

Faithful Love

Rich Nathan
May 14 & 15, 2016
The Father Loves You
Hosea 1-3

Picture of Beyonce

Beyonce recently released her newest album called “Lemonade” in which she very vulnerably and transparently sings about the emotions a woman goes through when they discover they have been cheated on. It’s widely speculated that these songs were from her own experience of infidelity of her husband, Jay-Z. Through her songs, Beyonce sings about the grief and loneliness she experienced; her feelings of abandonment and betrayal; her transition into anger and defiance; her demand for change and repentance.

The album was released to huge critical acclaim. Almost every well-known pop and rock star has sung about their experience of the sting of being cheated on – from Rihanna to Alanis Morissette to Carrie Underwood.

Of course, infidelity and cheating are a staple of country music songs going back to Hank Williams.

Picture of Hank Williams

He sang the classic “Your Cheatin’ Heart”

Your Cheatin’ Heart will make you weep.
You’ll cry and cry and try to sleep.

To Shania Twain

Picture of Shania Twain

Who back in the 90’s sang “Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under? And Whose Heart did you Steal I Wonder?”

To more recently, LeAnn Rimes who did a cover of Barbara Mandrell’s country hit “If Loving You is Wrong I don’t Want to be Right”

Picture of LeAnn Rimes

There are so many songs about unfaithfulness in marriage that sites like BuzzFeed don't make a list of songs about faithful spouses. If you Google "Songs about faithfulness" almost every one of them is a Christian song.

Here is something I discovered the other day. You search for "Movies about faithful spouse", here's what Google replies to your search request:

Google Screen Shot

It's so unusual apparently to have a movie about a faithful spouse that Google assumes that you must have typed wrong. Surely you mean movies about unfaithful spouses.

Cheating, affairs, infidelity, unfaithfulness – call it what you will – it's so common in our culture that when you go on line and search for illustrations of faithfulness or faithful friends, you know what almost every entry is about? Dogs.

Picture of the "dumb dog"

It's fascinating to me that almost all of our songs and movies and TV shows are about cheating, when if you ask people, "What is the deepest desire of your heart?" The answer often is "to find someone who we could finally totally trust. Someone who we don't have to defend ourselves against or be involved in a lot of self-protective behavior." The deepest desire of the human heart is to find someone who will stand by us no matter what we do or what life brings our way.

I want to speak about finding such a person today. A person who the Bible calls, "the Lord". I've been doing a series for the last couple of months on God the Father's love and today's message is simply titled, "Faithful Love".

Let's pray.

Hosea 1:1-11

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord." 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them— not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the Lord their God, will save them.”

8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the Lord said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

10 “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Let me give a little bit of background to the text that we’re reading today. We read in verse 1

Hosea 1:1

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

Hosea was a preacher and prophet during the reign of four successive kings of Judah, the southernmost part of the Jewish states, and during the reign of Jeroboam, who was one of the kings of the northern states. So, apparently Hosea’s ministry must have lasted about 50 years. This is a man who was faithful to his ministry over many, many years. And he was faithful to his marital vows. Hosea is a picture of faithfulness hanging in there despite the most difficult of circumstance in ministry and in marriage. We’re not told a great deal about Hosea’s life other than the poignant story recorded in the first three chapters of the book of Hosea which we look at in a moment.

What I think we find in the first three chapters is the story of

Surprising love

Setting the context for Hosea’s prophecy, it’s helpful to know that Hosea lived in the 8th century B.C. and he prophesied about the same time as did two other Old Testament

prophets: Isaiah, who prophesied to Judah in the south; and Amos who prophesied to Israel in the north. In the time that these three prophets were prophesying was a time of great prosperity for the Jewish states. It was a time of growing wealth. People were outdoing each other – building bigger and bigger houses. It was a time of national security. Israel and Judah were experiencing a period of peace. It was a time of lots of religious show. But it was also a time of great economic inequality. The rich were getting richer; the poor were getting poorer. It was a time of great corruption in leadership. And it was a time where even though there was a show of religion, people’s devotion to God was really shallow. In short, Hosea was prophesying in a time very much like our own.

Let me pause and ask you a question. Is it possible to be materially successful and yet spiritually empty?

Surprising emptiness

Is it possible to have a great education, to have a great a job, to have a great place to live, to have a great car, and even perhaps a great family? To have everything everyone says should make you happy, and yet still feel unhappy? Is it possible to have everything and yet still feel like something is missing?

The fact is there are millions of people in America right now who are living out the truth of Stephen Covey’s words in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Book cover of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Covey said,

“You can climb the ladder of success only to discover that it’s leaning against the wrong wall.”

