

Cords of Love



Hosea 11:1–9 · This week: I Will Love Them Freely, Hosea 1–6; 10–14; Joel

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 47, “I Will Love Them Freely,” on Gospel Library**

START

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1).

READ TOGETHER

In this chapter the Lord speaks like a parent remembering a child who has grown up and gone away. Israel had turned to other gods, and the Lord had to decide what to do (Hosea 11:2; 11:7).

HOSEA 11:3–4

³I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. ⁴I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

HOSEA 11:8

⁸How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

WHAT IT TEACHES

“I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms” (verse 3). It is a picture of a parent teaching a toddler to walk. Israel never even knew who had been holding them up and healing them.

He led them “with cords of a man, with bands of love,” the way a parent holds a child’s hand (verse

4). He lifted the yoke off their jaws and set food in front of them.

In verse 8, the Lord asks, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” He says his heart is turned within him. Israel had earned destruction, and the Lord would not give them up. “For I am God, and not man,” he says (verse 9). His mercy is greater than any human patience.

Matthew saw verse 1 fulfilled in Jesus. Joseph took Mary and the young child to Egypt to escape King Herod, and they came home after Herod died. Matthew wrote that this fulfilled the words “Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:13–15). Israel was the child who wandered. Jesus is the Son who came out of Egypt and stayed true.

TALK ABOUT IT

**What have you learned to do because someone patiently held your hand?
How is the Lord like that with us?**

TAKE TO CHURCH

The Lord taught Israel to walk and led them with bands of love. When they wandered, he asked, “How shall I give thee up?” He feels that way about each of us.