

The Hollow Promises  
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Hosea 6:1-7:2

Who remembers Eddie Haskell from “Leave it to Beaver”? How would you describe him? There is a term known as the “Eddie Haskell Effect” in workplace psychology. It describes a boss who sucks up to their superiors and bullies their subordinates when the bosses are not around.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/202005/remembering-eddie-haskell>

Eddie Haskell portrayed himself to the adults as the model of manners and politeness but when the adults were out of sight Eddie was a bully and a jerk. He pretended to be the model kid, yet Eddie was a fake and a fraud. He was a model kid on the outside but rotten on the inside. He thought he was fooling the Cleavers with his over-the-top, obsequious “act” but they knew better.

The nation of Israel (and to some degree the southern kingdom of Judah) was made up of a lot of “Eddie Haskells.” They went through the motions of religion and ritual on the outside, but they were rotten and sinful on the inside. They thought they were fooling God, but no one fools God.

The point: God despises “fake” repentance; He delights in undivided loyalty. He is looking for truly obedient children not “Eddie Haskell.” Being truly faithful to God begins with being truly sorry when we sin and turning from that sin.

- Before the text, a little context – in chapters four and five God called out Israel (through the voice of the Prophet Hosea) like a prosecuting attorney making His case for a conviction.
- One commentator summed up Israel’s offenses this way: *“The Lord accuses Israel...of having (1) no faithfulness, truth, or integrity...(2) no love, compassion, or kindness, and (3) no knowledge of God...they were characterized by lying, cruelty, and greed. Their understanding of God was perverse, their relationship with Him nonexistent...Because of Israel’s adulterous idolatry, arrogance, and stubbornness, they were warned that God would blow them away like a whirlwind...”*<sup>iii</sup>
- Not only were the average Israelites guilty, even their leaders and priests were corrupt. Look at chapter five verse ten:

**Hosea 5:10–12 (NLT) — 10** “The leaders of Judah have become like thieves. So I will pour my anger on them like a waterfall. **11** The people of Israel will be crushed and broken by my judgment because they are determined to worship idols. **12** I will destroy Israel as a moth consumes wool. I will make Judah as

weak as rotten wood. **15** Then I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and turn to me. For as soon as trouble comes, they will earnestly search for me.”

- Now, with a tone of sarcasm, God (through Hosea) describes how His hypocritical “bad kids” would say the right things when they got caught:

**Hosea 6:1 — 1** “Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces; now he will heal us. He has injured us; now he will bandage our wounds. **2** In just a short time he will restore us, so that we may live in his presence. **3** Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring.”

- That sounds like sincere repentance doesn't it? *“Let us return to the Lord!”*
- When you probe those words more deeply you see some flaws.
- Verse two: Your translation may say, *“After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up...”*<sup>iii</sup> Some argue that points to Christ's resurrection and maybe it does (see 1 Cor. 15:4). The context here is what we just read in the NLT: *“If we say the right things, “in a short time” he will restore us. We got caught but if we return to God, He will forgive us as sure as the rains come in early spring.”*
- They weren't looking to repent; they just wanted “probation.”
- That's not repentance, it's a transaction; I say I'm sorry and God let's me off the hook with a light punishment. God is not a vending machine!
- In verse four God speaks the words of an exasperated parent:

**4** “O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?” asks the Lord. “For your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight.

- *“What in the world am I going to do with you!”* Last week God demonstrated Israel's unfaithfulness through Hosea's unfaithful wife. In this chapter He described Israel (and to a lesser degree Judah) as rebellious children who thought they could fool their parents.
- You know the profile. When they're at home they seem to be model children but when they leave home it's a different story. Some teens are pretty good at being “sneaky” about their behavior.
- Did you ever have a “sneaky” kid? Were you one yourself? How can a parent sniff out the “sneakiness?” How should they deal with it?
- Psychologists tell us some sneakiness from kids is to be expected. They advise not overreacting initially but using some calm questioning to cause their natural “guilt response” to kick in and cause them to confess.
- That works when you catch the rebellious kid in their early years. God had given Israel time after time to feel guilty and come clean but by now they were committing horrible sins and feeling like they were fooling Him. Of course, they were not. He saw all their sinful behavior.

**5** I sent my prophets to cut you to pieces— to slaughter you with my words, with judgments as inescapable as light. **6** I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings. **7** But like Adam, you broke my covenant and betrayed my trust. **8** “Gilead is a city of sinners, tracked with footprints of blood. **9** Priests form bands of robbers, waiting in ambush for their victims. They murder travelers along the road to Shechem and practice every kind of sin. **10** Yes, I have seen something horrible in Ephraim and Israel: My people are defiled by prostituting themselves with other gods! **11** “O Judah, a harvest of punishment is also waiting for you, though I wanted to restore the fortunes of my people. **7:1** “I want to heal Israel, but its sins are too great. Samaria is filled with liars. Thieves are on the inside and bandits on the outside! **2** Its people don’t realize that I am watching them. Their sinful deeds are all around them, and I see them all.

- God wanted to heal Israel but they had gone too far. He had to get their attention so He would allow the Assyrians to conquer and capture them.
- What’s the lesson for Christ-followers today?
- Today we hear the term, “in name only.” It is *“used to describe a person, thing, or action that does not have the qualities that its name suggests.”*<sup>iv</sup>
- God is not looking for followers in “name only.”
- To be clear, if we’ve truly trusted Christ as Savior and Lord then we ARE saved forever. However, we’re still human and like a little kid we can drift into behavior that isn’t consistent with being an obedient follower of Christ.
- Our drifting might not involve horrible sin. It might be like a five-year-old sneaking cookies after Mom said they couldn’t have cookies. The key is to not let the drifting get out of control. God uses His word to convict us of sin so we will turn to Him in true repentance before our rebellion goes too far.
- God isn’t concerned only about our outward behavior; His bigger concern is what is in the heart. Look at **6:6 (NLT)** — **6** *“I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings.”*
- Jesus quoted that verse twice so it must be important. Rituals become mockery if the heart is far from God.<sup>v</sup> He doesn’t only want rituals He desires relationship. If our hearts are right on the inside our behavior will be right on the outside.
- D.L. Moody said, *“Character is what you are in the dark.”*<sup>vi</sup>
- God said of Israel in 7:2, *“...[They] don’t realize that I am watching them. Their sinful deeds are all around them, and I see them all.”*
- People used to say rebellious teens were just “sowing wild oats.”
- **Galatians 6:7 (ESV)** — **7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. [Wild oats become wild weeds!]
- We hear the expression, “beautiful inside and out.” God desires that we would be faithful inside and out. Thanks to His Spirit inside us, we can.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- God despises “fake” repentance; He delights in undivided loyalty. He is looking for truly obedient children not “Eddie Haskell.” Being truly faithful to God begins with being truly sorry when we sin and turning from that sin.
- The way we know what obedience looks like is to study His word.
- The way we follow Him in obedience is to listen to His Holy Spirit inside us and follow His leading.
- If we stay in His word, do what it says, and ask His forgiveness when we slip, we’ll be obedient children who are faithful inside and out and not an “Eddie Haskell” Christian.

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<sup>i</sup> Clendenen, E. R. (1998). [The Minor Prophets](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 346). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>iii</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ho 6:2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/in%20name%20only>

<sup>v</sup> Adapted from Life Application Study Bible note on 6:6.

<sup>vi</sup> Source: <https://quotepark.com/quotes/1796465-dwight-l-moody-character-is-what-you-are-in-the-dark/>