

DONALD J. WILLS  
SENIOR PASTOR

JUNE  
2019

# COMMUNITY

IT'S TIME



ADULT CONNECT  
CLASS CURRICULUM



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

## *A Note From Our Pastor*

Dear FBC family and friends,

This month we begin a new study in the book of Hosea. It is a picture of the relationship between the nation of Israel and God. As God's chosen people, they had wandered from a loyal relationship with Him to that of an idolatrous relationship with other gods. However, as you will see in this study, God is long-suffering and patient with us—just as He was with Israel for the purpose of reconciliation.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

As we go through this study, you will see that God is in the business of reconciliation. As Paul tells us in the New Testament, God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself ([2 Cor 5:19](#)). As a loving and loyal God, He desires a loving and loyal people.

-Blessings  
Pastor Don



## *Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively*

### *Introduce*

**Day 1:** Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Instruct*

**Day 2:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

**Day 3:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Inspire*

**Day 4:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Incorporate*

**Day 5:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

**Day 6:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

**Day 7:** Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.



**Contents**  
**June Lesson Plan**

3



**June 2, 2019**

The Consequences of Sin  
in the Community

[Hosea 1:1-11](#)

19



**June 9, 2019**

The Charges brought  
against the Community

[Hosea 2:1-13](#)

33



**June 16, 2019**

The Covenant of the Lord  
with the Community

[Hosea 2:14-23](#)

47



**June 23, 2019**

The Compassion of the Lord  
for the Community

[Hosea 3:1-5](#)

61



**June 30, 2019**

The Chastisement  
of the Community

[Hosea 4:1-11](#)

*June 2, 2019*



# *The Consequences of Sin in the Community*

## *Hosea 1:1-11*

Focal Verse:

"Then God said: 'Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God.'"

back to  
Table of  
Contents

Hosea 1:9

## Introduce

Sitting at a picnic table in the backyard under the cloudless sunshine that warmed the early Spring day, Johnny's shrill voice pierced the silence. "Miss," he exclaimed! With a devious smirk, he then called out succinctly, "B-4." David, his long-time friend, sheepishly replied with frustration, "Hit." To which Johnny made a high-pitched whistle of a missile descending followed by the imitation of an explosion. This scenario continued turn-after-turn with the same results until David cried, "You sank my battleship." In fact, never once did David ever hit any of Johnny's flotilla of vessels, but somehow Johnny never once missed any of his. This happened game-after-game, causing David's suspicion to grow intensely.

David wanted to determine how Johnny could identify the location of his ships so effectively, so he positioned a mirror in the bushes where he could see Johnny's board since they always played the game of *Battleship* in the same spot at the picnic table.

The game started as usual, but it didn't take long for David to surmise what was occurring. Suddenly, he screamed, "You're cheating! You don't have any of your ships on the board!" In anger, David lunged at the board, knocking it over and sending the pieces flying into the air and then crashing to the ground. He then jumped on top of Johnny and they



began tussling as they rolled on the ground. The noise alerted Johnny's parents who came quickly to break up the skirmish.

Taking Johnny aside, his mother began to explain that all games have boundaries by which the players must abide. Like any player, she emphasized that he must respect and abide by these boundaries for the game to work properly. She continued to explain that God has also given us boundaries in life by which we must live. If we fail to live according to those boundaries and break them, we will face consequences for our sin and disobedience. Reminding Johnny that Jesus told His disciples that they should "love [their] neighbor as [themselves]," she proceeded to explain the consequences that he would face for cheating and fighting with his best friend. Johnny wasn't happy, but

## Introduce

at least he understood and learned a valuable lesson in life.

As we open the book of Hosea, God uses His prophet to declare an important message to Israel. He reminds them that their actions and behaviors have consequences. In fact, the Lord explicitly outlined these consequences to Moses in [Deuteronomy chapters 27 and 28](#) which serve as a backdrop to the book of Hosea. If the people would obey the Lord and follow His commands, they would be blessed; if they didn't, then they would heap curses upon themselves. Unfortunately, in the eighth century BC at the time of Hosea and Isaiah, the people in the northern kingdom of Israel disobeyed the Lord and refused to repent. Consequently, God sent Hosea to tell them the consequences of their choices. As we learned in our study of Ephesians, God has called us to be distinguished through holy living, so that we can represent Him with honor. When sin enters the community, however, it will always result in negative consequences and God Himself will enact judgment. Therefore, let us be a community that exhibits holiness and avoids the consequences of the curse of sin.

Key  
Question

According to Scripture, what are the consequences of sin for both non-believers and believers?



### Hosea 1:1-3

#### ***THE PROBLEM OF UNFAITHFULNESS IN THE COMMUNITY:***

Writing at the same time as the prophet Isaiah during the mid to late 700s BC, **Hosea** addresses a corrupt and unfaithful community which has turned from the Lord and become like the secular cultures around them. During the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel had enjoyed a time of peace and stability in which many in the community sought the Lord. In the years following, however, the nation descended into strife and turmoil because they had forsaken their relationship with the Lord and began to live immorally and reprehensibly as they did during the period of the Judges where “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” ([Judg 17:6](#)). As a result, it had become difficult to differentiate an Israelite from members of any other secular culture at the time. With only a few exceptions, Israel’s kings rejected the Lord and aligned themselves with the evil practices and religions of other cultures. When **the word of the Lord came to Hosea**, his culture and community very much resembled that of our own day (v. 1).

At the time of **Hosea**, Israel was separated into two regions or kingdoms: the Southern Kingdom typically identified as Judah and the Northern Kingdom usually referred to as Israel.

**Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah** governed in this chronological succession over the Southern Kingdom of Judah to whom Amos and Isaiah prophesied and warned of impending conflict with Assyria and Babylon unless the people repented and mended their ways. **Jeroboam the son of Joash**, sometimes called Jeroboam II, reigned over the Northern Kingdom of Israel to whom Hosea directed His prophecies from the Lord. During Jeroboam’s forty-one-year reign ([2 Kings 14:23](#)), the nation of Israel fared well politically and economically. He expanded the nation’s territory and the people as a whole became wealthy, prosperous, and independent as a general



## Instruct

rule ([2 Kings 14:25, 28-29](#)). With this prosperity and independence came all kinds of problems which involved materialism of the people, corruption of the leadership, and exploitation of the poor—which can be seen in the book of Amos which precedes **Hosea** by a few decades.

With the increase in wealth and prosperity, the people no longer felt they “needed” the Lord and abandoned Him altogether. Instead of directing the people to seek the Lord and providing an example for them to follow, **Jeroboam** as their **king** continued to participate in idolatry and drive them further from reconciliation with the Lord. 2 Kings 14:24 reports, “And he did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin.” Although people, events, and circumstances can’t “make” us sin, they can put pressure on us to conform to their ways and lead us further down a path of destruction. We live in an ever-increasing materialistic world in which people engage in selfish activities in the spirit of independence and freedom. In such a society, for example, people will spend more than three hours watching movies like *Avengers: End Game*, but many won’t serve the Lord with such equal zeal! Material possessions and entertainment seem to have more value than a relationship with the Lord (see [Matt 6:24](#)).

In what ways can the spirit of materialism drive us further from the Lord as a society?

Question  
# 1

Today, materialism has come to define our culture and, in many ways, it has infiltrated



the church, causing strife and disillusionment within the community. For instance, many people treat the church as a marketplace and attend on occasion when they feel they can get what they need. Take a moment to examine the influence of the consumerist culture on our vocabulary: some “shop” for a church, others change churches

because they aren’t meeting their needs, or some may even display the attitude that

“the customer is always right” when they don’t get their way. In many ways, however, we must be a positive advertisement for Christ. Certainly, the church must be a place that meets needs, disciples others, and draws people to Christ, but too often people fail to invest and serve with the right purpose! Many want to get rather than give. God has graciously given us blessings in abundance and will continue to do so; therefore, we must give just as He has sacrificially given to us.

In addition, those in wealthy and materialistic societies tend to focus on leisure and entertainment. These things aren’t inherently wrong themselves, but when they receive priority over our relationship with Christ they have become idols and, therefore, sinful. We don’t have to look far to see how the church competes with entertainment—whether movies, social media, video games, sports, hobbies, or recreational activities. People often plan their lives around these activities which they consider important and enriching. However, the cost of these activities often goes far beyond monetary value because they often come at the expense of a relationship with Christ! People fill their calendars with activities and social events, but they often relegate Christ to an insignificant portion—even if they dedicate any time at all for devotion, evangelism, or attending church!

In what ways have we seen materialism influence the church? How can we take steps as individuals and as a community to have the right perspective in Christ?

Question  
# 2

A materialistic mindset proves harmful because people begin to perceive that they can control their own destinies and they don’t need any guidance from the Lord. When left to their own devices and desires, they tend to make foolish decisions that create problems and lead to dysfunction. Consequently, they pursue pleasures, possessions, and practices which make them “feel good” at the moment regardless of their inherent truthfulness and morality; hence, our society promotes the attitude “if it feels good, do it.” Yet, these physical things never satisfy and eventually develop into an unquenchable longing for more. Therefore, people’s happiness doesn’t last because it depends upon their circumstances for satisfaction. Without God, people will continually search for direction and purpose in life—never truly understanding why they were created. With Christ, on the other hand, we can have true joy in the midst of any circumstance because we will know our purpose and have clear direction in life; however, this requires us to swallow our pride and admit we must depend wholly upon the Lord.

## Instruct

God's command for Hosea to **go** and **take a wife of harlotry** and **children of harlotry** sounds strange to our ear, but it presents a striking picture which captures Israel's unfaithfulness as a people to the Lord (v. 2). The Hebrew word translated **harlotry** is actually plural and refers to *acts* of fornication or adultery. In fact, the word hardly ever refers to the profession of prostitution; thus, God hasn't told Hosea to marry a "prostitute," but in His foreknowledge based on Gomer's character the Lord did direct him to marry an unfaithful woman who would break the sacred bounds of marriage. As a result, this relationship depicts how Israel had become unfaithful to the Lord and compromised themselves with other cultures.

Hosea explains that **the land has committed great harlotry** because the people have **departed from the Lord**. It wasn't an intentional or drastic shift, but over time they began to drift because they failed to cultivate their relationship with the Lord daily and exclusively. Gradually, the nation began to break the boundaries of their covenant with



Him—particularly the first two commandments which prohibit the worship and service of other gods—until they abandoned their relationship with the Lord altogether ([Exod 20:3-6](#)). The same seems to have occurred in Hosea's marriage to **Gomer**. Other than God's description of her as an unfaithful wife, their marriage begins like any other without a hint

of infidelity. Just as the Lord had instructed, Hosea **went** and **took Gomer**, identified further as **the daughter of Diblaim**, as his wife (v. 3). After the consummation of the marriage, **she conceived and bore a son** to him.

As the years passed and the events progressed as recorded in the book of Hosea, she became unfaithful to her husband. However, this process didn't occur overnight, but gradually. Adultery, for example, usually doesn't occur in a one-time, immediate decision, but in a stolen lustful glance, in a casual, but sordid conversation, in an illicit emotional connection, and in unrestrained thoughts. Although the text doesn't give us an exact number of years that transpired and led to her adulterous affair described



in the third chapter, it does imply a few years since she gave birth to three children and had **weaned** at least one of them (v. 8). Unfortunately, the rockiness in this marriage illustrates Israel's relationship with the Lord well as they continue to move further and further from their first love (see [Rev 2:4](#)).

Many times, acts of unfaithfulness begin slowly as a process where we move away from the Lord rather than a stark choice which comes upon us suddenly. In some instances, we may not even realize how far we've drifted in our relationship with Him. Such a slow departure may begin by placing Bible study on the back burner until one day we don't even read it at all. It may begin by shortening our prayer time and then failing to pray at all except at random times when we may face difficult situations or need something. In addition, we may attend church less frequently to be strengthened and encouraged by other believers as we grow together in the Lord. Eventually, however, the lack of prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship and discipleship will influence every decision until we become like the Israelites and ignore the Lord in our daily lives altogether.



What safe guards can we take to keep from unfaithful actions against the Lord?

Question  
# 3

### **Hosea 1:4-6, 8-9**

#### **THE PUNISHMENT LEVIED AGAINST THE UNFAITHFUL:**

When **Gomer** gave birth to their first-born **son**, Hosea was instructed by God to **name** the child **Jezreel** which would have had special significance to the people of Israel because of the city and valley to which his name paralleled (v. 4). With this symbolic act, the Lord begins to outline the consequences of their unfaithfulness toward Him. Therefore, He explains that He **will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu** which would ultimately **bring an end to** the Northern **Kingdom** and the dynasty of **Jehu**.

Historically, the city of **Jezreel** typified idolatry, corruption, and violence. In this city,

## Instruct

**Jehu**, the great-grandfather of Jeroboam II, became king after killing the corrupt and godless King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. In a bloody reign of terror after he came to power, **Jehu** systematically slaughtered Ahab's seventy sons along with the rest of his family until none were left. Then, he subsequently tracked down and murdered forty-two of the brothers of King Ahaziah of Judah. In addition, **Jehu** concocted a deceitful plan to gather all the worshipers of Baal and destroy them in his temple (see [2 Kings 9-10](#)). Although God used him to rid the nation of Ahab and Jezebel, King **Jehu** still continued to sin and act as dishonorably as those who had come before him. [2 Kings 10:31](#) interjects, "Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam."

Although we are ultimately responsible for our own actions, how do / can our sinful actions influence others?

