



## Loyalty

*What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early.*

*Hosea 6:4*

I love when the Word of God surprises me. I got such a surprise this morning as I read chapter 6 of Hosea. The word "loyalty" in the feature verse had a note on it in my study Bible that gave an alternate translation: lovingkindness. The original Hebrew word is one of my favorites, *chesed*, and one that resonates with me when I come across it in a verse. Typically, from my own personal light-weight study of God's Word, I have seen this word used to describe the attitude and actions of God toward us, and often (especially in King James) it is translated "mercy." But it is also used multiple times throughout scripture to describe the attitude and actions of us with each other, and here of us toward God. Pjlibrary.org defines *chesed* as "giving oneself fully, with love and compassion." I understand the word "loyalty" now in this verse, and how that convicted my heart!

Often when I sit at my desk and study God's word, I worship and praise my Savior and am called and compelled to follow Him throughout my day. That determination sometimes lasts only as long as my Bible is open before me. The moment I more or less enter my day, when I am around others or attend to the duties of the day, I forget where I was just moments before, and I don't carry that worship and praise and conviction with me. It dissipates, like a wispy morning cloud buffeted by the high winds of the atmosphere.

Israel and Judah were God's chosen people, but they stopped choosing Him. We 21st century true believers are also God's chosen people (Eph 1:4); but we do the same. We stop choosing Him. We put on the outward "acts" of worship. We attend church, we give of our income, we serve within the body of Christ, but our hearts are far from Him. We ignore the commands, the truths, contained in His Word. John 14:15 says, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* How often do we fail at keeping His commandments when they are contradicted by our feelings?

Giving our loyalty, giving ourselves fully to Him in love and compassion, devoting ourselves to Him and His Word; this is what we are called to do as His chosen. We must choose Him over our feelings, choose Him over our flesh, our sinful desires, our pride. We must choose Him again and again and again throughout our day.

I don't want to be a morning cloud or a thin layer of dew that burns away in the heat of the sun. I want my entire loyalty to be to Him, a foundation of *chesed* out of which I operate day to day.

*Father, we thank You for the convicting power of Your word. We thank You for Your love, mercy, and loyalty toward us. Help us to choose You every moment of every day, building that foundation of faithfulness to You.*