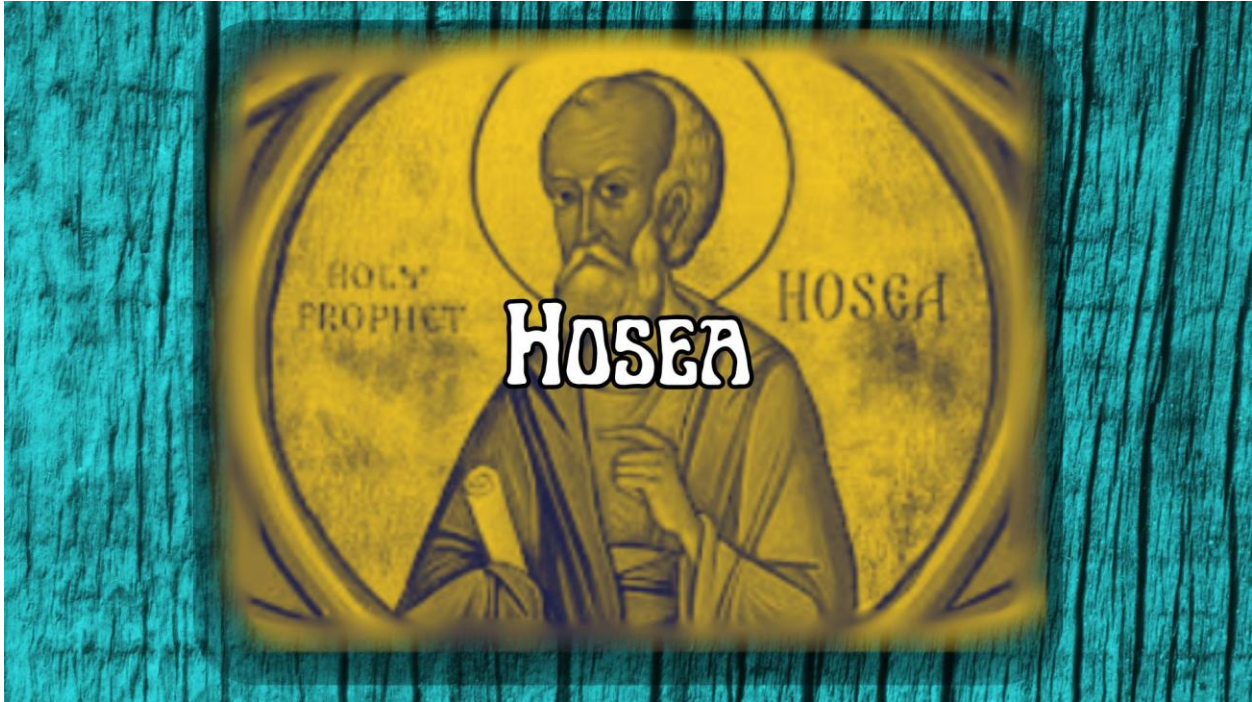


Small Group Guide: The Book of Hosea
Living Allegory of God's Unfailing Love



Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand His relentless love and the call to faithfulness. Pray for honesty in sharing and grace in listening.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever experienced a relationship where you gave far more than you received? How did that feel, and what did you learn from it?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Hosea's life was a living allegory** - God commanded Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman to demonstrate Israel's unfaithfulness to God
2. **The three children's names were prophetic:**
 - Jezreel (God will scatter)

- Lo-Ruhamah (no mercy)
 - Lo-Ami (not my people)
3. **Israel credited false gods** for blessings that actually came from the Lord
 4. **Despite judgment, God promises restoration** - mercy will ultimately triumph
 5. **We are all "Gomer"** - unfaithful to God, yet bought back at the price of Jesus' blood
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. What stands out to you most about God asking Hosea to marry Gomer, knowing she would be unfaithful? How would you have responded to such a command?
2. How do the names of Hosea's children function as prophecies? What does this tell us about how seriously God takes our unfaithfulness?
3. In Hosea 2:8, Israel didn't recognize that God was the source of their blessings. What modern equivalents do you see - ways we credit something or someone other than God for His provision?

Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

4. The sermon ended with: "We've all been unfaithful to God." In what areas of your life have you been most tempted to be "unfaithful" - giving your worship, time, or devotion to something other than God?
5. Hosea continued to provide for Gomer even while she was with other lovers. How does this picture of relentless love challenge or comfort you in your understanding of God's character?
6. Read Hosea 2:14-15. God speaks of "alluring" Israel back and speaking "comfort" after judgment. When have you experienced God drawing you back to Himself after a period of distance?

Application (20 minutes)

7. The sermon mentioned that Hosea 2:19-20 is recited by Jewish men when putting on phylacteries, committing to know God's Word. What practices help you "know the Lord" more deeply? What new practice might God be calling you to adopt?

8. Hosea had to buy back his own wife from slavery (Hosea 3:2). How does understanding that Jesus "bought us back" at the price of His blood change how you view:
 - Your own worth and identity?
 - How you should live daily?
 - Your responsibility to share the gospel?
 9. The restoration prophecies in Hosea point to the end times when Israel will recognize their Messiah. How should the promise of future restoration affect how we live now, even in seasons of difficulty or spiritual dryness?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Audit Your Worship

- Take inventory of where your time, money, and mental energy go
- Identify any "lovers" (idols) you may be crediting for provision or satisfaction
- Confess these to God and ask Him to restore pure worship

Option 2: Study God's Character

- Read through Hosea 2:19-20 daily
- Journal about one attribute of God mentioned (righteousness, justice, loving-kindness, mercy, faithfulness)
- Thank God for how He has demonstrated this quality in your life

Option 3: Share Your Redemption Story

- Reflect on how God has "bought you back" from something
 - Share this testimony with one person this week (believer or non-believer)
 - Emphasize God's relentless pursuit and love
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Group Activity (10 minutes)

Rewriting the Names:

- The children's names went from judgment (Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, Lo-Ami) to restoration
 - On index cards, have each person write:
 - **Side 1:** An area where they feel God's judgment or distance (a struggle, sin, or broken relationship)
 - **Side 2:** A prayer for God's restoration in that area
 - Share in pairs and pray for each other
 - Keep the card as a bookmark in your Bible as a reminder to pray
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Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

Read together Hosea 2:23: *"Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!'"*

Reflection: No matter how unfaithful we've been, God's final word is always mercy and restoration for those who return to Him.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Thank God for His relentless, pursuing love
 - Confess areas of unfaithfulness
 - Ask for grace to live as people who have been bought back
 - Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel
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For Further Study

- Read the rest of Hosea (chapters 4-14) this week
- Compare with Ezekiel 16 (another marriage allegory)

- Study Romans 11 regarding God's future plans for Israel
 - Read the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) through the lens of Hosea's message
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Leader's Notes

- Be sensitive that some group members may have experienced adultery or unfaithfulness in marriage
- Emphasize that the allegory is about spiritual unfaithfulness, not a commentary on divorce or remarriage
- Create a safe space for people to admit struggles with idolatry without judgment
- Point people to the hope of restoration, not just the reality of judgment

5-Day Devotional: Unfaithful Hearts, Faithful God



Day 1: The Allegory of Love

Reading: Hosea 1:1-11

Devotional: God commanded Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman, making his entire life a living parable of God's relationship with Israel. This wasn't cruelty—it was revelation. Hosea experienced the heartbreak God feels when His people chase after other loves. Yet even in commanding this painful marriage, God was demonstrating something profound: His commitment transcends our unfaithfulness.

Consider your own life. What "lovers" compete for the devotion that belongs to God alone? Career success, material comfort, human approval—these become modern idols when they replace God as our ultimate source. Hosea's story reminds us that God sees our wandering hearts, grieves over our misplaced affections, yet never stops pursuing us. His love isn't based on our faithfulness but on His unchanging character.

