

pursued

GOD'S DIVINE OBSESSION WITH YOU

bigIdea small group discussion

A lot of us get worn out trying to stay on God's good side. We know we should go to church more, pray more and read more of the bible, but when we try to live a 'better life,' we fail. The more we fail, the guiltier we feel and the harder we try next time. Most people give up on faith or trudge on through life not ever feeling good enough for God. There's a word for this: it's called religion.

But just like the shocking story of Hosea, where a prophet marries a prostitute, God doesn't pursue us for religion; He pursues us for relationship. God wants to know you and be known by you despite your failings. Time to stop running for His approval and rest in His perfect love.



BIG IDEA: We aren't meant to run on empty, we're meant to be full of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one thing you hope to get out of this Pursued study?
2. Have you ever pursued something or someone? E.g., job, degree, boyfriend/girlfriend, spouse... Briefly describe.
3. Have you ever felt "pursued by God?" (or, When you hear the phrase, "God is pursuing you", what comes into your mind?)
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Hosea 1:2.* Does this sound like something God would say? What are your initial thoughts about this verse? Have you ever experienced God telling you to do something you never thought He would ask of you?
5. Chris says, "God pursues you even though it's messy." Have you ever been in a "messy" relationship? Would you ever refer to your relationship with God as "messy?" Why would God pursue someone who is "messed up?"
6. When it comes to God, what do you think is the difference between "religion" and "relationship?"
7. Chris says, "God is calling us to exclusive commitment - like a marriage." Do you want that? If not, what's holding you back?
8. What is one positive step you can take in your life to update your status to devoted follower of Jesus?

GOING DEEPER

1. If you were in God's shoes looking down at your life, is there anything you would see that would make you mad?
2. In some ways, the Old Testament is a story of betrayal. More often than not, the relationship between God and his people was one-sided; God loved his people, but found that they continually directed their affection toward other things. How has this pattern of betrayal between God and his people continued to this day?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Hosea 1:1-3.* The story of Hosea and Gomer serves as an illustration of God's relationship with his people. Interestingly, Hosea experiences betrayal. When have you experienced feelings of betrayal?

4. As a result of his people's actions, God expresses his anger and jealousy. How do you respond when you feel betrayed?
5. Hosea's name means *salvation*. Gomer's name means *to put an end to, to use up, to destroy*. Gomer found out that even her unfaithfulness cannot bring an end to and destroy His salvation for us. And though sometimes we tend to cut off the relationships that frustrate or hurt us, God's response has always been, "I'm not going anywhere." What are some ways you can reflect God's commitment in your relationships?

THINK ABOUT IT

If someone borrows your car and returns it with an empty tank of gas, you're probably not going to let him borrow it again. If your girlfriend cheats on you, you will probably break up with her. But God is not like us. Yes, he may get mad. But he promises never to leave us. And that's God's message – *I am not going anywhere*. So if God has stayed put, what things in your life are pulling you away from him?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

It is said that 'thoughts disentangle themselves at the tip of a pen.' This week, write a letter to God. Share with him how you feel. Do you embrace his 'pursuit' of you? Are you holding him at arm's length? Do you want to make or renew an 'exclusive commitment' to Him? Do you need to ask Him for forgiveness?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"You must worship no other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you." Exodus 34:14