Have any of you ever done that? Do you know anyone who has climbed the ladder of success only to discover that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall? Have any of you ever chased after something or someone really hard, maybe even prayed to get something or to be with someone? Then after you got it, you say to yourself, “Now that I have it, or have him or her, I’m still not happy.”

2,000 years before Stephen Covey, Jesus of Nazareth said,

Mark 8:36

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

That was the situation in Hosea's day. Many people in Israel had gained the whole world and they lost their souls in the process. They were going through religious motions. Showing up in the temple, sitting there while the priest did whatever the priest did, but their hearts weren't into it. It was just a show of religion. Materially successful, but spiritually empty inside.

Now Hosea wasn't just given a message to speak to the people. Hosea was called to be the message.

Surprising calling

It appears from the first three chapters of the book of Hosea that God came to the prophet Hosea and called him to a very difficult thing. God said, "Hosea, I want you to marry a woman who is going to prove to be unfaithful to you, but to whom you are still to remain faithful. You aren't to divorce her. I'm going to ask you to do something that without my strength would be humanly impossible. I'm going to ask you to be faithful to an unfaithful spouse. You're going to love this woman, but she's going to betray your love. I'm asking you to do that so that you can enact before the people of Israel a drama. Your marriage is going to be symbolic. It's going to be an object lesson. It's going to be an enacted drama of My relationship with My people Israel. Hosea, you're to play the part of God in this drama. Your unfaithful wife is playing the part of Israel. The reason I'm asking you to do this is to show the people of Israel that despite my spiritual marriage to them, my people are regularly committing spiritual adultery against me."

"Hosea, don't just preach a message. Be the message."

You might say, "What an unusual calling. Marry someone who will prove to be unfaithful." God says, "I'm commanding you, Hosea, to remain faithful." What an unusual and difficult calling – to show this unfaithful world God's faithfulness in spite of everything. Don't just preach a message, be the message.

Do you know that every one of us is called by God to be an object lesson of some attribute or other, some aspect of God? Every one of us is called to reflect something of God's character to other people and to the rest of creation? All of us – whether we have a personal relationship with Christ that's making a real difference in our lives or not, whether we obey God or totally disobey God – all of us are called by God to be object lessons to the rest of creation. The only question that is answered by our life choices is "what will we be an object lesson of?"

Every human being shows something of God. Every person you will ever meet is an object lesson. The Apostle Paul says that even hard-hearted, disobedient Pharaoh, who

made life miserable for the Jewish people by enslaving them and killed Jewish baby boys, even he was an object lesson.

Romans 9:17

For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Pharaoh was raised up to show God’s power in judgment. What happens when a persona continually resists the Lord?

Paul writes about himself that he was personally an object lesson.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

The Apostle Paul, after persecuting the church and blaspheming the name of Christ, was forgiven by God. Paul was an object lesson of the grace and patience of God toward sinners. Paul was saying, “If I could be forgiven for what I did, then anyone can be forgiven. I am Exhibit A that there is forgiveness and grace available for anyone, no matter what they’ve done. Anyone who has turned to Christ and asked for forgiveness will be forgiven.”

Everyone is an object lesson. I think of the relatives of the nine murdered worshippers at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. You recall the story. A small group of African American worshippers welcomed into their midst a white man named Dylann Roof to join them for an evening Bible study at the church. They loved on him. They welcomed him. They shared scripture with him. After an hour, Dylann Roof stood up and murdered nine of the Bible study participants in cold blood.

What did their families do in response? They stood up in court, one-by-one, stood in front of Dylann Roof, a white supremacist murderer, and publicly forgave him. Some of them could hardly speak because they were so overcome with emotion, pain and grief. They were object lessons announcing to the whole world that they serve a God who forgives, a God who seeks for peace, a God who shows grace. They were telling the world, “This is what it looks like to follow Jesus Christ”.

Let me ask you a question. What are you an object lesson of? What is your life teaching the world about God? We’re all walking billboards that other people can read. What is the billboard that you’re carrying around? Is the lesson of your life the painful consequences of repeatedly disobeying God? Is that what you teach the world? Is the

lesson of your life instead God can heal anyone? God can restore anyone. If God could heal and restore me, he can heal and restore anyone is the lesson of his life. God heals. God restores.

What are you an object lesson of? What are you announcing to the world by your life choices? What word or tagline would you put next to your name?

My name is _____. I am Exhibit A of ... what?

