**Lovingkindness (Hesed)**

*Psalm 36:7*

**Introduction**

1. The Hebrew word *hesed* is a wonderful word which describes a facet of God most important to us.
   1. **It is found in the OT 247 times.**
   2. **It is an obvious important concept to learn if we seek to understand God.**
2. It is translated into several English words showing the depth of meaning which resides in the Hebrew.
   1. **Lovingkindness, kindness, mercy, loyalty, goodness, steadfast love, etc.**
   2. This wide array of translations shows the depth of the word, and uncover its various meanings in the passages’ context.
3. A study of the word shows how useful the Old Testament can be (**cf. Romans 15:4**) by showing us the nature of God, and His requirements for His people.
4. By studying the word, *hesed*, we:
   1. Gain wisdom (**cf. Psalm 107:43** – *lovingkindness*).
   2. Learn how to be obedient (**cf. Micah 6:8; Hosea 12:6** – *mercy*).
   3. Can refute the error that God’s lovingkindness is unconditional (**cf. Jeremiah 16:5** – *lovingkindness*).
   4. Know God better (**cf. Psalm 36:7-10** – *lovingkindness*).
5. Lovingkindness *(Hesed)* Defined.
6. Given Definitions.
   1. *hêsêd* – kindness; by implication (towards God) piety – favour, good deed (-liness, -ness), kindly, (loving-) kindness, merciful (kindness), mercy, pity. (Strong)
   2. “A term which denotes the kindness and mercy of God toward man in the OT…This term does not occur in the NT, but the concept of “grace” covers about the same area of meaning” (Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary, pg. 494 – “Loving-kindness”).
   3. **On Jonah 2:8** – “The KJV calls it mercy; the NIV renders it ‘grace.’ However, the Hebrew word *(hesed*) is understood by some to mean ‘loyalty’ (NEB) or ‘faithfulness’ (NASB).” (Irvin Himmel, Edited by Mike Willis. Truth Commentary - Minor Prophets 1)
   4. **On Jonah 4:2** – “’*hesed*’ applies primarily to God’s particular love for His chosen and covenanted people” (Unger & White 233), but his *hesed* may be expressed to people not in a covenant relationship.” (Irvin Himmel, Edited by Mike Willis. Truth Commentary - Minor Prophets 1)
   5. **From this we understand how deep the word *hesed* is.**
      1. **It means kindness, goodness, steadfast love, mercy, pity, grace, but also can have a strong sense of loyalty. (As in covenant relationships.)**
      2. When the word is used context determines the specificity of its meaning.
7. In Scripture.
   1. Lovingkindness – **Psalm 119:159**
      1. *Hesed* is God's "lovingkindness in condescending to the needs of His creatures" (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon , p. 339).
   2. Mercy – **Psalm 59:17**
      1. *Hesed* also means, "grace; mercy; . . . goodness" (Vine's Expository Dictionary, p. 232).
   3. **Connected with covenant loyalty** – **Deuteronomy 7:9, 12**
      1. *Hesed* "can be a synonym for covenant" (Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, p. 661).
      2. *Hesed* "applies primarily to God's particular love for His chosen and covenanted people. 'Covenant' also stresses the reciprocity of the relationship" (Vine's Expository Dictionary, pp. 233-234).
      3. ***Hesed* certainly emphasizes the love God has for mankind, but is also something that often connotes the immutable counsel of God concerning the faithful keeping of His covenant relationship with His people**.
         1. *In part, according to God’s hesed, He cannot fail in loyalty. He must keep His covenant with His people.*