Question  
# 4

Just as quickly as **Jehu** had come to power through deceit and murder, God would **avenge** his senseless **bloodshed** and **bring an end** to the reign of his family over the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This would be a total military defeat as Hosea proclaims that on **that day it will come to pass** that the Lord **will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel** (v. 5). Most of us probably know this valley better as Megiddo where the final battle takes place in the book of Revelation (Armageddon). To Israel, it represented a valley in which several important battles took place. In some, like that of Deborah and Barak ([Judges 4-5](#)) and Gideon ([Judges 6-8](#)), God victoriously fought with Israel; in others, such as those against the Philistines ([1 Sam 29-31](#)) and the Egyptians ([2 Kings 23:29-30](#)), Israel was soundly defeated. In this same Valley of Jezreel, Israel would ultimately lose their independence to the Assyrians in 733 BC and experience a total and resounding military defeat of the entire Northern Kingdom by 722 BC because of their unfaithfulness and sin against the Lord.

According to Scripture, what consequences does our sin have both here on earth and in life after death?

Question  
# 5

In short literary sequence, Gomer once again gives birth, but this time to a daughter that God tells Hosea to **name Lo-Ruhamah** which literally means "**no mercy**" (v. 6). Although an unusual name for a child, it too communicates a message to the people.

The Lord emphatically declares that He will no longer have **mercy** on Israel and will utterly take them away. Israel learned a hard lesson: our actions have consequences! God dispenses grace and **mercy** freely and He is patient with us, but there will come a time when His wrath will come upon our sin unless we repent (see [2 Peter 3:9](#)). In fact, to say that He will no longer have **mercy** implies that He has patiently and repeatedly shown the people **mercy** in the past despite their refusal to repent. God had given Israel chance after chance to return to Him, but they steadfastly refused and continued in their sinful ways; now comes their punishment. As His people, God will discipline us when we sin, but He mercifully offers us restoration when we repent and ask for forgiveness. God's **mercy** and grace don't depend upon what we do to earn them, yet they do require us to confess our sin and repent to be restored unto Him ([Eph 2:8-9](#)).

In what ways has God shown you mercy by restoring and forgiving you when you have sinned?

Question  
# 6

Those who do not have a relationship with the Lord and refuse to repent of their sins, however, will face a much more severe punishment because they will be cut off from God's **people**. Like people who "attend" church today and call themselves "Christians," but don't truly have a relationship with Christ, not every Israelite had a relationship with the Lord. Physically, they may have descended from the lineage of Abraham, but spiritually they did not have faith in the Lord like he did (see [Gen 15:6](#); [John](#)

*They answered and said to Him,  
"Abraham is our father."  
Jesus said to them,  
"If you were Abraham's children,  
you would do the works of Abraham."  
John 8:39*

[8:37-41](#)). Thus, when Gomer gives birth to a third child—another **son**—God uses his **name** to speak to this unbelieving segment in Israel and clearly outline their fate (v. 8). Ominously, Hosea names the child **Lo-Ammi** which literally translated means "not my people." The Lord explains that since they are **not** His **people** then He will **not be** their **God** (v. 9).

These unbelieving people who had a physical Hebrew heritage did not lose their place as God's **people**; on the contrary, they never were God's **people** because they never

## Instruct

had a relationship with Him! Paul explicitly expounds upon this in the New Testament when he declares, “For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, in Isaac your seed shall be called. That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed” ([Rom 9:6b-8](#)). As we will learn in [Hosea 1:10-11](#), God will deliver a remnant of people who truly have a relationship with Him from Israel just as He does through the church today. Just as with those in Israel who hardened their hearts and refused to repent, those who reject Christ and refuse to repent of their sins will be cut off from the people of God and will spend eternity separated from Him. Therefore, the choice(s) that we make here on earth have eternal consequences for where we will spend eternity.

According to Scripture, how can we know we have a relationship with Him? If we have a relationship with Him, how do we know that we can't lose our salvation?

Question  
# 7

## Hosea 1:7

### **THE PROSPECT OF MERCY IN THE MIDST OF UNFAITHFULNESS:**

Lest we end on a negative note and think hope doesn't exist, we can see in verse 7 that God extends **mercy** and grace to deliver His people! In fact, Hosea's very name means “Yahweh has delivered”; therefore, we can have hope when we read this book even though it demonstrates how calamity will come upon people who fail to repent and



surrender to the Lord. On the other hand, God will deliver people who will listen to and obey His message, seeking salvation and deliverance in Him alone! For approximately 150 years, God sent prophets like Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah to warn the people of the Northern Kingdom to turn or face judgment. He gave them multiple chances, but now judgment has come!



Although Israel had come to the end of their road because they refused to repent, God was not **yet** done with **Judah**. Whereas Israel had abused God's **mercy** and had run out of opportunities, God still showed **mercy** upon the house of **Judah** and declared that He Himself would **save them**. Indeed, God would deliver them without any military warfare or weapons (i.e. **bow, sword, battle, horse, or horsemen**). Instead, He would give them more time to repent and change their ways lest they follow the same path to destruction that their brothers in the north did. For approximately another 200 years, God would send prophets like Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah to warn the people to repent and serve Him alone. God shows us **mercy** every day—sometimes in ways that we don't even expect or notice. Yet, we must be ready to receive God's **mercy** and follow His plan unless we become like the people of Israel. Therefore, let us reflect upon His **mercy** and give Him thanks for all that He has done and will do for us!

In what ways does God show us mercy as His people?

Question  
# 8

## Hosea 1:10-11

### THE PROMISE OF RESTORATION TO THE FAITHFUL:

In the final two verses, God reminds the believing remnant in Israel that He will remain faithful to His promises (covenants). In verse 10, Hosea focuses on God's covenant with Abraham, particularly on His promise to make his descendants like **the sand of the sea**—great and innumerable ([Gen 22:7](#)). In Abraham, God had taken an idolater who worshiped the gods of his forefathers and transformed him to become the father of many nations who would believe ([Gen 17:4](#)). Like every one of us, Abraham came to a point where he had to decide whether to follow the Lord and trust solely in Him or reject His covenant offer and continue living as he had always done. As we know from Scripture, Abraham believed God and followed Him. Through Abraham, therefore, God called a **people** unto Himself as **sons of the living God** ([Exod 4:22](#)) through whom He would



## Instruct

bring the Messiah who would extend salvation to the whole world and call to Himself a **people** from among every nation.

As a whole, these two verses look forward to the ultimate day of restoration in the **great day of Jezreel** where all God's **people** (both from Israel and the church) will be united in Christ upon His return. Thus, the blessings promised to Abraham have now come to fruition to an even greater extent in Christ! As we will see in [Hosea 2:23](#), God will call a **people** unto Himself who were formerly not His **people** and provide salvation for them through the Messiah just as He did for Israel. To give the remnant hope, Hosea notes that both **Israel and Judah** will **be gathered together** on **that** day and **appoint for themselves one head**—that is the promised Messiah (v. 11). From the beginning, God Himself provided the way that we can be reconciled and restored unto Him. Salvation doesn't depend upon our heritage, physical lineage, or any other ritual; it freely comes through the perfect sacrifice of Christ Jesus promised to us. To inherit such a grand and wonderful gift, we must only choose to accept it. As we look back upon God's interaction with Israel in the Old Testament, we can know assuredly that God will fulfill His promises because we see the result of those promises clearly upheld in the New Testament through Christ.

From Scripture, what promises give you hope in the midst of such a wicked generation?

Question  
# 9

In the introduction, we met Johnny who cheated and broke the rules for the game *Battleship*. We all have something in common with Johnny! We have broken God's boundaries by which He has called us to live. Because we have broken those boundaries, we will face the consequences, namely the wrath of God upon our sin which leads to death and destruction in the end. Unfortunately, many people go through life oblivious to the consequences of sin and think somehow it will all work out in the end. They may even erroneously believe that a loving and merciful God will not punish sin, so they can live however they choose. Technically, as Israel discovered, we don't have an unlimited number of chances to repent and a day will come when God says, "Enough!" and those who remain in their sin apart from Christ will be separated eternally from Him.

Fortunately, however, we have a merciful Creator who grants us many chances to repent and turn to Him. He has even provided salvation to the entire world through the Messiah in fulfillment of the covenants that He has made. Indeed, God will forgive any and every sin if only we would ask Him. He will forgive the vilest and most repugnant sinner, but it requires that we ask. In Hosea, Israel refused to seek forgiveness and repent of their sins, so God's wrath came upon them fully. We can't afford to live like Israel did and blatantly ignore the consequences of sin. As both individuals and a community, we must seek forgiveness in Christ and be reconciled with Him, so that we might be delivered from our sins and spend eternity with Him.

## *Incorporate*

In what ways do you see a lack of commitment or faithfulness amongst church members today?

How should we deal with sin in the community scripturally so that we as a whole we can be in right standing with the Lord?

In what ways does the book of Hosea give us hope even though we live in a materialistic and ungodly society?



# ***Journal: Document God's Work***

June 9, 2019



# *The Charges brought against the Community*

## *Hosea 2:1-13*

Focal Verse:

“Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts.”

Hosea 2:2

back to  
Table of  
Contents

## Introduce

Great anticipation filled the air as the gallery of the courtroom filled with eager onlookers who arrived early to find a seat. Not long after the top of the hour, the selected members of the jury entered single-file, following the bailiff. The public defender and the accused had already taken their seats along with the prosecutor behind tables positioned in the center of the room. Suddenly, the voice of the bailiff boomed, “All rise. The Honorable William T. Justice is presiding.” With that announcement, Judge Justice banged his gavel, declaring the court in session. He then directed



that the charges against the defendant be read. The defendant stared at the table while he listened to the litany of charges being levied against him. One charge after another was rattled off the lengthy list. First, the defendant received the extraordinary charge of unfaithfulness against him. He began turning red as if he found himself on the “naughty list” at Christmas and would only receive a lump of coal in his stocking, but he realized that the consequences would be much more severe this time. Second, the charges of lying and fraud were brought against him—even noting that he had “behaved shamefully.” The prosecution had so thoroughly conducted their research that they provided hundreds of specific dates on which he had lied—some dating back to his earliest recollection as a child. The defendant sank lower in his seat, seemingly losing all hope of being found innocent and living as a free man again. The reading of the charges seemed to last hours because of their thoroughness. This set the courtroom abuzz, causing the judge to bang the gavel in frustration to declare order. When the room quieted, Judge Justice said, “You’ve heard the charges against you. How do you plead?” The defendant said nothing in reply—even when his attorney tried to prod him by nudging his arm; still, he sat and simply stared down. Unphased, the judge asserted, “Sir, your silence speaks volumes and is a consent to these unrighteous deeds which you have perpetrated repeatedly throughout your life.” He continued, “Put away this unfaithfulness in your life and turn from this lifestyle.

## Introduce

Do what is right!" Intrigued, the man looked up at Judge Justice for the first time. In a startling and striking statement, the Judge shouts, "Mercy is shown!" As he bangs the gavel, Judge Justice proclaims the man "guilty," but "forgiven" by virtue of mercy if he would only truly repent and turn from his wicked ways.

Like many of the old detective and crime-fighting shows on classic television, we can say that the names in this scenario have been changed, but the events were real. In Hosea 2:1-13, the Lord charges Israel with being an unfaithful community who has "behaved shamefully" (2:5). Certainly, we will face consequences for our sin, but God in His love has "shown [us] mercy" (2:1) because He affords us the opportunity to repent. As badly as Israel had gone astray, God still offered them a chance to repent when He declared, "Let her put away her harlotries from her sight" (2:2). Unfortunately, however, Israel refused to listen and failed to respond in repentance. As humans, we are all guilty of sin, but let us not be a community who hears the charges brought against us and fails to act in repentance. Let us repent and be in right standing with the Lord as His people!

Key  
Question

What charges could be brought against you as God's child?  
Have you repented and made things right?



### Hosea 2:1

#### HOPE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE:

This chapter begins where the previous one ends with a note of hopeful proclamation. The Lord directs Hosea to **say to his brothers, "My people,"** and **to his sisters, "Mercy is shown"** (v. 1). Even during the times which may seem darkest and most troublesome, we can have hope because God remains constant and faithful. His character and disposition never change toward us; He is always loving, gracious, and merciful. Although God must punish sin, He doesn't direct His wrath against us as people, but specifically against our sin. For this reason, Paul states, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" ([Rom 1:18](#)). Even in His wrath against sin, God displays love and **mercy** because He always stands ready to forgive when we ask.

Remember that in verse 1 Hosea is speaking directly to the believing remnant in Israel to encourage them in the midst of this ungodly culture. In many ways, we can probably identify with this remnant because the wicked and perverse greatly outnumber us in today's world. When we look at the course of the world around us, we may become discouraged and lose hope, even at times thinking "what difference does it make?" Yet, hope abounds in the Lord! This same God who has **shown mercy** to us will readily show **mercy** to the world around us. Like Hosea, we must declare this message of hope—not just to fellow believers, but



the entire world in hope that some may repent and turn to God from their wicked ways. Although we can't show **mercy** to others in exactly the same way as Christ who can forgive sins and restore relationships, we can still imitate His compassion in other ways. First, we need to speak the truth in love like Hosea did and point the world to the true source of hope. We can find hope in nothing else other than Jesus Christ. The hymn *On Christ the Solid Rock* captures this idea best in the first stanza which declares, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name." Second, we must willingly

## Instruct

forgive rather than harbor bitterness and seek revenge. Even here in this courtroom setting in Hosea in which God brings charges against His people, He still offers them a chance to repent and seek forgiveness. Third, we can meet their physical needs while reminding them that only Christ can fully satisfy just as Hosea did for Israel who had forgotten from where their provision came (see [vv. 8-9](#)). Hope exists only in Christ; like this believing remnant in Israel, we have a greater hope to which we can look forward because of the **mercy** which God has **shown** us! Now, let us show **mercy** to others as the Lord has **shown** it to us!