You know, parenthetically, some of us are called to exactly reenact the same kind of object lesson that Hosea was called to. My dear friend, Craig Keener, who was one of the world's foremost New Testament scholars just wrote an incredible book titled *Impossible Love*

Impossible Love book cover

If you're looking for one book to read for summer reading on vacation, *Impossible Love* contains the most incredible personal stories I think I've ever read. In it, Craig tells in a very vulnerable and transparent way the story of his last semester in seminary.

He relates that his wife began to talk about turning away from God. She was tired of being a Christian. Very quickly, her entire behavior changed. It really disturbed Craig, he was praying and he felt like the Lord said, "Your wife is being unfaithful." Initially, he took that to mean that his wife was being unfaithful to God. But then his wife and her best friend's husband disappeared one weekend and he realized the awful truth. Upon returning a few days later, his wife announced that she was going to leave him and marry her best friend's husband.

Not only did his wife destroy their marriage, but his wife destroyed Craig's ministry because Craig was part of a denomination that if you got divorced for any reason, you couldn't be ordained. So the things that mattered most to Craig – his marriage and his ministry – were just completely blown up by his wife's sinful choices. He felt that the Lord said, "I want you to be Hosea. Keep loving her." To not initiate a divorce action against her. God said to Craig,

"Your wife has not done anything to you – as Hosea's wife did not do anything to him – that my people have not done to me. Day and night I call them in my love. Day and night, most of them are wrapped up in things that they love more than me."

As it turns out, Craig's marriage was not saved. His wife initiated a divorce action against him several years later. He did not lose his ministry. He gained a world-wide ministry by becoming not a pastor but one of the foremost New Testament scholars of

our generation. I won't spoil the book, but God provided for Craig with another incredible love.

Friends, might there be someone listening to me right now, even as I'm speaking, who God might be saying, "I'm asking you to be Hosea. I'm asking you to be an object lesson to the world of my faithfulness. To stay faithful even with another person who has been unfaithful."?

Well, Hosea's wife did what God told Hosea she would do – she became unfaithful to Hosea. This adulterous wife was acting like the spiritually adulterous people of Israel. Here's what we read in chapter 2.

Hosea 2:5

Their mother [Israel] has been unfaithful
and has conceived them in disgrace.
She said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my food and my water,
my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.'

Hosea 2:8

She has not acknowledged that I was the one
who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil,
who lavished on her the silver and gold—
which they used for Baal.

It must have been a terrible shock to Hosea to come home and discover that his wife was gone, leaving three little ones at home, hungry and afraid.

Again, the story of Hosea is an enacted drama – Hosea's wife plays the part of Israel and Hosea plays the part of God.

Hosea's grief and pain in discovering his wife's infidelity speaks to us about the grief and pain of God, who grieves over the faithlessness, the infidelity of his people.

Grieving Love

The philosophers in Greece could not conceive of a God who would grieve. According to the Greek philosophers, God is devoid of any feelings at all. The Greeks had a word for God, "Apatheia"

Apatheia = Without Feeling

It's where we get the word apathy. The god of Greek philosophers is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ weeps. He grieves. He yearns to have his people return to him. He longs for his people and when his people betray his love, God's heart is broken.

I would say to any of you who have ever been betrayed by the disloyalty of a friend. If any one of you has ever been stabbed in the back by someone you trusted – a family member or a boyfriend or a girlfriend – and certainly if the betrayal involves your spouse – it is natural to go through various emotions associated with the stages of grief. We grieve when we've lost something. When you experience infidelity, you've lost the exclusivity of the relationship. You've lost this other person's affection. You've lost the specialness, the unique place you were supposed to enjoy. Your trust has been trampled on. It is natural to grieve.

And if you've ever talked with someone who discovers their spouse in an affair, you will see so many of the same emotions that people have when a loved one suddenly dies. There's shock. There's a feeling of "I can't believe this is happening to me. I feel like I'm walking through a fog."

Often there's guilt. Could I have done anything to prevent this from happening? It's good to do some self-examination. What did I do to lead to the break down of this relationship without assuming responsibility for someone else's sin. There's shock. There's guilt. There's often anger. There should be anger.

When a marriage is violated. When vows are broken, there's loneliness. I thought we were a couple and now I'm all by myself. There's sadness. There's depression. There's a whole gamut of emotions that people feel when they lose something precious.

God says in scripture, "That's what I feel when my people wander away from me." Alongside of grieving love, what we see in God is a holy anger, a jealous passion for our whole hearts. What we see in God is a

Jealous Love

Here's what we read

Hosea 2:9-13

"Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens,
and my new wine when it is ready.
I will take back my wool and my linen,
intended to cover her naked body.

