**“Would You Fellowship Hosea?”**

(by Frank Jamerson)

If Hosea and Gomer were members of the congregation where you worship, could Hosea preach? Could Gomer teach a Bible class?

The message of the book of Hosea is one that needs to be taught and practiced today. Hosea did not just teach his message of mercy, he lived it! He could preach with a broken heart about the broken-hearted God, because of his own experiences, but many today would not listen to him because he was divorced from his wife! Many brethren would not listen because "all the guilt is not on one side" or "no one is completely innocent in a divorce." But, was Hosea a better preacher because of his experiences or a worse one?

What about his wife? Would you allow a reformed prostitute to teach your children? Granted that she would have to show "fruit" of repentance, but granting that she has done that, would you forgive her?

Let's look at the story in Hosea again. God told Hosea to ***"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed a great harlotry by departing from the Lord"*** ([**Hosea 1:2**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Hos.%201.2)). Hosea's relationship to his wife and children were used to help him understand the relationships between God and His people. The meaning of the children's names indicated the spiritual condition of Israel. The first boy was named "Jezreel" (God will scatter), the little girl was named "Lo-Ruhamah" (not loved, or no mercy) and imagine the bitterness of his soul as Hosea named his next boy "Lo-Ammi" ("not my people," or "illegitimate")! After doubting the parentage of his own children, Hosea's wife left him to live with her "lovers." Even after those heart-breaking experiences, God told Hosea, ***"Go again, love a woman like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans"*** ([**Hosea 3:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Hos.%203.1)). He bought her back for the price of a wounded slave, and after a period of "proving" he accepted her back as his wife. Remember, she represents God's people and Hosea represents the forgiving God. Hosea saw God's willingness to forgive and his own willingness to forgive the wife helped him to understand God's!

Many today catalog sins. They are willing to "forgive" some sins, but not others. Maybe we will forgive "white lies," but harlotry? Paul said about the Corinthians, ***"Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you*** (is that "all" of you, or just "some" of you?) ***were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"*** ([**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%206.9-11)). How many of those who were "washed, sanctified and justified" in Corinth would you use as preachers, elders, or Bible class teachers? How many of them would you "forgive"?

Brethren, "the way of the transgressor is hard" enough without us making it harder by unforgiveness! Paul told the Corinthians to "forgive and comfort" the fornicator who had repented ***"lest such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow"*** ([**2 Corinthians 2:7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Cor.%202.7)). If two years later, the Corinthians would not call upon him for prayer, allow him to teach a class or preach a sermon, have they forgiven him? When we continue to treat the person as a sinner while protesting that we have forgiven, we need to remember the words of the Lord: "***for if ye forgive not men their trespasses. . ."*** ([**Matthew 6:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%206.15)**;** [**18:35**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%2018.35)).

Finally, to those who have experienced the unforgiveness of brethren, do not be angry with God, for He is not its source. Be angry with Satan and refuse to serve him!

Jesus Christ Is Not Our Lord If…

(by Gary Henry)

***“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”*** (**Luke 6:46**). The words “Christ is Lord” are easier to say with our lips than to demonstrate with our deeds. But Christ calls us to do more than talk about His lordship. It is not His purpose to attract a host of talkers or even admirers; He desires a people who will love Him with an active, responsive, and obedient love. ***“Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’”*** He asked, ***“and do not do the things which I say?”***Contrary to widespread opinion, there is more to Christianity than simply listing that as our religious preference. Whatever we may say, Jesus Christ is not really our Lord if we don’t do the things that He says.

Even if we’re among those who take the will of Christ most seriously, it’s a common occurrence for us to overrate the level of our own obedience. We very likely make the same mistake with Christ that we make with our friends: we expect to be judged solely on the basis of our ability and our intentions. We have high principles, we know what we should do, and we really do intend to get around to it; we just haven’t done it yet. So despite the relatively low level of our actual performance, we still wish to be seen as superior persons; we just happen to be running a little behind on our “To Do” list. Christ, however, does not see us in terms of what we “plan” to do (and the truth is, our friends probably don’t either). He sees us in terms of our real obedience. *“Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”*

Complete candor might compel us to admit that we really think some parts of the Lord’s will are “insignificant.” We may take Him seriously in the areas that seem to be important, but we feel free to dissent from His opinion on other matters. Truly to have Jesus Christ as our Lord, however, means that we honor the significance of all of His will. We may know less than we’d like to know about our Lord’s rationale in some cases, but we certainly know enough to trust that He never issues commands carelessly. The real test of whether we’ve actually accepted His lordship is whether we yield to His will when it comes into conflict with our own. The person whose will we obey, that person is our real lord.