In what other ways can we show mercy and compassion to the world around us?

Question  
# 1

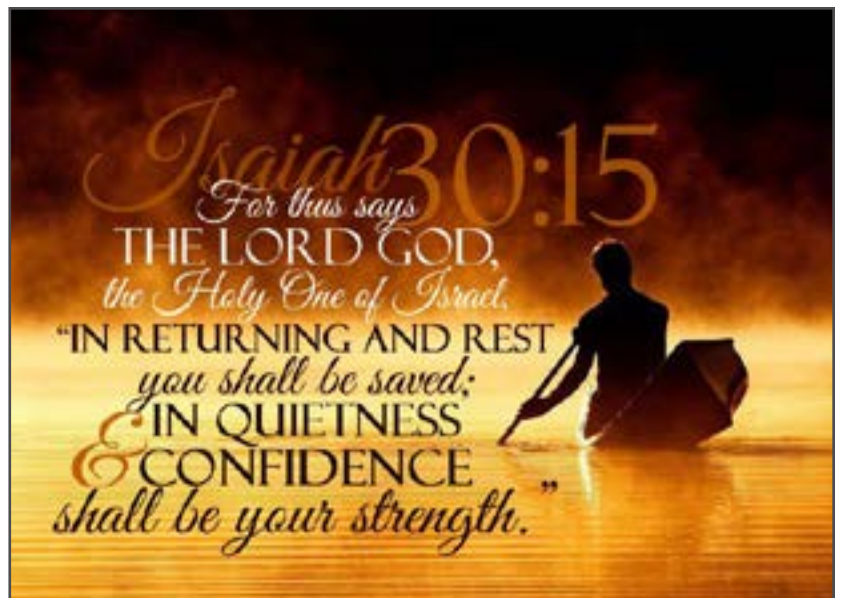
## Hosea 2:2-5

### ***A CALL TO PENANCE:***

After this brief declaration of hope, Hosea returns to outlining the **charges** against Israel (v. 2). In this figurative courtroom setting, the adulterous children (Hosea 1:2) serve as witnesses and **bring charges** against their **mother** (Israel). The children aren't innocent pawns in this case, but individually they reflect their mother's unfaithfulness and wickedness. In other words, the people's individual actions bear witness and substantiate the **charges** against the nation as a whole. After the children are summoned to testify, the **Husband** (the Lord) brings charges against His **wife** (Israel). He declares, "**For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!**" God isn't seeking a "divorce" from Israel or to void His covenants with her, but rather He wants restitution and reconciliation with her. He wants her to come back to Him! Hence, God demonstrates in very specific terms how they have been unfaithful in their relationship with Him, so that they might amend their ways.

Before detailing the specific **charges** against Israel, the Lord offers a general call to repentance and bids the people to **put away their harlotries from her sight** (v. 2). In typical Hebrew poetic style, Hosea repeats this call to repentance with slightly varied wording for emphasis: Israel should **put away** their **adulteries from between her breasts**. Thus, God invites them to stop chasing after so-called foreign gods and re-dedicate themselves to Him alone. As humans, we tend to point fingers and decry how badly Israel (or others) have acted, but we may often find ourselves in these very

same situations. In a world which has many things competing for our attention, it can become very easy to lose focus and cast the Lord aside. Before we judge Israel harshly, we must examine our own lives to measure how faithful we have been. Let us spend time in prayer this week, asking Him to reveal any area of unfaithfulness and repenting where we have fallen short.



Why is it important to confess and repent from specific sins as much as possible rather than just offering a general prayer for repentance?

Question  
# 2

In verse 4, the Lord also announces that He **will not have mercy on her children** because they too have participated in her **harlotry**. God isn't transferring the sins of the **mother** upon the **children**; just because they have been born illegitimately doesn't mean that they have inherited her sins. On the contrary, **they are children of harlotry** because they too chose to practice these sins. Think of the nation of Israel as the **mother** and the individual citizens as the **children**. Not every individual in Israel had forsaken the Lord; some still faithfully served Him. A remnant, however, maintained a relationship with the Lord through whom He would bring revival and restoration to the nation as well as the entire world despite the prevailing wickedness of most people. As a community in a wicked world today, we must not disparage our relationship with the Lord by compromising our biblical values and morals by participating in ungodly cultural practices. In the New Testament, Paul urges Christians to reject false doctrine and purge sinful practices from their lives because "anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" ([2 Tim 2:21](#)). We must keep ourselves pure and unstained by worldly influences, serving the Lord faithfully as an example to others.

In what ways can our culture and social environment influence us? Why are we still responsible for our own choices?

Question  
# 3

## Instruct

Having offered Israel one final chance to repent, the Lord announces the consequences she will face if she refuses. If Israel refuses to repent of her sins and return to Him, **He will strip her naked and expose her like the day she was born** (v. 3). This signifies that the Lord will abandon the people and leave them helpless like an infant. The Lord has always provided for Israel, but as a whole she has forgotten the source of her blessings and rejected Him; so, if she fails to repent, the Lord will leave her on her own like a helpless newborn infant and He will no longer provide for her which will ultimately lead to her demise. For this reason, the Lord will no longer provide rain for their crops and the land will become desolate and infertile; thus, He will **make her like a wilderness** (i.e. desert), **set her like a dry land**, and **slay her with thirst**.

Whether we cognitantly acknowledge it or not, the Lord has always provided for us and sustained us. He has even provided salvation through His Son if only we would repent! If we fail to repent, however, we will face eternal destruction—"for the wages of sin is death" ([Rom 6:23](#)). God offers every one of us a chance to repent, but He doesn't force us. If we refuse to repent, we will suffer a terrible fate; the God who loves us and wants a relationship with us will give us what we really want! As Paul says in [Romans 1:24-](#)

And since they did not see fit to  
acknowledge God, God gave them  
up to a **debased mind**  
to do what ought not to be done  
**ROMANS 1:28**

[25 and 28](#), God gives us over to a depraved mind with which we seek to satisfy the lusts of the flesh and commit unspeakable acts of sinfulness. The word translated "gave up" in these verses from Romans means "to abandon." Just like God "abandoned" Israel and allowed her to chase after other gods and destroy herself in the process, He will "abandon" us to

our own selfish desires and ultimate destruction. What a terrible thought that God would abandon us to our own thoughts and desires! The good news, however, is that we don't have to resign ourselves to this destruction; we can choose to accept His offer to repent!

How would you explain the concept of repentance to someone in our day?

Question  
# 4



In verse 5, God specifically defines the charges against Israel who **has played the harlot** and **has behaved shamefully**. Israel wasn't subtly seduced by other cultures and their gods; she actually pursued them willfully and vigorously. She didn't even try to hide her idolatry, but acted **shamefully** for all to see. She even declared in her heart, **"I will go after my lovers."** Israel had become captivated by the allure of these other cultures' seeming wealth and prosperity. She sought after their **bread and water, wool and linen, and oil and drink**. She wanted to experience their riches and successes! To borrow the old expression, the grass always looks greener on the other side. Israel wrongly assumed other cultures had it better; they had forgotten how much the Lord had truly blessed them!

Sin always looks alluring and attractive, seeking to meet all our desires and fulfill our deepest longings. However, sin only delivers upon one promise: destruction. Those who live in sin may seem to have it all. They may seem free from care, but, in reality, they are enslaved to addiction. They may seem to have solid relationships, but most truly feel alone and isolated—just look at how disconnected and dysfunctional relationships have become in our society. Those who live in sin may seem to have abundant wealth and riches, but these things can vanish in an instant and none of them are eternal. Above all, they may outwardly seem to be filled with happiness and joy, but they really feel empty inside because they continually search for something more that will satisfy. They have no direction or purpose in life, but they wander aimlessly and hopelessly in search of something they can never attain outside of Christ.



In what ways does sin look attractive, but truly leave one feeling empty?

Question  
# 5

## ***Hosea 2:6-8***

### ***NO SATISFACTION IN SINFUL PURSUITS:***

Once again, the Lord explains the consequences for Israel's sin. **Therefore**, He says



## Instruct

that He **will hedge up her way with thorns, wall her in**, and obscure **her paths** (v. 6). In an allusion to the forthcoming exile under Assyria, God asserts that He will cage the people like an ignorant animal which continually wanders astray (see [Isa 1:3-4](#)). As He shows in the upcoming verses, the people have forgotten that the true source of their prosperity and joy comes from Him alone. As a result, Israel will no longer have the freedom to explore and experience the pleasures of life. Furthermore, God reveals that Israel will search for satisfaction and contentment in life, but will never find any. Although the nation will experience captivity in exile, she will continue to seek after her own desires in hope of finding satisfaction, but she will never find it. Consequently, God notes that **she will chase her lovers, but not overtake them**; for emphasis, he also points out that **she will seek them, but not find them**.

In what ways does sin promise to satisfy, but fail to deliver?

Question  
# 6

To show how sin enslaves rather than satisfies, we don't have to look far for an example. At some point in our lives, we have all lied. Lying may seem the best way to get out



of trouble (or keep from getting into trouble) at the time; however, it always leads to many more problems. Just one lie requires an infinite number of other lies to continue the ruse and cover our tracks in the long run. Not only do we become a slave to lying, but we also become a slave to worry. We must constantly worry about what we say and to whom we said it so that we can keep our story straight. Therefore, we must constantly look over our shoulder, hoping that no one will catch us in our deceit. Furthermore, no matter how good we

think our lie may be, the truth will always surface. In the moment, we forget that the Lord sees even what we do in secret and He knows the truth. Even if we get away with a lie here on earth, we will stand exposed and accountable before the Lord.

After outlining the consequences of Israel's sin, God reveals the purpose for her punishment. He doesn't punish Israel out of spite and vindictiveness; He does it so that Israel may realize her folly and repent. One day Israel will realize that she had it

better with the Lord and remember who truly provided for her. Thus, the people will eventually **say**, “**I will go and return to my first husband for it was better for me than now.**” Interestingly, in Hebrew, the word translated **return** also means **repent**. Israel must *turn* from her sin and **return** to her relationship with the Lord characterized by righteousness. As any parent and child knows, discipline should always seek to correct a problem and produce a change in behavior. As our heavenly Father, God functions in the same way. He doesn’t punish us because He takes pleasure in it or because He enjoys taking away our fun in life and making us suffer; He punishes us so that we might know the correct path in life that we ought to take—to keep us safe and give us an even more abundant life than we could imagine.

For this reason, God takes time to emphasize what led to this punishment. When engaging in discipline as parents, we should be clear about the behavior that led to the problem. A general punishment with an undefined problem will never produce specific life-change! Consequently, God reminds the people that they **did not know** He was always the source of their provision (v. 8). Instead, they attributed their bountiful harvest and abundant wealth to the Canaanite storm-god, **Baal**. They attributed their success to a false god! The Lord, however, **gave** them their **grain, new wine, and oil**; He was the One who multiplied their **silver and gold**. We may not attribute our success in the twenty-first century to a false god, but we do have the tendency to forget what the Lord has graciously done for us. When we forget, then we tend to attribute our success to our own hard work or even the ingenuity of mankind. God alone has made all things possible; only He should receive the glory for our triumphs and successes.

In what ways has God blessed you that you may not generally remember to give Him praise?

Question  
# 7

## **Hosea 2:9-13**

### **SIN ALWAYS LEADS TO PUNISHMENT:**

The last section we will study this week details the specific punishments that God will levy against Israel because of her sin. Because they have forgotten the Lord, He will no longer be their source of provision (which He has already stated in v. 3). He **will take away** their **grain** at harvesttime, their grapes will not produce (i.e. **new wine**), and they will not have any **wool** or **linen** to produce clothing (v. 9). Moreover, He will **destroy** their vineyards and **fig trees** which have become their chief source of wealth from the secular nations (v. 12). The land will become overgrown like a jungle and overrun with

## Instruct

wild animals that will eat the produce. Their booming economy which had given them



Picture from the Great Depression in 1936 in Oklahoma.

their prosperity and confidence will collapse and they will have absolutely nothing. Israel had relied on a false god who cannot help them and who did not provide for them. Through this punishment, God is showing Israel what they truly have without Him—nothing! In addition, all the other nations (i.e. **lovers**) will see her evil deeds (i.e. **lewdness**) and she can do nothing to avert this punishment by the

**hand** of the Lord (v. 10). Indeed, God is merciful and forgiving, but our sinful actions have consequences. We know the consequences for those who reject Christ and refuse to repent is death. For those of us who have a relationship with Christ, we have received forgiveness for all our sin and have life in Him, but in our imperfect human existence we will still sin. We cannot lose our salvation when we err, but God still disciplines and corrects us. When we sin, God calls us to repent and be restored unto Him ([1 John 1:9](#)). Although He forgives all our sin, the consequences of our actions can remain. Just as when we break traffic laws, the ticket and fine remain even if we are truly remorseful and repentant over our actions. In the same way, certain sins can cause physical problems that will remain with us the rest of our life. Similarly, we can be disqualified from serving in the church in *certain* positions when we engage in *certain* types of sinful behavior. We shouldn't dwell on our sins, but we should learn and move forward. At the same time, we must be reminded of how the Lord has forgiven us so that we won't engage in these same sins again.

