

Love, Tough Love and Endless Love

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Bible-First Lifestyle reading: Hosea 1-14; 1 Cor. 1-8; Song of Solomon 6-8; Ps. 95-98

Background of Israel, Judah and Hosea

930BC - Nation of Israel divided under King Rehoboam into two Kingdoms

722BC - Northern Kingdom, Israel (made up of ten tribes minus Judah and Benjamin), is conquered and exiled by the Assyrians.

586BC - Southern Kingdom, Judah (made up of Judah and Benjamin), is conquered and exiled by the Babylonians.

Whole State of Israel reformed in 1948

Baal – Canaanite fertility god of agriculture, beasts and mankind

Among forms of worship included sexual practices, ritual prostitution and even child sacrifice.

High Places and Asherahs – Literally places of high elevation designated for Baal worship.

Asherah poles installed as the object of idolatrous worship.

Hosea – Followed Amos as the prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

He prophesied the word of the Lord for over 37 years to no avail.

He is instructed by God to take a prostitute wife to demonstrate God's love for Israel.

1. Love: God loves us even though **He knows** we will be **unfaithful**.

Love is: "An unconditional commitment to an imperfect person"

"Go, take to yourself and adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord....Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them..." Hos. 1:2, 7

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8

Take away: You cannot do anything to make God stop loving you because there is nothing you did to make Him start loving you!

2. Tough Love: God will **discipline us** because He loves us

"She said, I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink." Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them." Hos. 2:5-7

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.”
Heb. 12:5-6 (Prov. 3:11-12)

Take away: A father only disciplines those who belong to Him. Thank God for the trials you face as discipline from your loving Father.

3. **Endless Love:** God will **restore us** because He is gracious and merciful

“The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord love the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisincakes...So I bought her...and told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.” Hos. 3:1-3

Mercy: Not receiving the **punishment** that we deserve

Grace: Receiving **reward** that we do not deserve

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
1 Jn. 1:8-9

Take away: Take God’s commitment to you seriously! Repent early and often. Don’t let shame isolate you from God’s loving restoration.

Prayer: Father, I know You love me, no matter what I’ve done. Because of Your great love, You desire intimacy with me and will discipline me when I wander into sin. Today I choose to return to You with my whole heart. I want to enjoy the power of Your mercy and grace and my relationship with You fully restored. Thank you, Lord, for your tough, endless love. Amen