         2. *It would be against His nature to fail in keeping His promises of mercy, kindness, love, and goodness.*
   4. **Connected with truth** – **Psalm 25:10; 85:10; 89:14**
      1. *Hesed* and the Hebrew word for truth are together **16 times** in the OT.
      2. **God’s *Hesed* and truth are inseparable. Without *hesed* we can’t know truth, but without truth we can’t experience God’s *hesed*.**
8. Lovingkindness *(Hesed)* is Conditional.
9. Boundaries of God’s Lovingkindness (*Hesed)*
   1. **Psalm 136** – His mercy *(hesed)* endures forever.
      1. **Even through time, and change everywhere else, God’s *hesed* remains unchanged, and continual.**
      2. **(v. 1-3)** – In His position as the true God, and Lord (supreme in authority).
      3. **(v. 4-9)** – In His displayed power in creation (He continually provides all that His creation needs).
      4. **(v. 10-26)** – In His care for His covenant people (He continually protected and cared for Israel).
   2. **Psalm 33:5; 103:8, 17** – The *hesed* of God never runs out.
      1. The idea that God can only love so much before it is too much is a false concept.
      2. **Some suggest there are things that are too evil for God to forgive, and show mercy to those who were once guilty of such practice.**
      3. **The lovingkindness of God is unlimited**.
   3. It is a wonderful concept that God’s lovingkindness is available, unlimited, and far reaching. **Yet, this does not mean it is unconditional.** 🡪
10. Conditions of God’s Lovingkindness *(hesed)*
    1. **The idea that God’s grace is unconditional, and covers every man no matter what, and that once received it cannot be lost, is a foreign concept to scripture. 🡪**
    2. *This concept of conditional lovingkindness is seen in its connection with covenant and truth.*
       1. Covenant – **Exodus 20:1-6**
          1. God had showed mercy *(hesed)* to the Israelites in delivering them from Egypt, and now gave them the covenant/law.
          2. **(v. 6)** – mercy *(hesed)* is only shown to those who love God, and keep His commandments.
          3. **Deuteronomy 4:13-14, 23-24** – The Lord will not FORGET the covenant if they do not FORGET the covenant.
             1. A covenant relationship involves two parties.
             2. **Both parties must be loyal to the covenant.**
       2. Truth – **Psalm 119:124, [155, 158-159]** – There is no lovingkindness bestowed upon those who practice error.
          1. Only those who believe the truth, and keep the truth receive God’s *hesed*.
          2. ***“In mercy [hesed] and truth atonement is provided for iniquity” (Proverbs 16:6)***.
11. Conditions of God’s Grace (New Covenant)
    1. **Enter Covenant Relationship** – **Hebrews 9:13-15** (Jesus mediator of New Covenant by His blood).
       1. ***“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28***).
       2. **Acts 2:38** – Baptism is where we enter the covenant relationship.
    2. **Remain Faithful to Covenant** – **Hebrews 3:15-4:1** (Israel did not continue to believe and obey.)
       1. **Hebrews 10:26-29** – When we sin willfully we count the blood of the covenant a common thing.
       2. **We must keep the covenant in order for God to keep the covenant with us.**
    3. ***“[look] carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15)***.
       1. **Israel could fall short of the lovingkindness (*hesed*) of God.**
       2. We, too, can fall short of God’s grace.
       3. IT IS CONDITIONAL!