In what way can we have complete forgiveness for our sin as believers, but yet the consequences still remain?

Question  
# 8

Finally, God will cause all her joy and celebration (i.e. **mirth**) to cease because all the religious festivals and rituals in which they had placed their hope will be rendered

meaningless. Even if they had kept all the rituals prescribed by the Law (**feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths**), they didn't mean anything because they worshiped Baal. They merely performed the rituals for the sake of performing! Instead of engaging in pure, holy worship of the Lord, they **burned incense** to the **Baals** (v. 13). In fact, they **decked** themselves with **earrings and jewelry**, forgetting **the Lord** altogether. Israel proved Christ's statement true: we can't serve two masters because we will love one and hate the other ([Matt 6:24](#)). God doesn't take delight in the performance of rituals because they mean nothing if our hearts aren't pure and right with Him ([Psalm 51:16-17](#)). Nothing is wrong with tradition when we know Whom we serve and why, but we will never find joy in repeating rituals mindlessly and merely going through the motions; true joy only comes from authentic service of the Lord.

In what way do we see false, pretentious worship in the church / culture today?

Question  
# 9

We serve the one true and living God who has given us His very best even though we don't deserve it. Through Christ, we can have forgiveness for our sins and escape the death penalty because He has given us His own righteousness. Although we shouldn't intentionally abuse God's patience and mercy, the repeated chances He grants us to repent and how He lovingly restores us every time demonstrates His love for us. Even when God disciplines us to correct us, He still gives us a chance to repent and learn from our mistakes. Therefore, we can never afford to forget that God is the source of all our blessings and provisions.

Unfortunately, we live amongst a culture that persistently pressures us to conform to its thinking and standards. Because we live in a country with great advantages in wealth, education, and system of government, it becomes easy to forget the Lord. We see ourselves as self-sufficient, independent, and individually successful. As long as things go well, many don't "need" the Lord. In bygone years, many turned to Him only when things went badly. However, we live in a culture now that seeks to mock and blame Him for our misfortunes and attribute our success to human ingenuity. As the church, we must be beacon of hope and a catalyst for change in our society. We can't allow culture to influence us, but we must influence culture by proclaiming the truth of Scripture. Let us not be known for the ungodly charges brought against us, but let us be known for the transformation that Christ has produced within us as we seek daily to conform to His image.



## ***Incorporate***

In what ways has our society forgotten the Lord? As a church, how can we help remind them about what He has done?

How would you respond to someone who says that a loving God wouldn't punish sin and that we'll all go to heaven regardless?

Even when we repent and are forgiven of our sins, why does it not always mean that we are free from the consequences or results of our choices?

June 16, 2019



# *The Covenant of the Lord with the Community*

## *Hosea 2:14-23*

Focal Verse:

“I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy.”

back to  
Table of  
Contents

Hosea 2:19

## Introduce

Many of us may not know the name Robert Robinson, but we've most likely sung or at least heard a song composed by him. Growing up in England during the 1700s, Robert faced difficult times early in life when his father died suddenly. As a strong-willed child, he soon began to rebel against authority which caused untold problems for his single-mother. In fact, he became too difficult for her to handle alone, so she sent him to London where she hoped that he would learn the trade to become a barber which would ultimately lead him to change course in life. However, as his personal testimony shows, this time of virtual independence led him even further astray.



While staying in London at the age of seventeen, Robert did not make wise choices in whom he selected as friends and acquaintances. The people with whom he associated began to pressure him to begin drinking and ultimately to join a street-gang. Vulnerable and impressionable, he allowed the so-called friends to shape almost every aspect of his life! Even though we live several centuries later, the life of Robert Robinson sounds so familiar with people in our own day—and it could even represent the testimony of any one of us!

One day while under the influence of alcohol, Robert's friends convinced him to visit a fortune-teller. Even in his inebriated state, he still had reservations about the things that happened during the session; therefore, when he saw a revival held by the famed preacher George Whitefield later that day, he persuaded his friends to attend! Speaking on [Matthew 3:7](#), Whitefield read John the Baptists' words: "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" That evening, the Lord spoke to Robert Robinson in a way that no fortune-teller or any other human could have ever done! Over the course of three years, He began to realize his life was headed for destruction and without repentance he would face the full wrath of God to come. On December 10, 1755, he repented of his sins and surrendered his life to Christ who radically transformed him.

## Introduce

Eventually, he surrendered to full-time ministry and at the age of twenty-three penned a hymn for his message on Pentecost. That hymn we still sing today: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. Indeed, the words of the second verse capture the answer to Robert's predicament—as well as our own: "Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood." Through the new covenant ratified in Christ, God restores our relationship with Him when we repent of our sins and surrender our lives into the complete control of His Son. Even in Hosea, God sought to restore Israel who went far astray; if they would only repent and follow Him, He would reconcile their relationship and rescue them from danger. Yet, this promise wasn't meant for Israel alone, but even for us! Hosea declares, "Then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people! And they shall say, 'You are my God!'" (Hosea 2:23). Let us repent, be restored, and live faithfully as His people redeemed by the blood of His Son and our Savior!

Key  
Question

How would you explain the concept of covenant to someone today? What is the covenant that God has with us through Jesus?

## In Reference



For Robert Robinson's story, see Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), p. 64-65.

### Hosea 2:14-16

#### **A COVENANT THAT RESTORES RELATIONSHIP:**

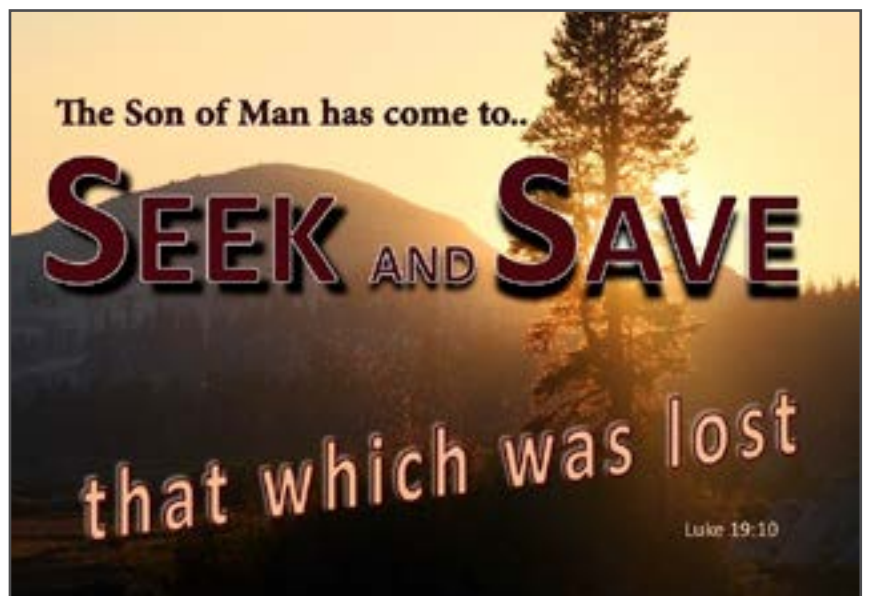
After detailing the punishment for Israel's sin, the Lord interjects an announcement which offers hope in the midst of despair. God has not completely abandoned Israel, but He seeks reconciliation and restoration with her. **Therefore**, He **will allure her and bring her into the wilderness to speak comfort to her** (v. 14). We may gloss over the word **allure**, not thinking much about its connotation, but it has great significance in understanding God's love toward us. It signifies that the Lord pursues a relationship with us! He seeks us! Just as a man pursues a relationship with a woman to make her his bride, the Lord pursues a relationship with Israel (and the church) to become His transformed and faithful bride ([Eph 5:25-28](#)). Humanly speaking, relationships don't just happen as we sit idly; a gentleman must pursue a lady by continually demonstrating how much he loves her. For most who are married, it took work and persistence and, even at times, may have had to endure rejection and difficulties. For it to work, however, it requires that both individuals pursue one another in a relationship in the end.

In our day, just like in Hosea's, we have acted unfaithfully toward the Lord and we all have pursued illicit relationships with other idols. In fact, Scripture clearly notes that we do not seek God at all because we live in sinful rebellion ([Psalm 53:1-3](#); [Rom 3:11](#)).

Despite our unfaithfulness toward Him, God loved us so much that He actively sought a relationship with us even while we were yet sinners ([Rom 5:8](#)). God didn't sit idly and watch us destroy ourselves, but He came to us! Rather than waiting for us to come to Him, He sent His Son to be our Savior and pay the penalty for our sins ([John 3:16](#)).

On our own, we could never do

anything to have a relationship with God; fortunately, however, He did everything we need through the sacrificial death on the cross of His Son whom He raised from the





## Instruct

dead three days later. God pursued a relationship with us! When we confess our sin, repent, and surrender to Christ, we will be transformed into His faithful bride who wants to pursue a relationship with Him in return.

In what ways does the Lord pursue a relationship with us?

Question  
# 1

Before God can restore Israel, she must recognize that she has sinned and broken her covenant with Him. When God says that He **will bring her into the wilderness**, He reminds Israel of her unbelief and rebellion after He brought the people out of bondage in Egypt. They wandered in the **wilderness** of Sinai for a generation because they did not trust that the Lord would deliver the land of Canaan as He had promised. Therefore, this unbelieving generation never saw the promise of God to Abraham fulfilled. Although the wilderness pictures disobedience and despair, hope is not far off! The Lord did not abandon Israel even though that generation forfeited their inheritance. He still speaks comfort to His people and gives them hope. The next generation saw God's promise fulfilled because they learned to trust Him and depend upon Him alone. As we know from history, God triumphantly worked through His people and delivered this land into their hands despite the seemingly overwhelming odds and obstacles they faced.

In what ways has God given you hope by the promises He has fulfilled?

Question  
# 2

By speaking **comfort** and reminding people of the promises He has kept, God illustrates the true purpose of discipline. Discipline should always seek to lead others to restoration; we should never engage in it purely out of anger or frustration. God implemented this discipline to correct Israel's course and bring them back into right standing with Him. Our culture, however, often misunderstands and misapplies discipline because they prevalently think it is unloving and stifles one's psyche. Nothing could be further from the truth! Those who enact discipline don't do it because they enjoy it or want to exercise power over others; they do it because they love them and want to see them have the most successful life possible. Those receiving discipline have chosen to bring the negative consequences upon themselves! Although parents can't make decisions for their children, they can point them to the

truth and guide them down the right path. By disciplining children when they lie, for instance, it teaches them the benefit of telling the truth which keeps them from making even more serious mistakes as adults—whether being fired from a job, charged with perjury in court, or ruining relationships. When a person is restored, it doesn't mean that he escapes all the negative consequences of his choice. On the contrary, the consequences remain so that he can take steps to correct the behavior and not engage in it again. At the same time, parents can still encourage (**comfort**) their children while administering a form of discipline that works effectively with that particular child. For example, parents can re-affirm that they love their children as well as show all the positive benefits associated with telling the truth by reminding them of how they have kept their promises to them (provided they have truly done so). God does the same with us! He corrects us and disciplines us while reminding us at the same time how He loves us and how He has been faithful to us.

Employee Reprimand		
Employee	Work Location	Code of Discipline Action Taken
Employee ID # (if any)	Date of Occurrence	Issuing Supervisor

**Violation Statement**  
 Place of violation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Violation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Description of Violation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disciplinary Action**  
 - Administrative Leave w/ Pay                       - Recommendation for Termination  
 - Send Home w/ Pay                                       - Suspension Without Pay \_\_\_\_ Days  
 - None     - Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Corrective Actions**  
 Description of Corrective Actions to be Taken:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- I have read this Notice of Discipline and understand it.

Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 - Employee refused to sign this form and all attached documentation.

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways can we speak words of comfort to those undergoing discipline? **Question # 3**

In verse 15, the Lord announces the ways in which He will restore Israel when she returns to Him. He **will give her vineyards** as she returns from the **wilderness** (i.e. **from there**). This restoration of her **vineyards** reminds the people of God's promise to give Abraham a land that He would show him. God initially fulfilled that promise when He brought her **up from the land of Egypt**. Because of her idolatry and disobedience, however, Israel lost the land which she had graciously received to the Assyrians. Yet, God in His infinite mercy would return their land to them after this period in exile. No longer would the land be characterized by sin as in **the Valley of Achor**, but it would be seen **as a door of hope**. No longer would the land mourn and grieve over sin, but the people will worship the Lord and **sing as in the days of her youth**. Songs and praises will burst forth as the people celebrate the Lord who has rescued them and provided for them. Once again, they will have a pure relationship with Him. They will

## Instruct

know Him intimately without any compromise!

The **Valley of Achor**, which means “valley of trouble,” was the site of Israel’s first major defeat during the time of conquest under Joshua. It looked hopeless for Israel because of the sin of one man and his family—Achan ([Josh 7:24](#)). In defiance of God, Achan had taken the forbidden spoils of war; thus, he introduced sin into the camp and brought destruction upon the nation for his disobedience. Now, however, God has reversed the fortunes of the land and it no longer stands under a curse. On the contrary, God has blessed the land because the unfaithful people have been removed and authentic worship of the one true and living God has been restored. Although this does refer to an actual time after exile in which Israel will return to their physical Promised Land (Ezra, Nehemiah), it ultimately looks forward to an even more-joyous celebration when the Lord gathers all His people home in heaven to **sing** and worship Him in perfect holiness! As the song says, “What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see . . . when He takes me by the hand and leads me through the Promised Land.”

