



The Book of Hosea
Discussion/Reflection Questions

Chapter 1

The word of the Lord came to Hosea, but the word was not for Israel. First, it was for Hosea. God asked Hosea to marry Gomer, as a picture of the unfaithfulness of Israel. Hosea would experience the feelings that God feels, when his people are unfaithful to him.

Sometimes when we read God's word, it is tempting to apply it first to others. But we must always remember to apply God's word first to our own lives, before we teach it to others. Hosea prophesied to Israel out of his own suffering and life experience. How have you experienced God in your own life and how can you use that to minister to others?

Chapter 2

Israel's relationship with God was broken because of their unfaithfulness to him. They sought after the passing pleasure of sin, over the blessings of God and so God said they would be disciplined. After their discipline was complete, God said he would speak tender words to them, to draw them back and restore them to himself forever.

After we fall into sin, God's heart is always that his people would be restored to him. Think of a time when you have been tempted to go off the path that God has for you? What drew you away? How did God bring you back? Was it through discipline or tender words? How is your relationship with God deeper as a result of his mercy and grace?

Chapter 3

God commanded Hosea to go and love his adulteress wife. Hosea's love was to be an illustration of God's love for his people, who were spiritual adulterers. God still loved his people, despite how they had turned to other gods.

God's love, compassion and forgiveness towards us is greater than we can ever imagine. How does knowing God's great love for you, even when you fail, challenge you to love and forgive others in your life?

Chapter 4

The Lord brings an accusation against Israel that they have no faithfulness, no steadfast love and no knowledge of God in the land. As a result, they have no restraint. They are swearing, lying, murdering, stealing, committing adultery and self-destructing.

God's people were being destroyed for their lack of knowledge and rejection of knowledge. They had forgotten the law of the Lord and their sin was increasing. When you miss your daily time in God's Word, how does it affect you and your daily choices? How does seeing the rejection of knowledge by God's people, remind you of the importance of being in God's word every day?

Chapter 5

God's judgement was on Israel because their leaders, the priests and kings, had failed. Pride is always at the root of rebellion and Israel's pride had caused God to withdraw from his people. Rather than being a refuge, God says he is like a moth and a lion. A moth slowly eats away and destroys things, while a lion devours what it attacks. Both cause destruction. God's end goal was that Israel would acknowledge their guilt and seek him, in their distress.

We do not want to face the judgement of God. We must root out any pride we have hidden in our hearts, that would lead us to rebel against God. In what area of your life are you tempted to be prideful? Write a prayer of confession to the Lord below, asking him to help you remain humble and dependent on him.

Chapter 6

Hosea led the people in a prayer of repentance. Hosea understood God's loving discipline was meant to heal them rather than strike them down. He had full confidence that God would restore them, but Israel and Judah's love was temporary, like a morning cloud. They were willing to make sacrifices to God, but they did not have a steadfast love for God and so they sinned in their unfaithfulness.

Hosea 6:6 says: *"For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice."* Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 9:13 and Matthew 12:7. God delights more in our deep love for him, than the following of rituals. Sometimes we may be tempted to check certain boxes that show we love God, like going to church and putting money in the offering plate, but God wants a close relationship with us. In what ways are you tempted to be busy serving God, while missing out on just being still with God in prayer and the reading of his word? How can you offer God more steadfast love and not just sacrifice?

Chapter 7

Israel's sins were before the face of God, but they did not consider that with God, there are no secrets. Like an oven, blazing with fire, Israel was inflamed with passions and desires for other gods and their pride blinded them and so they strayed and rebelled against God. They cried over their problems, but they did not consider that they should repent of their sin, which was the cause of their problems.

Our greatest love and affection should be for God but sometimes our fleshly passions and desires lead us astray. Are you struggling with a secret sin right now? Have you considered that God sees and knows your struggles and if you do not confess your sin, it could lead to trouble in the future? Pray now and ask the Lord to help you overcome any desires that compete with your love and affection for God.

Chapter 8

As God pronounced the judgement, about to come on Israel, the people cried out, "My God, we know you." Many churchgoers might say this on judgement day. But Israel had rejected God and followed idols. Now they were about to reap what they had sown, over a long period of time. And though the sowing was slow, the reaping would be sudden like a whirlwind.

Divine discipline follows the law of sowing and reaping. If we sow bad decisions in our lives, we will suffer. Sometimes we might be tempted to think we can get away with doing wrong, but God always sees and knows. We are responsible to choose right over wrong, even when it requires time and patience. It is worth the effort in the long run. Is there an area in your life right now, where you are compromising?

