

## TILL DEATH DO US PART

My family loved to sit down every Friday evening and watch "Family Matters." We were big Steve Urkel fans, but when Steve, in his great love for Lora, would pull the petals off a flower, he would say, "She loves me, she loves me, she loves me, Oh, she loves me." But of course, Lora did not feel the same way about Steve. And that is pretty much what was happening back in the time of Hosea. The people of Israel didn't love God like God loved them.

God made a rather strange request of Hosea. God told him to marry a prostitute? Why? The simple answer is because she was unfaithful and so were the people of Israel to God. The Israelites were God's "bride," and every time they worshiped an idol they were committing adultery. If you are a Christian, you are the bride of Christ, and any flirting with Satan is adultery.

The toughest lesson for Hosea would be to understand the heart of God. Hosea's wife left him to be a prostitute again. How did Hosea feel? It was a hollow, defeated and humbling feeling that makes anyone wonder how anyone could ever love them. Hosea, listen up! This is how God felt when the people of Israel decided to love idols and not Him. Christians listen up! This is how God feels when you and I flirt with Satan. God is a jealous God, and He has every right to be jealous. We made vows of love to Him when we became a Christian. He offered us salvation and eternal security. He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Can you or I expect God to just sit back and accept our adultery? Is he going to just brush it off? I don't think so!

Hosea bought back his own wife. 30 pieces of silver was the price of a slave, but he got her for half price. She was evidently damaged goods. What kind of price did Jesus pay for you and me in order to lure us back into His love? Romans 5:6, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." That's you and me, God's own creation. The creation He not only made in His image, but also put all of His love into. We left Him, and He had to buy us back. God is saying to you, "I promise to be a good husband, but will you love me?" Any failed marriage in this relationship will not be the fault of God.

*Roy Goodlet is a retired minister and a member of Murphy Church of Christ. Email him @ royfcc@yahoo.com.*