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Taste and See ([Psalm 34:8](#))

*Let not **mercy** and **truth** [or **steadfast love** and **faithfulness**] forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the tablet of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. — [Proverbs 3:3-4](#)*

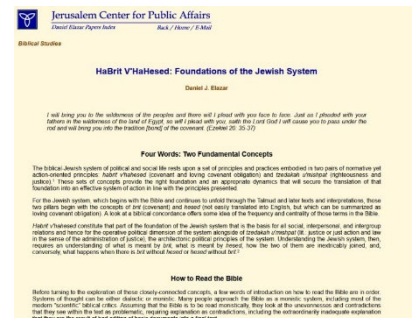
God describes His character in the Old Testament (OT) using the **dynamic duo** of “steadfast love” (*hesed* or *chesed* in Hebrew) and “faithfulness.” He used the flexibly rich word [hesed](#) or [chesed](#) around 250 times in the OT, over half the occurrences in the Psalms. When the Lord explained Himself to Moses at the golden calf incident ([Exodus 34:6-7](#)), it was a self-description He used. Though only demonstrated perfectly in God’s person, the [standard](#) applies for guiding human behavior in governance, too. The above cited Proverb expresses advice from King Solomon to his sons. God’s ‘Wordly’ **dynamic duo** would have well served Rehoboam, the next king had he demonstrated their meaning in response to a demand for tax relief from Israel’s tribal leaders! If the late Queen Elizabeth of England could refresh her son Charles’ memory at today’s coronation of a ruler legally owning [a sixth of the earth’s surface](#), her counsel might be similar. She exercised her powers of influence to serve people with felt love and faithfulness. May God’s exemplary steadfast love and faithfulness be what others perceive from us.

Come and See ([Psalm 66:5](#))

A troubling reality while living in cultures where bribery abounds stems from the lack of steadfast love and faithfulness by the actors who govern. In the absence of God’s Law given to Moses as the bedrock of justice, there is no considered need. Bribes recognize persons of prominence being honored for their power to act. As a result, injustice foments because the **dynamic duo** lacks. This again became obvious after our Tuesday return to Bondoukou. We received a visit from our Ivorian brother, who has worked for years to finalize the legal paperwork on one property his family has owned for generations. As those papers now appear settled, a second landholding enters into question. A greater than \$30,000 project in the 1990s developed that area which is the principal funding goal of the agricultural project. He learned in the last month that local paperwork submitted (to answer a national government claim on the land for creating a military facility) was falsified. His name and the tribal designation of the land into perpetuity for community development projects were not noted. In addition, gatekeepers for the 5th appointed political leader within the last eight years did not grant him an appointment with the magistrate. He asked Verlin to go with him to try again for an appointment, hoping the presence and testimony of an outsider would help. The strategy seems to have worked, but what a frustration that the step was needed to re-initiate a program known to help herders and shepherds! Sadly, due to the continued recognition of bribes as a signal of ordained authority, the success of citizens proceeding through legal means is often limited except a greater power gets invoked in a classic [missionary use of encounters](#).

Prayer & Praise

- ☞ Thankfully, we arrived safely in Bondoukou. We both took anti-malarial drugs this week, letting us recover quickly by treating our symptoms early. Fatigue dissipates; the joys of exercise resume!
 - ☞ Pray for a resolution to the land issue mentioned and others soon to impact church properties. Pray that government officials respond quickly and resist bribes while determining rightful land owners.
 - ☞ Pray that the Ivorian CHE trainer will free himself to edit the UFHB CHE lessons. He changed plans and did not come this week as anticipated. His assistance will likely speed up the process.
- Your partners in the Gospel, Verlin & Debbie



An excellent [standard](#) from which to explain the Biblical, congregational, federal, & Baptist non-hierarchical governance encouraged by CHE. (We seek permission to provide a FR PDF.)



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