According to the Bible, what will our praise and worship in heaven look like?

Question  
# 4

Furthermore, the Lord explains that **on that day** Israel **will call** Him her **Husband** rather than her **Master** (v. 16). In other words, she will have a close, intimate relationship with the Lord. Her worship will **no longer** be polluted by the worship of other gods; the Lord will be the sole focus of her worship and desire! Interestingly, the word translated **Master** comes from the word often translated “Baals” (plural). At this time, many in Israel worshiped many gods, including the Canaanite storm-god, Baal.



Through this revelation, however, Hosea notes that Israel will **no longer** see the Lord as one among many gods, but she will serve Him as the one and only God. Although we may not say we worship many gods today, we must ask ourselves: “What is our priority” (singular)? Many times, we list our priorities (plural), but by the very definition

of the word we can and should have only one priority; only one person, place, event, or thing can be first—that is receive the priority—in our lives. As believers, therefore, we should have only one priority: to worship the Lord with all our being!

What are some of the “priorities” in your life?  
How do you reconcile them with Christ who should be **the** priority?

Question  
# 5

## ***Hosea 2:17-20***

### ***A COVENANT THAT REQUIRES FAITHFULNESS:***

Next, the Lord explains the requirement of the renewed **covenant** that He will make with the people: faithfulness. Israel will no longer direct her praise and devotion to the **Baals**—that is the foreign gods of secular cultures (v. 17). To emphasize how radical this change is, the Lord notes that the names of these foreign gods **will be remembered no more!** Through this time of discipline, the people have truly come to know the Lord and now they seek a daily, intimate relationship with Him! Instead of misunderstanding their source of blessing as **Baal**, they have come to know Who has truly provided for them, Who has sustained them, and Who has saved them: the Lord God! Therefore, they **no longer** invoke **the name** of false gods.

Imagine, for a minute, how successful a marriage would be if one of the spouses constantly mentioned the names of old boyfriends or girlfriends in a way that caused the other spouse to question their devotion. In most cases, it probably wouldn't last very long and wouldn't end very well! Constant remembrances can cause strife and discord in the relationship because the attention of the spouse would appear divided. However, the focus and devotion should be on building an intimate relationship and getting to know the spouse—not entertaining ideas about the past or comparing one person to another! This same applies to our relationship with the Lord. In giving the First Commandment, the Lord tells the people not to worship other gods because “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” ([Exod 20:5](#)). In other words, God is a unique, one-of-a-kind God who wants an intimate relationship with us; He doesn't want us to divide our attention among other things. Let's not put God's name in a long list of what we consider priorities, but let us put Him in the place that He deserves! Let Him be the focus of our lives!

In what ways do you make the Lord the focus of your life?

Question  
# 6

## Instruct

Now, God specifically describes the content of the **covenant** which He initiates with the entire world (v. 18). We must always remember that God is the One who initiated the relationship with us. He chose us even before we chose Him! On **that day**, from our perspective, refers to the **day** when Jesus comes again to establish His spiritual kingdom fully and bring this present age to a close. In the same order in [Genesis 1:30](#) in which He relates how He provided for them, God establishes this covenant with **the**



**beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground.** In other words, God will restore the entire earth to its original condition and intended purpose! He will reverse the curse which Adam brought through His sin which has corrupted all creation. He will give all creation peace; He will remove war (i.e. **shatter bow and sword of battle**)

and **make all lie down safely.** There won't be a life and death struggle over the resources of life, but every being will dwell in harmony together. The Lord Himself will be our Provider and Protector.

To Israel and the church, God emphatically states that He **will betroth** us to Him **forever** (v. 19). Again, God uses the illustration of marriage to highlight the concept of its permanence. This is an everlasting commitment or **covenant**; nothing can separate us from the love of God ([Rom 8:38-39](#)). Thus, it also reminds us of what Jesus said in Mark 10:9, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." In contrast to this relationship, nothing here on earth is permanent. Ronald Reagan once joked that the closest thing to eternal here on earth is a department or division of the federal government. Nonetheless, even human governments will cease one day and the Lord will return to His rightful place as our God and King. His rule and reign will be without end—**forever**. Therefore, we have a great hope in the future if we have a relationship with Him. Those who do not, however, will spend eternity separated from Him in eternal torment. Our prayer is that today, if you haven't, that you would remove all the idols from your life and turn to Him through confession and repentance, so that you



too will be guaranteed this future peace and prosperity shared together with our Savior Christ Jesus.

Next, God describes five character traits which will define this marriage: **righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, mercy, and faithfulness** (vv. 19-20). Not only will the Lord display these characteristics toward us as His bride, but we will also reciprocate them to Him because marriage isn't a one-sided endeavor. Hosea pairs **righteousness** and **justice** together because they picture the initial salvation and restoration of the relationship. Through Christ, we have been justified, or declared "not guilty," by virtue of His **righteousness** which He has given to us ([Rom 4:4-5](#)). Thus, in this marriage, we will conform to and reflect His **righteousness** and be in right standing with the Father. Therefore, we will dwell with Him in purity and holiness. Freed from the grip of sin on **that day**, we will always make the right choices and be wholly devoted unto Him. For this reason, Paul can say that Christ will "sanctify and cleanse her [the church] with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" ([Eph 5:26-27](#)). Therefore, we will rid ourselves of any immorality and impurity, reflecting the perfect character and image of the Lord in the way which He intended from the time of our creation ([Lev 19:2](#)).

In what ways will righteousness characterize our relationship with Christ in heaven?

Question  
# 7

Subsequently, we will exist in **lovingkindness** and **mercy** (v. 19). The word translated **lovingkindness** has a wide range of meanings; it can be variously translated at "**mercy**," "compassionate," and "faithful." Technically, the word highlights the fact that God has always been faithful to His covenants with us. Never once has He broken any of the promises He has made! He has always perfectly fulfilled them. This contrasts Israel and with us because we have been unfaithful to the Lord and compromised our promises by cheating on Him with other things we consider more



## Instruct

important. When we consummate this renewed covenant in the Lord, we will never break our promises to Him again! Because He has always kept His promises to us, God has acted with **mercy** by exhibiting great patience with us when we have broken our end of the deal (see [Hosea 2:1](#)). In **mercy**, we will have the right perspective and we will keep our eyes always focused on Christ. We won't look elsewhere for satisfaction, but understand that true satisfaction is only found in our relationship with Christ. Finally, the Lord declares that He **will betroth us in faithfulness** (v. 20). He has now made explicit what He has implied implicitly in these other four characteristics. No longer will we seek to find happiness and contentment elsewhere. We won't be tempted to give away our devotion to other people, objects, or activities. In this way, we **will truly know the Lord**. We will have intimacy with Him as we have never had before! Thus, we will truly become like Him and bear His image exactly as He purposed us to do at creation ([1 John 3:1-3](#)). Because we **will know the Lord** in this way, we will trust Him, understanding how much He loves us and has provided for us. Therefore, we will fully submit to His leadership and rely upon Him to guide us in our relationship with Him. When we truly **know** Him, we will imitate Him, we will adopt His perspective, and we will exhibit His holy character.

In what ways has God been faithful to you?  
How does your faithfulness compare to His?

Question  
# 8

## Hosea 2:21-23

### A COVENANT THE RECEIVES ALL PEOPLE:

This section concludes with the Lord demonstrating how He will reverse the curse which Israel and the whole world have brought upon themselves. Then, He will gloriously invite all people to participate in this **covenant**. Hope exists for the entire world to be restored, not just Israel! Therefore, **it will come to pass on that day** that He **will answer** from heaven and the people **will answer** from **earth** (v. 21). To borrow an illustration from a wedding, the couple will say, "I do." Both the Lord and the people agree to this covenant and the **earth** will be restored to its original condition before sin entered the picture! As a result, all the things God destroyed or which ceased because of Israel's unfaithfulness ([Hosea 2:3, 12](#)) will be restored and they will know that He is the source of these blessings ([Hosea 2:5, 8-9](#)). No longer will the **earth** be a desolate

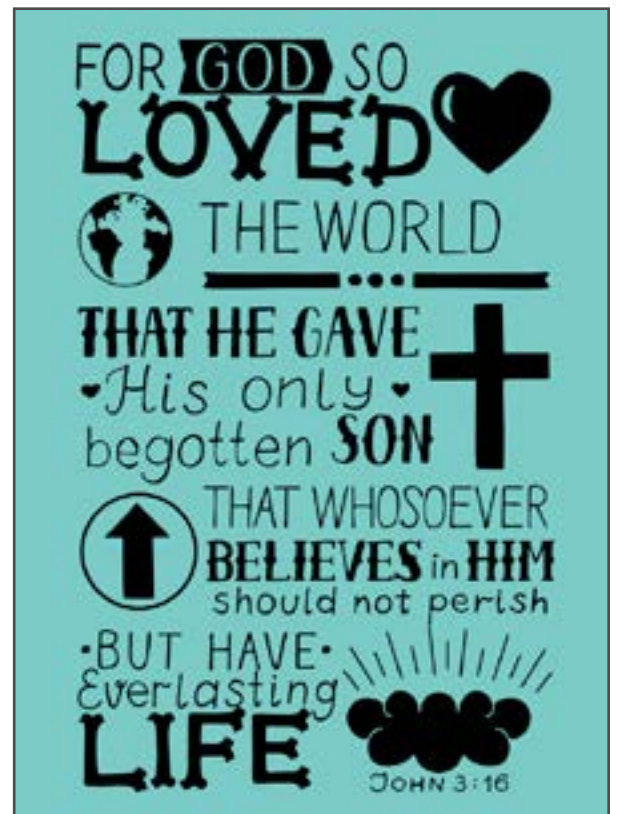
wasteland, but it will once again produce a bountiful harvest of **grain, new wine, and oil**. Therefore, **Jezreel** will become a source of blessing and joy rather than a picture of discontentment and defeat. The restoration by the Lord will be complete!

Although God has primarily been speaking to Israel throughout these first two chapters, we see a dramatic shift. Now, God offers the entire world a chance to participate in the **covenant**. Previously, He has told Israel that He would no longer show her **mercy** ([Hosea 1:6; 2:4](#)) and they would no longer be called His people ([Hosea 1:8-9](#)), but because they have repented they will now receive **mercy**. In addition, God declares that the entire **earth** who has **not obtained mercy will** now receive

**mercy** (v. 23). Moreover, **those who were not** His **people** will now be His **people** and **they** will say, **"You are my God."** This refers to you and me! Through Christ, we have an opportunity to participate in this covenant. From the beginning, God intended to use Israel to help lead the entire world to restoration in Him. Through Israel came the Messiah who brought salvation to the entire world! God offers a chance for everyone to repent and experience the blessings of this covenant.

To participate in this covenant, all we must do is accept Christ's offer to join Him through His death and resurrection and say "I do" by surrendering our lives to Him. Therefore, let us be a community which points others to a relationship with Christ

and one that heralds the good news that salvation has come to all who will accept it!



In what ways can we show our gratitude to the Lord for offering us a way to participate in this renewed covenant?

Question  
# 9

As we saw in the introduction, Robert Robinson had a defining moment in life which caused him to change paths. His life changed dramatically because He encountered Christ and responded to His invitation to repent and join Him. Although we may not be alcoholics, members of a gang, or given to violence as Robert, we too must have a change in our course. Because every one of us has sinned, whether we have told one lie, stolen a lustful glance at someone, hated another person in anger, or any other thing we may consider a “insignificant” sin, we need a Savior who can help us change directions and restore us to a relationship with the Lord. Entering this life-changing covenant is easy because Christ has done the hard part in dying and resurrecting for our sins. All we must do is accept what He has done, confess our sins, and return to the One who created us. Most of us have probably done this and we have a relationship with Him. The hard part is remaining faithful and maturing to become like Him as we await the final consummation of this covenant at the close of the age.

In a fallen, sinful world, how can we remain faithful to the Lord and not become distracted by the sinful enticement of others? This requires commitment, time, and direction. Faithfulness, as in marriage, just doesn’t happen. It requires effort on our part! Faithfulness to the Lord works in the same way! We must cultivate our relationship with Him as we await His return. We need to commit ourselves to reading His Word daily, praying to Him without ceasing, and surrounding ourselves with good influences. The church must be central in our lives as well. We cannot forsake assembling together, but we must gather with like-minded people to be encouraged, equipped, and accountable for the ministry to which God has called us. This is why Bible studies like these are important! If you know someone in our congregation not attending a small group, invite them. It will help give us all a sense of direction and purpose as we study God’s Word together and mature in Him. Therefore, as a community, let us commit ourselves to participate in God’s covenant faithfully as we draw closer to the time where we will spend eternity with Him.

## ***Incorporate***

What is the requirement to participate in the covenant? How will this covenant transform what we say, what we do, and who we are?

What should a restored relationship with the Lord look like? How does that restored relationship look in the church?

In what ways can we as a community be faithful to the Lord in our journey on earth now?



June 23, 2019



# *The Compassion of the Lord for the Community*

## *Hosea 3:1-5*

Focal Verse:

"Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

Hosea 3:5

back to  
Table of  
Contents

## Introduce

A mob of church-going, seemingly upstanding people gathered around a young woman shouting accusations and hurling derogatory comments. By all accounts, she seemed to have lived a despicable life by her outward actions in plain view of everyone on social media. As the crowd continued to swell, someone yelled the name of a good teacher which they had all recently heard on a Podcast. We should take *this* woman to him, so that we can hear what he will say about her situation.

