

Two words summarize the love of God in the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament word is *agape* - the unconditional, unmerited love of God. The Old Testament word is *hesed* - usually translated "lovingkindness" or "mercy", but more literally thought of as "loyal love". *Agape* and *hesed* are like two sides of the same love-coin. If love is loyal, it cannot be cancelled, which means it is unconditional. God's love cannot be earned or negated; it is merciful and loyal.

The greatest story of God's unconditional and loyal love in the Old Testament is the story of Hosea, in which *hesed* occurs 6 times. It occurs nearly 250 times in the entire Old Testament, primarily referring to God's loyal love for Israel. Hosea's unconditional love for his wayward wife, Gomer, was a picture for Israel of God's forever love for His chosen people: "I will betroth you to Me forever...in lovingkindness [*hesed*] and mercy." (Hosea 2:19)

God loves you unconditionally and loyally. Even if you are unfaithful, "He remains faithful". (2 Timothy 2:13) If you have fallen or been unfaithful, be encouraged, because God is faithful to love and forgive.

Psalm 51:1 "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions."