

The Hebrew word *hesed* occurs 248 times in the OT! It is translated into English in a variety of ways: mercy, love, kindness, loving kindness, grace, loyalty, goodness, everlasting love. *Hesed* isn't one of these, it's all of them taken together. *Hesed* is the way God loves you. And the way God calls you to love others.

MONDAY *I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness [hesed] to you.*

Jeremiah 31:3

Surely goodness and mercy [hesed] shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. Psalm 23:6

I shared the story of the little dog who followed the ultra-marathon runner as a visual example of *hesed*. What does it mean to you that God's goodness and mercy are at your heels every day of your life? Have you let it sink in that you are loved with an "everlasting love?"

TUESDAY *Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds [hesed], are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 2 Chronicles 32:32*

Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds [hesed] that I have done for the house of my God and for his service. Nehemiah 13:14

Many of Israel's most faithful leaders (kings, prophets, civil servants) are described as *doing hesed*. Our faith is made visible to the world in the way we act. In what ways do you actions reveal your *hesed*? Are there places where you actions are in conflict with your faith?

WEDNESDAY *"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more*



important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Matthew 23:23

Jesus warns us that spiritual acts like tithing are important, but even more fundamental are justice, mercy and faith. The Pharisees focused on outward religious acts (prayer, worship, giving) but didn't give any attention to harder, less visible manifestations: showing mercy, working for justice, living an active faith. It's a hard question, but where do you "go through the motions?" How can you actively live out your faith?

THURSDAY *But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love [hesed]; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.*

Genesis 39:21

God's steadfast love doesn't guarantee comfort or ease. *Hesed* means that no matter where you are, God is with you, redeeming that place, situation, circumstance. God showed *hesed* to Joseph while he was a slave and in prison. How has God's *hesed* (sustaining love) been with you in times of sorrow or struggle?

FRIDAY *Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. Luke 6:35*

I always remember this verse when I'm having a hard time with someone. I remember that God is kind to the wicked and the ungrateful!! Our *hesed* doesn't depend on another's worthiness. We show love, mercy, kindness and goodness to people who don't deserve it and won't be thankful because that's what it means to be God's child.

SATURDAY *Exodus 34:6-7. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,*

but my steadfast love [hesed] shall not depart from you,

and my covenant of peace shall not be removed... Isaiah 54:10

God's people had turned away. In captivity (exile), they repented of their sin and turned back to God. God's word of hope is that his love (*hesed*) will never depart from them, no matter how deep their sin. Where our own nation need to hear a word about God's constant *hesed*?