Luckily, they found him not too far off in a public square, so they began pulling up her Facebook and Instagram pages to show him what she had done. With a clamor of confusion, one person began to shout, "Look who she's with in this picture!" Then, another blurted out, "Look what she's holding in this picture!" Yet, another yelled, "Look at this horrible, ungodly activity in which she's engaged in this picture."



For a moment, the man remained silent and only took out his phone. The crowd perceived that he was investigating this woman's publicly displayed sins even further as he began to type on his screen. Soon, every phone in the crowd began to buzz and beep. It was a group text from this revered teacher. As they stood there, the teacher began to speak calmly and wisely, "Let the ones who haven't sinned be first in line to post accusations on her Facebook wall." Looking at their screens with a puzzled, yet horrified expression, the people who had accused the woman began to leave one-by-one without saying another word. Eventually, the woman stood alone in front of this revered teacher who looked her squarely in the eye and asked, "Where are all the ones who brought you here to accuse you of these heinous sins?" He continued to affirm, "Neither do I accuse you," and he bid her to go and sin no more.

This story should sound familiar minus the updated, twenty-first century setting. In the first century, Jesus had this very same encounter with a woman caught in adultery whom the religious leaders of the day brought to Him for accusation ([John 8:3-12](#)). Although we don't know what Jesus stooped to write in the dust, the way

## Introduce

He responded to the woman clearly displayed compassion and forgiveness despite her being caught in such blatant sin. Rather than jumping on the bandwagon, Jesus offered forgiveness and restoration. Restoration comes when we admit our guilt and truly repent of our sins, whereby we turn from our old, wicked ways. For this reason, Jesus illustrates the concept of true repentance by instructing her to go and sin no more; in other words, stop sinning and turn to Him! Despite the people's obstinacy and refusal to repent, God exercised patience and showed compassion to Israel during the time of Hosea. God repeatedly offered them a chance to repent, but many of them stubbornly refused. Let us, however, be a community that recognizes God's compassion in His call to repent so that we can appreciate the redemption He offers through Jesus Christ.

Key  
Question

In what ways has Jesus personally demonstrated compassion in your life?

## Hosea 3:1

### ***THE RELATIONSHIP RECONCILED:***

We often perceive the Old Testament in a negative light because we tend to focus primarily on the sinfulness of the people and God's wrath that they suffer because of their sin. However, the prophets, like Hosea, actually include a tremendous amount of positive instruction that encourages people to turn from their sin and turn to the Lord, so they may experience the full benefits of a relationship with Him. Where hope abounded in the second half of chapter 2 ([vv. 14-23](#)) for a new covenant with the Lord that will last forever, that same hope continues in [chapter 3](#) where we see redemption paid, reconciliation offered, and repentance accepted. Even in the midst of the darkest times, we still have hope in Christ!

This short chapter begins with instruction specifically addressed to Hosea. At some point in his marriage with Gomer after she had given birth to their three children, she had become unfaithful to her husband. Although Hosea had been wronged by his wife and he had not sinned against her, the Lord instructs him to forgive her and take steps to reconcile the marriage. Hence, He tells him to **go again** and **love** his wife who **is committing adultery** (v. 1). God hasn't asked Hosea to do something He wouldn't willingly do; rather, just as the Lord so loves **the children of Israel** who have looked to **other gods**, so also ought Hosea show love to Gomer by seeking reconciliation with her.

### ***In-Depth Information***



The text relates that Israel loved **the raisin cakes of the pagans** (v. 1). As a highly sought-after delicacy, these **cakes** were made from compressed dried grapes, having the concentrated sweetness of dehydrated fruit. Their use in pagan worship, however, remains highly uncertain. Perhaps, Hosea used this metaphor to describe the overindulgence and materialism of his day as people sought prosperity and contentment in the false gods of secular culture. For more information, see Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah, Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), p. 65-66.

Undoubtedly, many of us have experienced hurt in a relationship because the person has wronged us in some way. For Hosea, it centered around the hurt caused

by unfaithfulness; whereas he remained faithful to his wife, she did not reciprocate



that same dedication to him. For many, such hurt causes them to jettison the relationship and harbor bitterness and animosity toward that individual. They may even ponder ways to seek revenge and retaliate in kind to the person. God, however, doesn't want us to respond in these ways at all! He wants us to imitate Him and exhibit His character. We've all acted unfaithfully toward God. We've all cheated on Him with other loves in our

lives, but He didn't throw in the towel and give up on the relationship. He didn't seek revenge by making our lives miserable and cruelly tormenting us day and night. On the contrary, He showed us the depth of His love by the lengths which He went to seek and save us! While we were still in our sin, God took steps to reconcile us with Him!

In what ways have you been unfaithful to the Lord? How has God taken steps to reconcile you to Him?

Question  
# 1

Although we can't deal with our response to hurt in our relationships comprehensively in such a short space, we can learn to apply four principles to deal with that hurt effectively. First, we must turn the situation over to the Lord and seek His wisdom in how to handle it. This may seem obvious to us, but even many Christians try every alternative first and turn to the Lord only as a last resort when everything else has failed. Pop-psychology, television talk shows, self-help books, and secular therapy may offer some insight into the human mind, but God always offers the best solution because He designed and created us. Not only has God provided His creation clear instruction in Scripture, but He has also sent His Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts and guide our minds. The Holy Spirit reminds us what He has said, teaches us how to respond to difficult situations, guides us to make the right choices, and guards our hearts by keeping us focused on Christ. We will experience hurt and disappointment in life, but we don't have to live in despair, act in desperation, or engage in retaliation



because we have the Spirit who will temper our distress if only we would turn everything over to Him.

How does the Holy Spirit help us deal with hurt?

Question  
# 2

Second, through the wisdom we have received from the Spirit based upon Scripture, we should continue to love those who have hurt us, but we should not enable the sin to continue either. Although we continue to love people as Christ does, we should not repeatedly put ourselves in situations which can cause physical or emotional abuse. No type of abuse has any place in a relationship! However, Scripture compels us to love our enemies and bless those who persecute us ([Matt 5:44](#); [Rom 12:14](#)). Love doesn't depend upon what others do; it depends upon what Christ has done and who we have become in Him! God is love and His love never changes depending upon what we have done. At the same time, God doesn't simply ignore the sin and allow it to continue either. We too can continue to love others, but we must take steps so that we point the person to Christ and don't encourage the sin to continue.

Third, we should always seek forgiveness and reconciliation, but we must move on if the person doesn't respond or accept it (see [Hosea 3:5](#)). Although God could force us in His sovereignty to act in certain ways, He grants us free will and the ability to choose.

Some choose to reject His offer of reconciliation and salvation, but that doesn't hinder His plan for all mankind. The offer of salvation remains and people can choose to accept it, but God doesn't become distracted or distraught so He arbitrarily changes His plans. On the contrary, He remains the same and stands ready to receive us. We also ought



to imitate Him. We should seek to forgive and ask for forgiveness, but if the person doesn't respond we shouldn't continually dwell upon it and allow it to hinder our own personal walk and create stress in our own lives. Like God, we extend forgiveness and

## Instruct

reconciliation, continue to love, and move on if the person doesn't respond. Allow the Lord to be the ultimate judge in the end!

If we offer sincere forgiveness and people don't accept, why should we move on?

Question  
# 3

Finally, to deal with hurt effectively we cannot dwell in the past. This means that we shouldn't constantly bring up the offense and expect an apology—even in a joking way. We must in a sense forgive and forget, but we can't forget in the sense of allowing the same action to occur repeatedly. We must take steps to help the person overcome the situation that causes the hurt, especially if sinful. We should place safeguards on the relationship and establish new corresponding boundaries (see [Hosea 3:3-4](#)). We can't dwell on the past in a negative way, but we must take steps to make a positive change. God does this with Israel and with us! He forgets our sins—He doesn't hold them against us, but He expects us to learn from them and put safeguards into place so we won't succumb to the same temptation and continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly.

To keep from engaging in hurtful relationships what safeguards and boundaries can we put into place?

Question  
# 4

## Hosea 3:2-4

### **THE REDEMPTION RENDERED:**

Every day on his way home from school, a little boy passed the county animal shelter which had a large picture window with several animals featured in cages. One day he noticed a cute puppy that had a beautiful, shiny coat and the most-beautiful eyes like charcoal; he instantly connected with the puppy. He never missed a day to stop and wave at the puppy with a big smile on his face. Once, one of the shelter workers was cleaning the window, so the boy began asking how much it would cost to adopt the puppy. The worker explained, "It would be a total of \$100 for all the fees and paperwork." Looking dejected, the boy stared down at the sidewalk and asked, "What happens if no one has \$100?" Stuttering and unsure how to respond, the worker eventually got the courage to say, "In two weeks, the puppy will be euthanized." The

boy suddenly and quickly ran home.

For the next two weeks, he worked hard doing odd jobs around the neighborhood on weeknights after school and weekends. Two weeks later, he returned to the shelter and paid the \$100, saving the puppy from death. After finalizing the paperwork, the shelter worker opened the cage and the puppy sprang forward straight toward the boy and began to lick his face. From that day forward, the boy and the puppy had a special bond! Unlike other dogs, the puppy was always by his master's side; he always listened to his voice and obeyed his every command, knowing how much his master



loved him and provided for him. In much the same way, God loves us so much that He paid the price to set us free from sin and death. The price He paid cost His Son everything because He gave His life in place of ours. Knowing how much Christ has provided for us and how much He loves us, we ought to follow closely by His side, listening and obeying everything He tells us.

Why should the redemption we have received in Christ lead us to obey our heavenly Father?

Question  
# 5

To rescue his wayward wife, Hosea sought to redeem her. He **bought her back for** himself at a cost of **fifteen shekels of silver** and five bushels—that is **one and one-half homers of barely** (v. 2). In the grand scheme, the amount of the price paid for Gomer and to whom Hosea paid it is of little consequence. What matters most is that he went to pay the price even though she had been unfaithful to him! This shows the tremendous amount of love and devotion that Hosea had for Gomer. We live in a world, however, that would tell Hosea he could do much better for himself. He shouldn't waste his time pursuing a woman like Gomer and attempting reconciliation with her because she has been so unfaithful. Moreover, the world would probably advise him to seek revenge and let her suffer the full penalty she deserves for her

actions. In fact, [Leviticus 20:10](#) decries that both “the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death.” Gomer, by virtue of her own choices and actions, deserves the death penalty!

### In-Depth Information



*The price Hosea paid shouldn't be our focus. It really isn't an exorbitant amount of money. A female slave, for example, would cost about 30 shekels at that time ([Exod 21:32](#)) and to pay for a woman in a vow was 10 shekels ([Lev 27:4](#)). The main point is that Hosea has paid the price required in full!*

In the same way, God has paid the price in full to redeem us. Like Gomer, we don't deserve redemption and should receive the death penalty for our sin. God could have struck us dead the moment we first sinned, but He didn't. He gave us another chance and even came seeking to save us. For instance, Adam and Eve did die spiritually that day they ate of the forbidden fruit and they separated themselves from the Lord, but they didn't immediately die physically. Scripture tells us that the Lord came to find them where they hid and meet them where they were in order to restore them into a relationship with Him ([Gen 3:8-9](#)). He gave the couple a chance to confess their sin and repent. Although they would still suffer the consequences of their sin in the form of the curse ([Gen 3:14-19](#)), God set in motion a permanent plan for redemption through His Son. His Son would die in their place, as well as ours, in order to pay the full price to redeem us!

What is the price that God paid to redeem us?  
What does this show about His character and His relationship to us?

Question  
# 6

After Hosea graciously paid the price of redemption, he set boundaries by which Gomer must live and conduct her life. Through these boundaries, we can see that redemption also requires transformation on her part—as well as our own. Hosea instructs Gomer to **stay home with him many days** to keep from participating in unfaithful activities (i.e. **playing the harlot**). He also informs her that they will not have physical relations as husband and wife during this period (v. 3). Likewise, God establishes boundaries for Israel. **Israel will abide many days without king or prince**



(v. 4). In other words, they must learn to rely upon Him alone as their true King and not look to other human beings for guidance and to pattern their lives. In addition, they will do **without sacrifice** and **sacred pillar** as well as **without ephod and teraphim**. As a combination of rituals, these show how Israel worshiped God along with false gods. The idea behind doing without these things means that Israel should dedicate herself to the Lord and not mix worship of Him with the false gods of other nations.

### In-Depth Information



The **sacred pillar** refers to a large, stone structure that represents a god. The Lord clearly forbid the construction of any of these pillars in the land ([Deut 16:22](#)). The **teraphim** are household gods which the people used to seek answers to their questions—again forbidden in Israel ([Zech 10:2](#); [Ezek 21:2](#)). The **ephod**, in contrast, was designed by the Lord and utilized by the priest, so they could seek guidance from Him ([Exod 28:30](#)).

Having paid the price for redemption, God wants us to dedicate ourselves to Him and not mix our worship with other beliefs or in other things. Today, many people pick and choose what they believe about the Bible, so much so that they completely distort the message. When we talk about idolatry, we usually think about putting other activities, possessions, or people before the worship of the Lord. However, idolatry can also occur when we distort the worship of the Lord by changing Scripture to fit our beliefs or mixing human philosophies and desires. The Bible is literal, historical, inspired by the Lord, and without error; therefore, it is true just as it is written. We cannot add to it nor can we alter it to fit our own opinion. We can't mix our worship of the Lord with any other religion or cult. We serve the only true and living God who became flesh, died for our sins, and resurrected three days later. We must found our beliefs upon the truth and boundaries God outlines in the Bible; we cannot use our beliefs and opinions to determine what we want Scripture to say and how we want to apply it.