Chapter 9

Israel had grown accustomed to plentiful harvests and blessings but due to their disobedience, their crops were about to fail. They would be taken into exile, where they would mourn and have bread only for survival. God remembers a time when Israel was fruitful, but they had now become detestable like the gods they served. And so, there would be no more fruitfulness in the land, but rather barrenness because they had not listened to God.

Because of the people's deep corruption, they called Hosea a fool (9:7). They were experiencing great blessing and pleasure and so they could not imagine the coming judgement that Hosea foretold. But Hosea continued to boldly prophesy. Are you afraid to share the gospel because of what people will think or say about you? How does Hosea's bravery encourage you?

Chapter 10

Israel used their blessings in ungodly ways, but even in their sin, if they would turn back and sow righteousness, steadfast love and seek the Lord, God would bless them. But instead they continued to trust in their own way and harden their hearts.

Once again, we see the law of sowing and reaping in the book of Hosea. The hearts of Israel were hard and needed broken, so they could sow seeds of righteousness. If they would seek the Lord, he would bless them, and they would be fruitful again. Isn't the availability of God's grace so encouraging? Even though we may go astray, if we will turn from our ways and once again seek to sow seeds of righteousness, God will honor that. All sin starts when we trust our own ways rather than God's. In what area of your life do you need to trust God more and sow more seeds of righteousness?

Chapter 11

God's tender and parental love for Israel is seen as he speaks of his fond memories of them from the past. God won Israel's heart with his love rather than by force and He served them by meeting their needs and giving them rest. It was not their sin that was bringing discipline but rather their refusal to repent of their sin, that was leading to discipline. But God took no pleasure in knowing that they would face judgement. He promised to leave a remnant to restore them because of his deep love for them.

God's love is not like man's love. God is holy and perfect. His patience, compassion, kindness and forgiveness are beyond what any man can give. And though God is not man, because of his great love for us, he came as a man, to die on the cross for our sins. Pause for a moment and consider how deeply loved you are by God. Even when you mess up and make wrong choices, when you repent, you are forgiven and unconditionally loved because you are his child. How does remembering how loved you are by God, draw you towards him in obedience? Give thanks to God for his loving kindness right now and tell him how much you love him.

Chapter 12

Despite being warned over and over, Israel continued their empty pursuits. So, God reminded Israel of their father Jacob and how he wrestled with God, refusing to submit to him. In the end, Jacob wept desperately as he sought God's blessing. But even Jacob had to flee from his homeland, when he ran from Esau and Jacob ended up in exile, just as Israel would.

God initiated a wrestling match with Jacob because he needed Jacob's full attention and submission, in order to bless him. I'm sure the last thing Jacob felt like he needed was a wrestling match with God, but God knew what he needed. When Jacob finally came to the end of himself, that is when he received the blessing. What are you wrestling with today? Go to God in prayer and do not give up. Stay with God until he drives out all of your fear and anxiety because when you are done wrestling with God, you will find a peace and blessing that you would not have without it. Remember that the way God answers your prayer may not be what you desire but God will show up and he will do what is best for you and for his glory.

Chapter 13

Israel continued to sin more and more but like the morning dew, they would not be able to stand up under God's judgement. The only one who could save them was God, who they had rejected. They rejected God as their king and begged for other kings, who could not save them. But times were good, so they forgot about God but now, judgement was about to be as intense as pangs of childbirth. It would be sudden and unexpectedly, as they bore the guilt of their sin, until they turned back to God.

Even though Israel had put their trust in other gods and in their own strength, God continued to protect them and care for them. When times are good and we are experiencing God's protection and care, we can be tempted to forget God. But there is no other God but our God and no other savior but our savior. In what ways are you tempted to trust in your own strength rather than in God's care for you? And how does seeing Israel forget God in the good times, remind you to not forget God in your good times?

Chapter 14

This chapter in Hosea is one of the most beautiful chapters in the Old Testament. It reveals the loving heart of God, as his people experience his mercy, love, blessing and complete restoration after a time of judgement. He compares them to the beauty of a lily, the strength of roots of a tree, the value of the olive, and the delightful fragrance of Lebanon. The fame of Israel is restored as God promises to look after them and be like an evergreen cypress, providing fruitfulness to them.

Oh, what a loving and gracious God we serve! Our God is full of compassion and he loves you deeply. No sin is beyond his forgiveness. He is forever faithful to us. The final words of Hosea 14 tell us, that those who are wise, understand these things and whoever is discerning, knows them. For the ways of the Lord are right and the upright walk in them. How does this challenge you to carefully follow God's Word? What is one new thing you learned during your study in the book of Hosea?