Reflection: What in your life receives the worship that belongs to God?

Day 2: Named for Judgment, Destined for Mercy

Reading: Hosea 1:4-11; 2:14-23

Devotional: Hosea's children bore prophetic names: Jezreel (God scatters), Lo-Ruhamah (no mercy), and Lo-Ammi (not my people). Imagine growing up with a name that declared God's judgment. Yet God's final word was never judgment—it was always restoration. The same valley of scattering would become a place of hope. "Not my people" would become "sons of the living God."

This pattern reflects God's dealing with all humanity. We deserve the names of judgment—separated, without mercy, scattered by our sin. But through Christ, we receive new names: beloved, redeemed, chosen, children of God. The cross transformed our identity from condemned to forgiven.

God's mercy doesn't ignore our sin; it conquers it. He allows natural consequences to wake us from our spiritual slumber, then offers restoration beyond what we deserve.

Reflection: How has God renamed you through redemption?

Day 3: The Gifts We Misattribute

Reading: Hosea 2:5-13

Devotional: Gomer credited her lovers for the gifts Hosea secretly provided. She adorned herself for other men with resources from her faithful husband. Israel did the same, attributing God's blessings—abundant crops, protection, prosperity—to Baal and other false gods. They took what God gave and used it to worship counterfeits.

We do this too. How often do we credit our own intelligence for wisdom that comes from above? Attribute our provision to our hard work rather than God's faithfulness? Thank luck instead of providence? We take God's gifts and give credit elsewhere, sometimes even using His blessings to fund our idolatry.

God's response wasn't immediate destruction but strategic withdrawal. He removed the blessings so Israel would recognize their true source. Sometimes God's greatest mercy is allowing us to experience the emptiness of life without Him.

Reflection: What blessings have you failed to acknowledge as coming from God's hand?

Day 4: Bought Back at the Price of a Slave

Reading: Hosea 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:18-19

Devotional: After everything—the betrayal, the adultery, the rejection—God commanded Hosea to buy back his wife from slavery. Fifteen shekels of silver and some barley: the price of a common slave. Gomer's unfaithfulness had led her to the lowest place, yet Hosea redeemed her.

This is the gospel in miniature. We are Gomer—unfaithful, spiritually enslaved, unable to save ourselves. Christ is Hosea—the faithful one who pays the redemption price. But Jesus didn't pay with silver; He paid with His own blood. We weren't worth thirty pieces of silver; we were bought at Calvary.

The beauty of redemption is that it doesn't just free us from slavery; it restores us to relationship. Hosea didn't buy Gomer to make her a servant but to make her his wife again. God doesn't redeem us to make us slaves but to make us His beloved children.

Reflection: Have you truly accepted that you've been bought back and restored to relationship with God?

Day 5: Waiting for the King

Reading: Hosea 3:4-5; Romans 11:25-32

Devotional: Hosea prophesied that Israel would spend "many days" without king, sacrifice, or temple—yet would eventually return and seek "the Lord and David their king." This prophecy spans millennia. Since the Babylonian captivity, no king has sat on Israel's throne. The nation exists, but the throne remains empty, waiting.

We live in this waiting period. The price has been paid, redemption accomplished, but the King has not yet taken His throne. Like Israel, we live between promise and fulfillment, between already and not yet. Christ has come as suffering servant; He will return as reigning King.

This tension should shape how we live. We're not just waiting passively but actively preparing for the King's return. We live as faithful subjects of a coming kingdom, representing our absent King until He returns to claim what is rightfully His.

Reflection: Does your life reflect eager anticipation for Christ's return, or have you settled too comfortably into this present age?

Closing Thought: Hosea's story confronts us with an uncomfortable truth: we are all unfaithful. Yet it offers glorious hope: God is faithful even when we are not. He pursues, He

redeems, He restores. The question is not whether we deserve His love—we don't—but whether we'll accept it and live transformed by it.