**END PART 1. RESUME WITH PART 2 IN P.M.**

1. Lovingkindness *(Hesed)* is Required (of us). (PART 2)
2. Toward God.
   1. **Greatly expressed before with regard to the conditions placed upon us to receive lovingkindness from God in the covenant relationship.**
   2. We must have *hesed* for God, just as He must for us:
      1. **Hosea 6:4-7** – Israel did not possess faithfulness (*hesed*) before Him.
      2. They were going through the motions, but were living unfaithfully. God wanted *hesed* (**loyal lovingkindness**).
   3. **We cannot demand God to be loyal to us with His love and mercy when we are not loyal to Him with our love and obedience!**
      1. ***“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21***).
      2. ***“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10)*.**
      3. ***Contrary to what the world would have us to believe, the concept of loving God is not a mere emotion, but an act of loyalty in love and kindness expressed in OBEDIENCE.***
3. Toward others.
   1. **All men** – lovingkindness is from God to man, and man to God, but also of necessity from man to man.
      1. **Micah 6:8** – The Lord shows us what is good, and what He requires, in His law, and in His actions and character.
         1. God wants those who are His children to imitate Him.
         2. Do justly – a duty to God. Act right with God, but also fellow man.
         3. **Love mercy (*hesed*) – faithful love, loyalty, goodness to God by keeping the covenant, but also an idea of goodness, and love to man. (Loyalty even in many respects.)**
         4. Walk humbly with God – duty to God in humility.
      2. **Joshua 2:11-21** – Rahab with the spies of Israel.
         1. Rahab hid the spies and cared for them.
         2. She asked that they deal kindly *(hesed)* with her because she had dealt kindly *(hesed)* with them.
         3. **(v. 20-21)** – part of her action of *hesed* would be to remain loyal to them.
            1. This would be their action as well.
            2. **Joshua 6:22** – after the conquering of Jericho, they kept their word.
         4. **Notice the connection of not just love, goodness and kindness, but also loyalty to fellow man, and keeping a promise made.**
      3. **This lovingkindness must be expressed to all men – Matthew 22:37-39 (***A love for fellow man is pertinent.)*
         1. **Luke 10:25-29 – who is my neighbor?**
         2. **Priest did not help him, Levite did not help him, Samaritan helped him.**
         3. **(v. 33, 36-37) – The one who showed mercy, compassion, love for the man was the neighbor.**
   2. **Family** – in the family relationship there must be love, kindness, goodness, compassion, and loyalty.
      1. **Ruth 1:8, 15-17** – Ruth decided to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi, even though her husband had died. (The other daughter-in-law, Orpah, did not stay.)
      2. **Naomi had already said Ruth had dealt kindly (*hesed*) with her**. Ruth continued such loyal love by staying with her even though her husband had died.
      3. **Ruth 3:10 (Boaz speaking)** – Furthermore, in order to ensure a continuance of Naomi’s family, Ruth chose to marry Boaz, Naomi’s relative.
         1. **Boaz and Ruth married, thus providing Naomi with a grandchild in their conceiving.**
         2. **4:13-17** – Because of Ruth’s loyalty to Naomi, Naomi’s family continued, and were direct ancestors of Christ (*seed of David. Obed, Ruth’s son, was David’s grandfather*.).
      4. There must be lovingkindness (*hesed)*, a loyal and compassionate love, for family members. (Required by God.)
         1. Marriage – **Matthew 19:4-6** (not to be separation; lifetime commitment/love/loyalty); **Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29, 33** (Love, compassion, kindness, loyalty)
            1. The marriage relationship is a loyal one.
            2. **The husband and wife are to have *hesed* for one another. (It is a type of love that is a choice which looks out for the well-being of another above themselves.)**
         2. Familial obligations – **1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8** (*A love which has compassion on the less fortunate, and in this case is loyal because of relation*.)
            1. If this is a need on the physical side of things, it is certainly on the spiritual side of things.
            2. **We must look out for the spiritual well-being of our family members first and foremost. (EX: discipline, teaching, training.)**
   3. **Brethren** – Those who are spiritual brethren must have lovingkindness ***(hesed)*** for each other as they receive such from God.
      1. **Zechariah 7:9-14** – The Lord commanded lovingkindness (*mercy, compassion, love, loyalty*) toward brethren, and those who disobeyed were punished.
         1. **Israel did not do as God commanded. (In part, show lovingkindness to brethren.)**
         2. Israel was taken into captivity because of their disobedience.
      2. **We are required to show such compassion, love, care, goodness, and loyalty to our brethren.**
         1. ***“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10)***.
         2. **1 John 4:7, 11, 20-21** – Because God has shown love to us, we also must show love to each other.
         3. This kind of loyal love is emphasized greatly in the responsibility we have to reprove one another when in the wrong **(cf. Jude 22-23** – *This shows a loyalty in that we sacrifice our own comfort to pull our brethren out of spiritual harm’s way*.).

**Conclusion**

1. We can learn a lot about God from the Old Testament.
2. The word ***“hesed”*** is used 247 times in the OT. It is a central theme concerning God, and those who are His.
3. In order to receive the lovingkindness ***(hesed***) of God, we must also show the same to Him, as well as to others.
4. **May we all seek to draw nearer to God by applying the knowledge of “lovingkindness” to our lives!**