it can be a ministry that some are equipped to carry out to God’s glory. Those who see themselves as called to this arena should consider prayerfully what God is leading them to do. Daniel was in a position of very high authority while on foreign soil in Babylon, and yet he maintained a record of unquestioned integrity during his service (Daniel 6:4). Who will “dare to be a Daniel” today?

Consider how the above three suggestions also apply within the church. First, pray. If Paul realized the need to request prayers on his behalf, how much more do church leaders in the twenty-first century need prayers as well! They are often faced with very challenging situations. Do you pray regularly for them in that regard? What about those who lead various church-related ministries, such as Bible colleges and Christian service camps? Second, work with them. It is easy to stay on the sidelines and complain about mistakes or oversights by church leaders. Perhaps we can volunteer our services in a particular area of church life where help is needed (see Hebrews 13:17). Third, become one of them. Paul tells Timothy, “Whoever aspires to be an overseer [elder] desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1). Do you have the desire or passion to pursue leadership of the Lord’s people? It is indeed a high calling to pursue—challenging but eternally rewarding.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. One whose teaching is designed to please hearers is unworthy of our regard (Mic. 3:5)
2. People who focus on ingratiating themselves with others will never please God (vs. 6)
3. We must be careful about whom we listen to, for false hope is deadly (vs. 7)
4. True biblical teaching is marked by the power and willingness to identify sin (vs. 8)
5. The desire for personal gain inevitably leads to abusing others (vss. 9-10)
6. Mere words of faith cannot deliver us from divine judgment (vss. 11-12)