

Sisters for Yah

Relentless Love

No human can truly comprehend how deep Yahweh's love is. Our limited human experience of love hinders us from understanding Yahweh's love for His children. We see a picture of this love in the life of Hosea. Many of us cringe when reading the account of Yahweh instructing Hosea to marry an adulterous woman. In Hosea 3:1, we're told, *"Then Yahweh said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of Yahweh for the children of Israel, who look to other deities and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.'"*

Let this sink in for a moment: Hosea was a righteous man, but Yahweh told him to marry a sinful woman! But indeed obeyed, and married a woman named Gomer. He cherished her and treated her with dignity and respect. Gomer had probably never experienced this kind of love! But she soon became dissatisfied. Gomer began giving her affections to other men. She became so involved in

these adulterous pursuits that finally she abandoned Hosea altogether. These other men used her until she had nothing left to give. To add insult to injury, Gomer was sold into slavery. After this, Yahweh gave Hosea this amazing command: *"Go and buy her back."* De-

Yahweh Commands

Hosea to Marry Gomer



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spite the intense pain and hurt that Gomer had inflicted upon Hosea, he was required to forgive her and pay any price to bring her back to his home.

Yahweh's message is clear: When we reject Him and turn our devotion elsewhere, our rejection carries the same pain as adulterous betrayal. After all that Yahweh has done for His people, it is incomprehensible that we should ever reject Him. It is even harder to fathom that Yahweh could still love us even after we have rejected, ignored, and disobeyed Him. Yet Yahweh's love is completely different from ours. His love follows us to the depths of sinfulness until He has reclaimed us, through our repentance and submission to Him. What incredible love He has demonstrated to us!

Spiritual Preparation

There is no substitute for spiritual preparation. I think about the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Verse 10, in particular, is scary. It reads, *“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut.”* The door being shut has a certain, fearful finality to it – the end of not being prepared for unexpected events.

Yahshua here, relates a parable that teaches this truth. Ten virgins were awaiting the arrival of the bridegroom so that they could celebrate with Him, as His bride. Five of them were prepared and had an adequate supply of oil for their lamps. The other five were not prepared, so they rushed out to buy additional oil. But while they were out buying oil, the bridegroom arrived. The five who had planned ahead entered into the house with him. But the door was closed against the five who were not ready, and they missed the celebration.



And the lesson? If we are prepared when a crisis comes; or when we have an opportunity to share our faith with an unbeliever; or have an occasion to comfort a person in sorrow, we'll be ready and equipped to meet these Yah-appointed encounters.

On the other hand, Yahweh's people can lose opportunities to work together with Him in another's behalf because they have not devoted enough time to developing their relationships with Yahweh. Why not begin now, so that you will be equipped for whatever life brings?

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

I, for one, am so glad the elections are over. Most of us agree that the constant media bombardment has been quite exhausting. We believe firmly that Yahweh causes governments to rise and fall. He chooses leaders to run a country (even as a way to punish an evil nation). So what do we do now? I strongly encourage everyone to pray for our new president-elect, Donald Trump. I plan to specifically pray that Yahweh would lead him into a strong relationship with Him. The blessings of a country very much depend on the righteousness of the people and their leaders. We see this, time and time again, when we read Scriptures. Ancient Israel thrived under righteous kings, and were blessed abundantly. Contrarily, under evil kings, the nation was punished and suffered greatly. Moreover, we should pray for the peace of Israel! Those who pray for Israel will be blessed.

Pray for our Leaders

BE ALERT
AND ALWAYS
KEEP ON PRAYING
FOR ALL YAHWEH'S
PEOPLE.

Ephesians 6:18, NIV



Learning to Love the Unlovable

And may Yahweh make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you ... But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by Yahweh to love one another, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9

Yahweh is love (1 John 4:16). His very nature is perfect love, but because of sin, His perfect love does not always come naturally to us. Some of us were raised in homes where love was not expressed. Perhaps you were hurt by someone you loved, and your heart became hardened as a defense against further pain. Many of us were even deeply hurt (maybe not deliberately) by other members of our own religious fellowships. We have been called by Yahweh to love, and may feel that we love others, but don't know how to express our love in word or deed. And this ignorance can be frustrating.

Every congregation has its share of "unlovable" people. It's difficult enough to love nice people, but almost impossible to love those who deliberately make themselves unlovable. We naturally gravitate toward people who make us feel comfortable and happy, but avoid, like the plague, those who get on our nerves with their obnoxious behavior. These are the people who most likely experienced unhappy childhoods and were hurt very early in life, perhaps through physical or sexual abuse that may explain their unpleasant dispositions in adulthood. For some of these people never fully recover, even into adulthood.

Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica to encourage them not to become disheartened as they learned to love each other, for Yahweh Himself would teach them how to love one another. (Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13.)

Yahweh is the authority on love. He would commend His love to them. And as they followed Him, He would cause His love to multiply. If someone was difficult to love, Yahweh through His Spirit would empower them to love.

Yahweh, in His grace, makes provision for our weakness. He is prepared to teach us how to love one another. We only need to ask Him. There are no exceptions. Yahweh can open our hearts to love that particularly difficult person. Even if the very best you can do is to not bring harm to that person, that in itself is, indeed, an act of love.

Are you struggling to love someone? If we were all honest, we'd say "yes." Yahweh will help you. He will enable you to love your co-workers, family members, friends, and even enemies in a way you could ever love them on your own. If you don't know how to express your love, Yahweh can teach you this also. As you relate to others, you can ask Yahweh to make His love overflow to them through your life.

There are three words in the Greek that mean love. But each means a different kind of love. The first word is *philia*, which means brotherly love. We find this in the word Philadelphia. The second word is *eros*, which is romantic love, as in the love that a husband and wife have for each other. The third word is *agape*, which is the deepest form of self-sacrificing love. We should strive toward having *agape* love for one another.



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Delightful Winter Punch

Serve in a large glass punch bowl. Best served very cold.

- 1 (64 ounce) bottle of cranberry juice cocktail
 - 1 (64 ounce) bottle of pineapple juice
 - 2 to 3 cups of pure cane sugar (depending on how sweet you like it)
 - 2 T. almond extract (found in the baking aisle of most grocery stores)
 - 2 liters of ginger ale
- Blend all the liquids in your punch bowl. Chill until ready to serve.



Chewy Pumpkin Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

(Submitted by Sister Jan Meyer)

- 2 cups, plus 2 T. all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
- 1 t. baking soda
- 2 t. ground cinnamon
- 2 t. pumpkin pie spice (found in the baking aisle of most grocery stores)
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 1/2 cups old fashioned whole rolled oats
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled
- 3 T. pure maple syrup
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup pumpkin puree (use paper towels to squeeze as much liquid out as possible)
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper (or silicone baking mats).

Whisk first five ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk butter, maple syrup, brown sugar, eggs, blotted pumpkin, and vanilla until combined. Pour into dry ingredients and mix. Add chocolate chips. Scoop dough onto prepared pans (1 1/2 T. of dough per cookie and 3 inches apart). Flatten slightly. Bake 13 to 14 minutes until lightly browned. The centers will look very soft. Remove from oven and let cook for five minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. While the cookies are still warm, I press a few more chocolate chips into the tops—this is only for looks!