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Preview Response

THERE'S NOTHING PASSIVE ABOUT BIBLICAL SHALOM

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Theological Reflections on Flourishing.

Thank you to the authors for this brilliantly clear analysis of a Christian approach to human flourishing, which is surely the most fundamental question underlying everything we aspire to do in life, both personally and politically. There is little to disagree with in the analysis – that flourishing involves the combination of moral agency, circumstantial well-being and affective contentment – and I look forward to the fuller explanation of each component in due course. Just two observations came quickly to mind, for what they are worth.

The first relates to the tripartite formulae in Romans 14:17. I too have often used this verse to capture the distinctive features of God's redemptive concerns in the world ("the kingdom of God is…") in terms of justice (or righteousness), peace and spiritual fulfilment. I sometimes wonder whether Paul had in mind the famous verse from Micah 6:8 ("He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God"), or perhaps Jesus' saying recorded in Matt 23: ("For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith"), strikingly similar tripartite formulae could equally serve as summaries of the key ingredients of flourishing.

The other observation is a slight query around the use of the word "passive" to describe the circumstantial dimension of flourishing and linking that notion to the word "peace" in Rom 14:17. There is nothing passive about biblical shalom. Indeed, in Rom 14, having mentioned righteousness, peace and joy, Paul goes on to conclude, "so then let us *pursue what makes for peace* and for mutual upbuilding" – which sounds rather "agential"! This perhaps sounds like hair splitting, and does nothing to detract from the excellent framework the authors propose, but I offer it as a small contribution.

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