

## “GOD’S DELIGHT”

Hosea 6:4-6

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### INTRODUCTION

**What shall I do with you, O \_\_\_\_\_?** Put your name there. What kind of loyalty do you have toward the Lord?

- Can God count on you? Can your Christian brothers count on you?
- Are you more devoted to the things of God than you are your house, car, possessions, money, entertainment, internet searches, cell phone, shopping, sports, fantasy sports, etc?
- When your church needs help with hospitality needs, financial needs, visitation, teaching, cleaning, nursery, etc., are you there reliable and dependable?

God wants our loyal love more than He does our outward expressions of religious worship.

**God delights in your loyalty to Him.** Do not disappoint Him like Israel of old did.

Too often, our desires toward the Lord are shallow and temporary;

- Watch a movie like “Courageous” and determine to be a better father and husband; but does it last?
- Attend revival meeting or church service and get stirred to serve God—temporarily. Do we continue?
- Make a commitment at camp and then back to the old lifestyle.

*It is not those who profess to love God, not those who commit to serve God, **but those who practice loyal love toward God and continue doing so who receive the reward one day.***

Here we see *GOD’S DILEMMA* with His people, *GOD’S DISCIPLINE* of His people, *AND GOD’S DELIGHT* with obedient service.

i. **GOD’S DILEMMA WITH HIS PEOPLE (6:4)**

A. What other means are available for God to use in restoring His people?

- The responses of vv. 1-3 have not come.
- The verse uses *bold anthropomorphism*—as though the Lord is in a dilemma: “I don’t know what else to do!”
- Once again He includes both Israel and Judah.
- This verse shows the **heart** of God toward His own; He gets no pleasure in their ruin and judgment.

B. Why don't they follow His example of consistency and reliability?

- In v. 3 the Lord's *going forth* and His *coming* to His people is as **certain** as the *dawn* and as the early and latter rain.
- Israel's response and reliability is an **uncertain** and **inconsistent** and **tenuous** as the "morning cloud" (**fog**) and as the **dew**.
- The quality in question here is their **chesed** or "loyal love."
- This loyal love in the context deals mainly with their faithful engagements with others with whom they are in relationships; but it also deals with their relationship with the Lord.
- God's "loyal love" extends to the heavens and people take refuge in it (Ps. 36:5, 7); see also Ps. 103:11-12.
- Their piety in contrast was light and unsubstantial.

This failure on their part is especially frustrating in light of the great effort put forth by the Lord to discipline and train His people.

ii. GOD'S DISCIPLINE OF HIS PEOPLE (5)

A. He has "Carved them" like stone or wood.

- This work is done through divine messengers—the prophets.
- This includes a long lineage of prophets—such as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and now Hosea himself.
- Their efforts were intended to cut and shape the nation(s) into something useful—instead their unresponsiveness led to their utter ruin.

B. He has "slain them" by the words of His mouth.

- These words are also from the prophets—the words of God.
- The words intended to give life and guidance, when resisted and rejected, result in death.
- Compare Paul's "savor of life unto life and death unto death".
- God does not allow us to rest comfortably in our sins.

C. His Judgments are "like the light"

- This can refer to light as revealing their sin.
- Or as manifesting God's righteous actions. As one commentator expressed the idea, God's efforts and 'pains' to purge them, His discipline of grace, cause the mercy of His chastisements to stand out clearly in the day of judgment and they leave the sinner confounded.
- Or as a lightning bolt punishing.

His disciplines had not resulted in repentance, or in the display of loyal love among His people. Therefore His dilemma is apparent. Israel did not lack outward display of religion, but they lacked its **heart** or **essence**—loyal love.

iii. GOD'S DELIGHT IN LOYALTY (**Loyal love**)

A. God desires Loyalty Rather than Sacrifice

- This is parallel to Samuel's words to Saul in I Sam. 15:22-23: "To obey is better than sacrifice."
- Loyal love toward God and men is displayed in a life of **obedience** to God and to His word.
- Neither God nor Hosea minimizes the rightness or the importance of the sacrificial system. After all, the Lord instituted it!
- Jesus twice quotes this passage in His conflicts with the Pharisees who put so much emphasis upon the externals of religion in contrast with the essence of religion—godly living and loyal love in relationships (Mt. 9:13; 12:7)

B. God desires the Knowledge of God rather than Burnt Offering.

- It was the lack of knowledge of God that was leading to their ruin (4:3, 6).
- Actually it is not either/or. God desires both the knowledge of God and sacrifice. But man generally puts stress upon the externals rather than the lifestyle of godliness and faithfulness that God expects.
- Today we might say: "I desire loyalty rather than **hymn singing, listening to sermons, attending pot lucks, giving to missions** etc.

## CONCLUSION

The Lord wants us to be genuine, real, consistent, faithful, loving toward Him and toward others.

Israel had religion—plenty of it. But it was counterfeit—Calf worship—and it did not translate into godly lifestyle.

How we need more loyalty among Christians!