¹⁰ So now I will expose her lewdness

before the eyes of her lovers;
no one will take her out of my hands.
¹¹ I will stop all her celebrations:
her yearly festivals, her New Moons,
her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.
¹² I will ruin her vines and her fig trees,
which she said were her pay from her lovers;
I will make them a thicket,
and wild animals will devour them.
¹³ I will punish her for the days
she burned incense to the Baals;
she decked herself with rings and jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
but me she forgot,”
declares the LORD.

Before we consider the jealous love of God, I want to take a moment to talk with you about the signs of unfaithfulness in marriage. How do you know if you are being unfaithful? You know, we go through so much rationalization, denial (“No, this is ok. It’s just so nice to get to talk to someone who really understands me.”). How do we know if we’re giving our hearts away, much less our bodies? I think, friend, there’s one clear sign of that you’re being an unfaithful spouse or unfaithful partner – that’s secrets.

Friends, let me as plainly as possible say this. If you are at all involved in having to cover your tracks, that is a really good sign that you are out of the will of God and doing what you ought not to be doing. The person who is in the will of God does not have to cover their tracks. A person who is in the will of God never has to go through their computer’s history and delete certain items. A person who is in the will of God does not have to delete text messages from their cell phones, or hide certain financial transactions, or pretend to be where they aren’t, or have someone else providing them with an alibi, or get their friends to lie for them. If you are involved in some sort of cover up, you are almost by definition in sin and outside the will of God.

And you know that you have a serious problem, maybe an addiction, if you are covering it up. People who have eating disorders are always involved in cover ups. You have to hide your binging and purging. Alcoholics always cover up their drinking. You drink vodka because others can’t smell it on your breath, eat breath mints or you drink when no one is around or use a sports bottle to drink from, or find creative places in your home to hide the bottle. Those who are involved in cutting themselves cover their scars with clothes. Those who are involved in gambling cover their financial losses. Those who find their comfort by shopping cover their debts by playing financial shell games with credit cards, hiding credit card statements.

If you are involved in a cover up of any kind, guaranteed you are outside the will of God.

Let me state this as plainly as I can. Secrecy is always involved in marital unfaithfulness. If you are unwilling to allow your spouse to know about every area of your life without exception you are being unfaithful. If you are unwilling to show your spouse your texts, your emails, to have her listen to your voice mails, if you have secret email accounts or secret Facebook accounts, or another cell phone; if you walk out of the room to have a conversation; if you are unwilling to account for all of your time that's a flashing red light that you are being unfaithful. As much as possible, we ought to be able to live before our spouse the way that Adam and Eve lived, naked and unashamed, no cover-ups, no hiding.

And if that seems to you to be an unrealistic idea, I would say it is unrealistic, in our own flesh, by our own strength. But it is not unrealistic, if Christ is at work in both of your lives. If you're both claiming to be followers of Christ, then total transparency is what you ought to be aiming at.

By the way, if you're the faithful spouse, a sign to you that something may be going on that you need to look into is sudden changes, radical changes in behavior. Sudden, unexplained withdrawals from your bank account or missing money from a wallet. Sudden change in dress, in weight, in hairstyle. Secrets and changes – those two things are always going on when there's been unfaithfulness.

How does God respond to our unfaithfulness, our cover ups and rationalizations and our attempts to hide from him and keep things secret? He grieves. But as we just read, God gets jealous. Do you know that one of the names that God gives to himself is Jealous?

Exodus 34:14

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

How can God be jealous? Isn't jealousy a sin? Doesn't the Apostle Paul call jealousy a work of the flesh?

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In the Bible, there are two types of jealousy. One that's healthy and the other that is unhealthy. Healthy jealousy is all about guarding what belongs to you. An exclusive relationship with your spouse, an exclusive sexual relationship with your spouse, your

spouse's heart. Jealousy guards our territory, as it were. See, healthy jealousy understands the reality of sin.

See healthy people take a realistic look at the world and say: There's really sin in this world, that's why a healthy person locks the doors of their house. A healthy person locks their car. You don't put your purse on the front seat and walk away with the car door open. You don't give out your credit card information to anyone who asks. Use the world with biblical realism that says that I need to be on guard, including being on guard regarding my spouse's heart and those who are approaching my spouse.

Unhealthy jealousy veers into paranoia. Unhealthy jealousy perceives threats when they're not there. Yes, I need to lock my door, but I don't need to aim a spring-loaded shotgun at the door to blast whoever might walk through. Unhealthy jealousy is rooted in deep feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Unhealthy jealousy is abusive, tries to control all the activities of our spouse or our boyfriend or girlfriend. We control all their going and coming. We give this other person no breathing space. We accuse when there is no basis for accusation.