In what ways do some in our culture (and in the church) mix the worship of the Lord with the false worship of other things?

Question  
# 7

## Hosea 3:5

### **THE REPENTANCE RECOGNIZED:**

Finally, **Israel** will repent (i.e. **return**) and **seek the Lord their God** and the Messiah (i.e. the One born in David's lineage). As a result, they will be transformed to **fear the Lord**



## Instruct

and live in **His goodness in the latter days**. The price of redemption has already been paid and costs nothing on our own part, but it nonetheless requires transformation in turning from our old, wicked lifestyle and surrendering to Christ. To **fear the Lord**, therefore, means that we honor and respect Him by patterning our lives after His holiness and living according to the boundaries He has set for us as our obedient act of worship. Similarly, the concept of **goodness** connotes the idea of morality or holiness rather than the way in which we typically use it to define well-being. When we turn from our sin, thus, we will make morally correct decisions and live righteously to reflect the goodness of the Lord which He has clearly shown us in His Word. Throughout 2018, as a church we examined the theme “Transformed” where we looked at all the ways God expects us to grow in our faith and trust in Him; therefore, we won’t spend much time detailing what transformation should look like—except to say that we ought to be more closely imitating Christ than we were last year! As I have said in the past, we must remind ourselves that we cannot go with Christ and stay where we are. We must grow and mature daily; as we walk with Him, His character should influence us and we should reflect His **goodness** and holiness.

In what ways does the offer of redemption require us to change?

Question  
# 8

In the introduction, we saw how Jesus showed compassion and offered forgiveness to the woman caught in adultery. Although He fully forgave her sins, that forgiveness required that she live a transformed life where she would “go and sin no more” ([John 8:11](#)). Just like this unnamed woman or even Gomer here in Hosea, we have good news in Christ! He extends that same forgiveness and reconciliation to us regardless of what we may have done in the past. Any sin is reprehensible to God and will incur His wrath unless we turn to Him. Despite our unfaithfulness and sin against Him, Christ paid the price for our redemption; therefore, we owe Him our very lives and should never forget the price that He paid on our behalf.

For those of us who have been redeemed by Christ, we ought to show the same love and compassion He has for us to others around us. Paul reminds us, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Cor 1:3-4). The world needs a compassionate declaration of hope and comfort rather than a message of condemnation. We must speak the truth about where those without Christ are headed in destruction, but we must point them to redemption and reconciliation in Him—a message that offers unfailing hope. Therefore, let us take God’s message of compassion and hope in the gospel to all nations beginning right here in Fort Worth, Texas.

## ***Incorporate***

Because the church is a community and a family that represents the Lord, why is it important to seek reconciliation with other members?

What should reconciliation look like in the church / community

In what ways does Christ expect us to transform when we accept His offer of redemption?

## ***Journal: Document God's Work***

*June 30, 2019*



# *The Chastisement of the Community*

## *Hosea 4:1-11*

Focal Verse:

“And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways,  
and reward them for their deeds.”

Hosea 4:9

back to  
Table of  
Contents



## Introduce

Joy searched every store for the movie iron-on that her son so desperately wanted. He had begged for months for her to buy this single item, so she decided to surprise him. She bought the patch and matching t-shirt and rushed home to show him. Elated, her son enthusiastically pleaded with her to finish the shirt now, so he could show it to his friends when they played. Finally, she consented and opened the package with the patch, but she ignored the warning written plainly on the side: “This activity involves using a hot iron.



Only an adult should do this. Be careful. Cardboard transfer will still be hot. Do not iron while wearing shirt.” Joy had everything she needed to apply the patch successfully and safely—if only she would pay attention to the warning and use wisdom. She got out the ironing board and plugged in the iron while her son waited impatiently, urging her to work more quickly. She began the process of applying the patch without reading the directions or any subsequent warnings. To hurry and ensure the patch was centered, she asked her son to wear the shirt. Finding the center, she grabbed the iron with one hand while holding the iron-on in place with the other. Grabbing the iron, she placed it squarely on the cardboard wedged against her son’s chest—thinking that it would absorb most of the heat. As soon as the iron touched the cardboard, her son yelped and squirmed; yet, she bid him to remain still because she had to get the iron-on in the center. She had failed to heed the warning and listen to the wisdom of others who had gone before her!

This scenario sounds startling and ridiculous. Obviously, someone, whether child or adult, had tried this technique before prompting the warning label to be applied to the package of the iron-on. Most of us, however, would never do something so foolish and dangerous! We would have enough common sense and wisdom that we would avoid injuring ourselves or others. Just as this package had instructions and a warning label, God has given us instruction in His Word along with a warning about what will happen if we fail to live by these principles. In fact, He’s provided all the wisdom and

## Introduce

knowledge we need to navigate life successfully. Yet, why do so many people ignore the warning that God has emphatically given and live according to their own path? In [Hosea 4:1-11](#), God clearly outlines the charges He has against Israel and warns them to listen to His Word and change their direction. However, the people refused to listen and they rejected the knowledge and wisdom that He had given them. Thus, as God explained in [Deuteronomy 27](#), their disobedience would have consequences! Here, in Hosea, they would endure His wrath because they did not follow His principles for life nor did they repent of their wicked ways. As individuals as well as a community, God will chastise us when we err because He loves us and wants the best for us ([Heb 12:5](#)). Therefore, if we receive chastisement from the Lord, we must repent, learn from our mistakes, and mature in the knowledge of Christ so that we can become more like Him every day.

Key  
Question

How should we respond to chastisement in our lives?

### Hosea 4:1-2

#### **GOD'S PEOPLE MUST HEAR HIS WARNING:**

Having offered an invitation to repent and receive restoration in the last chapter, Hosea switches tone and calls **Israel** to **hear the Word of the Lord** as He pronounces judgment upon their sins (v. 1). Since the beginning of the book, Hosea has primarily focused on one specific **charge** against the people; they have proven unfaithful to the Lord and broken their covenant with Him by worshiping false gods and graven images. In [4:1-11](#), however, **the Lord brings** more specific charges against the entire nation—that is all **the inhabitants of the land**. Because they have forsaken the Lord, the nation has crumbled under the weight of its moral decay. The people had no shame and no conscience because they didn't have God's **truth** and righteousness to guide their decisions. In fact, Hosea announces **there is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land**. This lack of morality and lawlessness should strike close to home because we live in a country that is very similar to Israel in the eighth century BC!



God begins by chastising the people because they have rejected the **truth**. Without **truth**, everyone lives according to his own standards which creates chaos and anarchy because everyone attempts to determine morality according to his own perception. God, on the other hand, has given us absolute **truth** in His Word by which we must live. In order to have a relationship with God, we must confess our sin, turn from it to Him, and surrender to Christ who paid our debt on the cross. This is absolute **truth**; we cannot have life any other way! In addition, as **truth**, the Bible not only tells us how to have salvation through Christ, but also how to live. Therefore, the Bible clearly differentiates right from wrong! It reveals the **truth** about how to have healthy relationships, how to conduct ourselves in marriage, how to raise our children, how to live with integrity, how to practice holiness in our actions, how to speak befittingly,

## Instruct

and how to live wisely by applying **the knowledge of God**. Without a standard which everyone follows, we can have no unity, no peace, and no order; anything goes and everyone will selfishly do what is right in his own eyes—the very motto of our secular nation today.

In what ways have people rejected truth in our society?

Question  
# 1

Not only did they reject **truth**, but they also did not practice **mercy**. Earlier, God stated that He would no longer show **mercy** because the people refused to turn from their sin ([Hosea 1:6](#)); however, He had patiently offered forgiveness and showed **mercy** repeatedly despite their unfaithfulness. Whereas God continued to show **mercy** to the people, they failed at this time to extend **mercy** to others! At this time, the people exploited the poor, acted unjustly without **mercy**, and constantly sought to do things selfishly despite the needs of others. On the contrary, we ought to live selflessly and extend **mercy** to others by pointing people to the Lord. We shouldn't expect the Lord to show us **mercy** if we're unwilling to show **mercy** to others ourselves. In fact, Micah asserts, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" ([Micah 6:8](#)).

In what ways can we show mercy to others in our world today without compromising biblical values clearly prescribed by the Lord?

Question  
# 2

Finally, Hosea charges the people with having no **knowledge of God in the land**.



Because they have spurned **truth** and failed to practice **mercy**, they have rejected the very essence of God's character. They do not know Him in the sense that they do not have a relationship with Him nor do they know the content, requirements, and principles of His covenant and Word which He has plainly spoken to them.

Because they truly do not know God or His Word, the people live lawlessly. We see this lawlessness manifested in our own world today because many people do not have a relationship with Christ and do not have the Holy Spirit to restrain them from making bad and immoral decisions. Without **the knowledge of God**, we see unrestrained violence and hatred, we see rampant sexual immorality and moral confusion, we see a lack of integrity, we see widespread corruption, we see deceitfulness, we see selfishness and a lack of compassion, we see clamor for revenge, and we see blasphemy against the Lord—to name a few lawless deeds. In a world without the guidance of God, mankind is hopelessly left to his own destruction—to which our nation is quickly headed lest we turn to the Lord and seek **knowledge** from Him.

When people forget God and have no **knowledge** of the **truth** of His Word, it directly leads to the moral decay of the fabric of secular society. Consequently, the Lord **brings** specific charges of lawlessness and violation of the covenant against them. In verse 2, Hosea lists five areas in which they have violated the Ten Commandments as they particularly relate to other people; they have broken the Law **by swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery**. **Swearing** in this context means that people take an oath falsely in God’s name and then break their promises; it doesn’t refer to cursing in the sense of using vulgarity—which we shouldn’t do either, though. **Swearing** violates the third commandment which adjures us not to misuse God’s name (i.e. take it in vain—[Exod 20:7](#)). We shouldn’t misuse the Lord’s name by making promises that we never intend to keep and lacking integrity. This unfairly brings shame and dishonor upon the Lord that He doesn’t deserve. Even though we shouldn’t swear oaths ([Matt 5:33-37](#)), we should always keep our word / promises and act with integrity to represent the Lord faithfully.

Why is it important to act consistently with our word and keep our promises?

Question  
# 3

Next, Hosea charges the people with **lying** which summarizes the ninth commandment which states that we shouldn’t bear false witness against our neighbor. Lying has become so prevalent in our society that people engage in it without even thinking. The “Ring Doorbell” advertisement provides an example when a woman sitting in a restaurant answers the doorbell and tells the caller she’s busy bathing the kids; she could have simply said she’s unavailable or busy—which was the **truth**—in case the person turned out to be a thief. Slander and gossip have also overtaken many



## Instruct

in our society given that people can post or say anything on the Internet. People



sometimes take statements at face value without investigating fully. Such lies can assassinate a person's character and cause irreparable harm. Even if they don't lie outright, many people make misleading statements and mischaracterize facts which contribute to animosity or bitterness and even lead to misunderstanding. Since God is

**truth** ([Heb 6:16-17](#)), we must also live in **truth** and speak the **truth**.

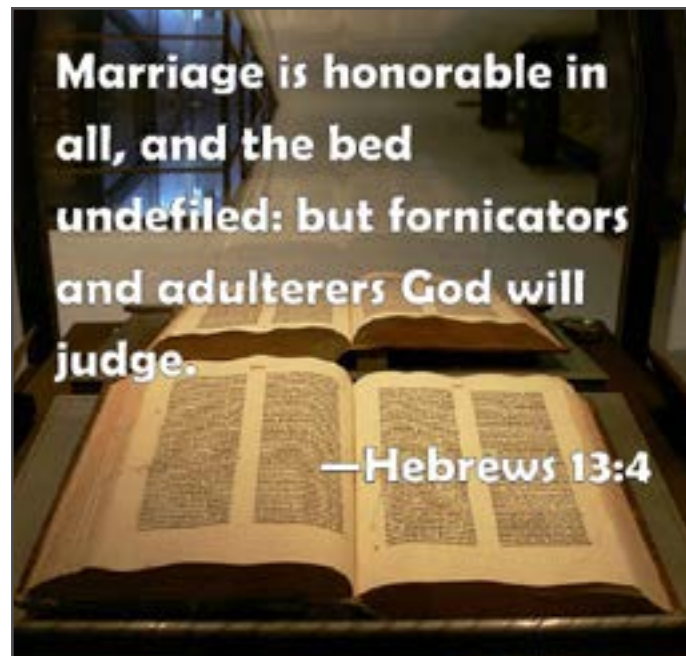
Hosea also chastises the people for **killing**, breaking **all restraint with bloodshed upon bloodshed**. The word **killing** comes directly from the sixth commandment which prohibits murder ([Exod 20:13](#)). Thus, the people are committing unrestrained violence and indiscriminately murdering people—whether through pre-meditated murder or manslaughter. Our society is filled with violence; we can't turn on the television without seeing scenes of violence. The news, unfortunately, is filled with acts of violence: murder, gang violence, assaults, manslaughter, domestic abuse, and road rage; we hardly ever see anything positive and uplifting on the news! This is nothing new because cultures like the Roman Empire glorified violence through the Gladiatorial Games. Similarly, more than half of television shows and movies feature gratuitous violence; some video games promote violence and murder, desensitizing youth and adults together. Violence will only cease when people give their hearts to Christ and allow Him to transform them from the inside out.