Friends, our God shows healthy jealousy. God never feels inadequate. He's not insecure. He's not paranoid, but he does want your and my whole heart and he does want our entire trust.

Here's what we read

Deuteronomy 6:5

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

God wants all of our love.

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;

God wants all of our hearts. He wants all of our devotion. He deserves all of our worship. You know the story of Hosea doesn't end with God's jealous love any more than it ended with God's grieving love. The story of Hosea is a story of God's faithful love.

Faithful love

Instead of ending with God's jealous anger, God punishing his wayward people, the story moves forward to one of the greatest descriptions of faithful love in the history of

all literature. Probably one of the most wonderful statements of God's faithful love in the entire Bible is found in

Hosea 2:19-20

I will betroth you to me forever;

I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion.

²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge the LORD.

The Old Testament Hebrew word for love here in Hosea 2:19 is the word "Hesed"

Hesed

Here is how I would define the word "hesed." "Hesed" very simply is

Love as a commitment.

"Hesed," love as a commitment, is the quality most often attributed to God in the Bible. There is no term used more often of God in the Old Testament than "hesed" – loving kindness, mercy, faithful love, steadfast love. When the Lord wanted to reveal himself to the children of Israel, he spoke to Moses and said, "Moses, here is what you can tell people about me so that they will have an accurate picture of me." Exodus 34:6

Exodus 34:6

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

The word "love" in verse 6 is "hesed."

Exodus 34:7

maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

The word "love" there again is "hesed." What God is saying to Moses is, "Moses, go tell the world that I am fundamentally committed to faithfully loving my people."

In Psalm 136, this is a 26-verse Psalm that contains the refrain 26 times,

His love endures forever.

His hesed, his commitment to love us, endures forever. 26 times we are told this, just in the case we might forget. Here's what we read

Ps 136:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. *His love endures forever.*

Ps 136:2 Give thanks to the God of gods. *His love endures forever.*

Ps 136:3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords: *His love endures forever.*

So, let's finish with the story of Hosea.

Hosea 3:1-3

The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley [a bushel and a half]. ³ Then I 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 behave the same way toward you."

Do you understand what's going on here? Hosea's wife, who has been unfaithful to him, has been sold into slavery. In the ancient world, you could become a slave if you fell into debt and couldn't repay your debts. She's left Hosea, she's left her children. Things have fallen apart for her in terms of the men she chased. Now she's fallen into debt, she can't repay it and she's being sold as a slave. And in the ancient world people were sold naked – there she is standing in front of a crowd – naked, humiliated in public – so utterly ashamed. Hosea goes to the slave auction and there's bidding going on for his wife.

"I'll give 12 pieces of silver," somebody yells out.

Hosea says, "I'll give 13."

Another voice says, "14."

Hosea says, "15."

One man says, "I'll give 15 pieces of silver and a bushel of wheat for this woman."

Hosea says, "15 pieces of silver and a bushel and a half of wheat."

The auctioneer looks around, there's no one left to bid. He slams the gavel down and says, "Sold to Hosea! For 15 pieces of silver and a bushel and a half of wheat."

Instead of treating his wife as a slave, because he now owned her, Hosea covers his wife with a robe, quietly walks through the crowd with the woman who had betrayed him and then he says to her in secret, "I don't want anything from you other than what I have always wanted from you. I just want your heart. I just want your love I still want you to be my wife."

Does God act like that toward us? Is this what God the Father is like? The Bible says, "Absolutely yes!" The Bible says that we're like Hosea's wife. We've become slaves of our own egos, slaves of our own addictions, slaves to our own desires, slaves to various habits. The Bible says that we're standing on the auction block being auctioned off and the bidders from the world line up and say, "We want to buy you! We will buy you with money!" Someone else says, "No, I'll buy that slave with being accepted!" Someone else says, "I'll buy that slave with drugs!" Someone else says, "I'll buy that person for a promotion and their name on the door."

Then into the crowd walks Jesus Christ and Jesus says, "I'll purchase them with the price of my own blood. I'm willing to die a horrible death on the cross in order to purchase this one. Cover their shame. All I ask is their love and trust."

God the Father slams the gavel down and says, "Sold! To my beautiful son, Jesus Christ, for the price of my son's blood!"

Gospel call.

Faithful Love

Rich Nathan
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The Father Loves You
Hosea 1-3

- I. Surprising Love
 - A. Surprising Emptiness
 - B. Surprising Calling

- II. Grieving Love

- III. Jealous Love

- IV. Faithful Love