Why must we be careful about the types of movies we watch or video games we play?

Question  
# 4

The people also broke the eighth commandment **by stealing** ([Exod 20:15](#)). Certainly, this includes taking items that don't belong to us, but **stealing** can be much more. Borrowing things and not returning them in a timely manner can be tantamount to **stealing**—which can also include promising to repay a loan, but never doing so.

*Intentionally* defaulting on loans, misusing credit cards, or declaring bankruptcy can be forms of **stealing**. Misusing time at work for personal things or failing to work diligently is a form of **stealing** from one's employer! Finally, Hosea cites the people for breaking the seventh commandment which prohibits **committing adultery** ([Exod 20:14](#)). Jesus even takes this commandment further when He says that we shouldn't even look upon another person with lust ([Matt 5:27-30](#)). Other than perhaps violence, the sin of sexual immorality plagues our society most. Every form of sexual deviance is detestable to God: adultery, pre-marital relations, homosexuality, bisexuality, self-gratification, and gender confusion. As Paul interjects, we must flee all sexual immorality—run away from it ([1 Cor 6:18](#))! Any relationship outside of the God-given confines of the marriage between one man and one woman is wrong. As believers, we must keep ourselves pure and not succumb to the temptation and pressure of the society around us.



What are other areas in which people "steal" in our society of which we may not normally think?

Question  
# 5

### **Hosea 4:3-8**

#### **GOD'S PEOPLE MUST LIVE IN HIS WISDOM:**

Because of the rampant sin which has defiled creation, **the land will mourn** (v. 3). The curse of sin with which man subjected the entire universe brings death and destruction; therefore, **everyone who dwells there will waste away**. The word **waste away** pictures an intensive drought in which plant life dies and destroys the rest of the animal kingdom for lack of food. **The beasts of the field and the birds of the air will perish** as a result. This apocalyptic drought will become so severe that even the oceans will dry, killing (i.e. taking **away**) **the fish of the sea**. Sin has contaminated and subjected all creation to destruction; thus, our sin not only has consequences for us, but it can also affect the lives of other people! However, we don't often ponder how our sin can affect other people, especially because we are a highly individualistic society and we often think of our sin as a victimless crime. On the contrary, our sin

## Instruct

affects the whole community just like a little leaven is present throughout the whole lump of dough ([1 Cor 5:6](#)).

In what ways does / can our sin affect others, especially in the church?

Question  
# 6

Hosea then tells the children not to point fingers and blame one another because they all stand guilty of sin. Therefore, no man should **contend** or **rebuke another** (v. 4). Not even **the priest** who should have offered moral guidance from Scripture can **rebuke** or contend with the people of Israel because they are all in the same boat; they all stand

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

*Galatians 6:1*



guilty and accused before the Lord! Picture a child who has done something wrong and he points the finger at another boy saying, "Look, he's done something worse than I!" He tries to deflect the guilt and blame by showing how much worse someone else has acted than he has. No matter how grievous the act or how much the boy protests, he still stands guilty

of his own sin! In the New Testament, Jesus tells His disciples to remove the plank in their own eye before they try to remove the speck from their brother's eye ([Matt 7:5](#)). Jesus didn't say that we couldn't point people to truth and righteousness by helping them to see their own sin, but He says that we must be in right relationship with Him and have the right motives and perspective when we do.

How should we as a community deal with the sin of a member(s) biblically?

Question  
# 7

Anyone who does not abide by God's wisdom or seek His **knowledge** will ultimately face destruction. If we don't have a relationship with Christ, it doesn't matter if we are a deacon, a Bible study teacher, a greeter, a church attender, or even on the pastoral staff because we will face destruction and a second death! Consequently, it doesn't matter what position we have; in this case, it matters who we know and with whom we

have a relationship—Christ! The people continually **stumble** even **in the day** because they have no **knowledge** of God or His Word (v. 4); they live openly and blatantly in sin because they have outwardly rejected God! Even the (false) **prophet** will **stumble in the night** along with them; these so-called prophets are actually leading the people astray which will result in the nation (i.e. **mother**) being destroyed.

This **lack of knowledge** doesn't represent mere ignorance of the people, but it's blatant disregard and outright rejection of the Lord! For this reason, Hosea explains that the **people** of God **are destroyed for lack of knowledge** which he then further qualifies by pointing out that they **have rejected** this **knowledge** (v. 6). This warning particularly applies to the **priest**; if anyone should have known God's Word and lived according to His wisdom, it should have been **the priest**! Yet, they were as corrupt as the rest of the nation. Because they have rejected God, He **will reject** them **from being priest**.

In addition, God will separate Himself from unbelieving Israel because they **have forgotten** His **law**; therefore, He **will also forget them** ([Rev 13:8; 17:8](#)). Hosea is directly warning those in Israel who did not have a relationship with the Lord; just because they're physically Jews in the line of Abraham doesn't mean that they automatically had a relationship with the Lord because of their ancestry. Instead, they have rejected God and must turn from their sins to be rescued and restored! In fact, the priests needed this restoration more than anyone because as leaders and teachers God held them more accountable since they were leading Israel astray (see [Jas 3:1-12](#)).

How would you respond to someone who said they have a relationship to God because they were born to Christian parents and live in a Christian home?

Question  
# 8

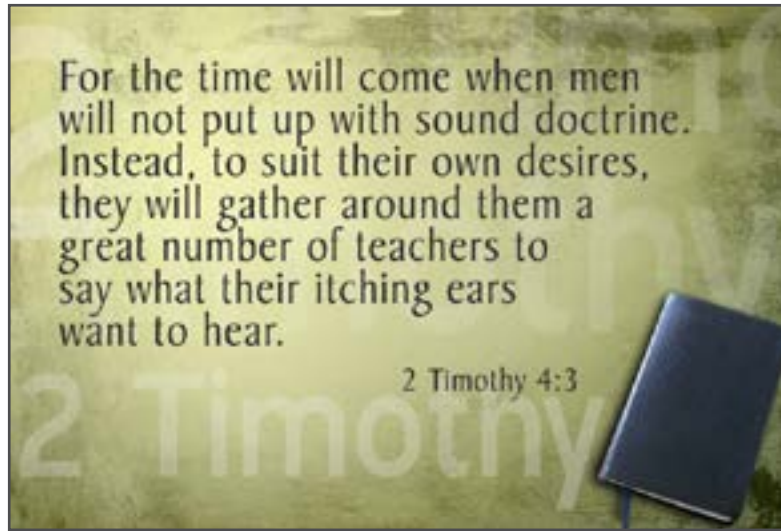
In verses 7-8, Hosea addresses the problem of a corrupt priesthood and how their sin affects the nation as a whole. Instead of maturing and growing closer to the Lord, the more the priests **increased** in number **the more they sinned** (v. 7). As mediators between the Lord and the rest of Israel, the priests had an honorable and respectable position; however, because they participated in the sin of the nation, God **will change** that **glory into shame**. Rather than representing the Lord and bringing honor to Him, the priests brought **shame** upon themselves. Not only did they behave shamefully and sinfully, but they also exploited the sinfulness of the people.

When Hosea says that they **ate up the sin of the people** and **set their heart on their**



## Instruct

**iniquity**, he means that they enriched themselves off the people's sin by making it a profitable business where they promoted unfaithfulness so they could receive half of



the sin offering for themselves ([Lev 4](#)). This is similar to the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages which offered forgiveness of sin for money—completely omitting the grace and sacrifice of Christ in order to profiteer on the people's sin. Forgiveness is not a business; salvation is a free gift of grace—not a means of making a profit at the expense of

others! As believers, we must adhere to God's Word regardless of what other opinions may be offered by the world; as teachers and leaders, we must faithfully preach correct doctrine and help others apply Scripture in a practical, everyday way! We can't afford to mislead people by elevating our opinions or preferences because it will ultimately lead to destruction. We must preach the truth and wisdom of the Lord unadulterated and undiluted, so that others may have a solid biblical basis upon which to build their lives.

In what ways do we see a lack of biblical knowledge in the church today? How does this affect the church as well as the society as a whole?

Question  
# 9

## Hosea 4:9-11

### ***THE SINFUL MUST TURN OR FACE GOD'S WRATH:***

Hosea concludes this section on an ominous note which underscores the results of the people's sin; they must turn from their sin or face the wrath of God. God does not discriminate and He **will punish** both **people** and **priest** alike **for their sinful ways** (v. 9). The phrase **reward them for their deeds** isn't a positive commendation in this sense, but it's an indictment. It reflects our modern understanding that the **punishment** will fit the crime. In verse 10, God gives the specifics of their **punishment**; they will never be satisfied in their pursuits and they will always feel lacking, lonely, and hopeless **because they have ceased obeying the Lord**. In terms of lacking, **they** will



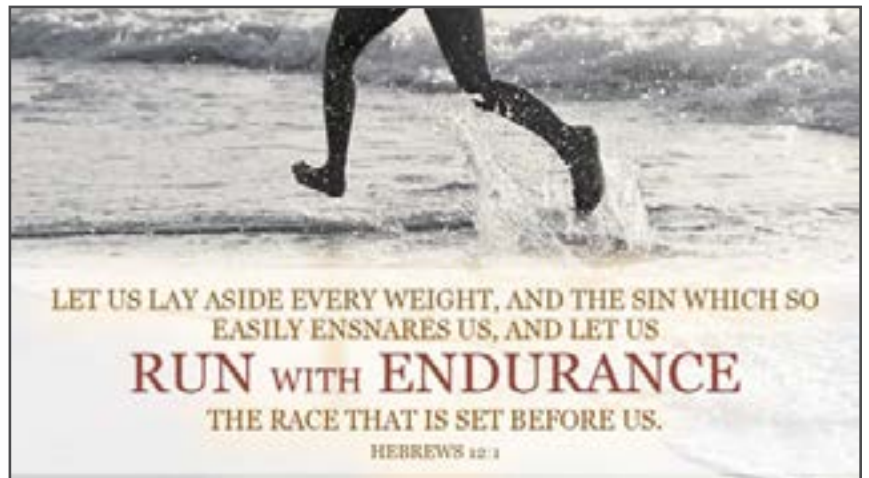
**eat, but never have enough**; in terms of loneliness and hopelessness, they will seek companionship by committing **harlotry, but they** will never **increase**. As we have learned, sin always promises more than it can ever deliver; it promises peace and happiness, but ends in turmoil and stress. Sin causes strife because people often seek to participate in “pleasure” at the expense of others by exploiting them to placate their perceived needs. Never once does sin satisfy; it always leads to an endless pursuit of pleasure and heartaches.

In what ways does sin leave us lacking and searching for purpose?

Question  
# 10

In addition, sin always leads to addiction because people continually engage in it in hopes of finding satisfaction and joy. Therefore, Hosea contends that **harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart** (v. 11). Sin consumes our finances and resources, wastes our time, depletes our energy, and destroys our relationships. These things may happen slowly over time, but our sin will eventually be found out and it will always

destroy everything in our lives despite its promises to the contrary ([Num 32:23](#)). Hosea uses two common illustrations, with which people still deal today, to show how sin enslaves and addicts: alcoholism (i.e. **wine**) and sexual addiction (i.e. **harlotry**). We don't have to take long to see how both



of these things destroy lives and crumble the fabric of our society. Yet, all sin has the same addictive power which enslaves! Any sin against the Lord leads to destruction and causes the ruination of the world around us—just look at how the first sin in the Garden of Eden brought a curse upon all creation. As a community of believers, let us rid ourselves of sin and its effects by faithfully serving the Lord in complete obedience. Let us be an example to the world through the joy, contentment, and peace that a relationship with Christ brings.

In what ways does sin enslave us?

Question  
# 11

In the introduction, we met Joy who failed to read the directions and warning label for a t-shirt iron-on. It ended with disastrous consequences for both her and her son! Likewise, we can't afford to have no knowledge of the Lord and His Word because that will lead to even more serious consequences—death and eternal separation from Him. Through Scripture, God has given us a warning label in which He clearly discusses the consequences of sin and shows the chastisement the unrepentant will face. Moreover, like warning labels, the pages of Scripture are filled with examples of people who have made mistakes and tried to control their own destiny and failed. We must learn from their mistakes so that we don't foolishly repeat them and suffer the same results! As believers, we have been restored to walk in the pattern of holiness established by Christ. We shouldn't entangle ourselves with fleshly desires and worldly pleasures. Instead, we must distinguish ourselves by living in obedience to God's Word. However, we can't live in obedience to God's Word unless we have a personal relationship with Him and know the contents of Scripture. We can't apply godly principles in our lives if we have no knowledge of Scripture! Therefore, we must be dedicated students to study God's Word both daily and diligently, taking time to know Him and apply the principles He has given us and live by the boundaries that He has established for us. Let us not incur the chastisement of the Lord and His wrath because we don't know Him and don't abide by His Word, but let us seek to hear those venerable words: "Well done my good and faithful servant" ([Matt 25:21](#)).

## *Incorporate*

In what ways does a lack of knowledge of Scripture create lawlessness in our world? How can we effectively warn people of the consequences of failing to know the Lord?

How does behaving corruptly affect the ministry of the church? How can we take safeguards to ensure the ministry of the church stays free from corruption?

As a church, how can we more effectively engage in discipleship so that our membership can know the truth in Scripture so that we can act with mercy and holiness?

## ***Journal: Document God's Work***

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