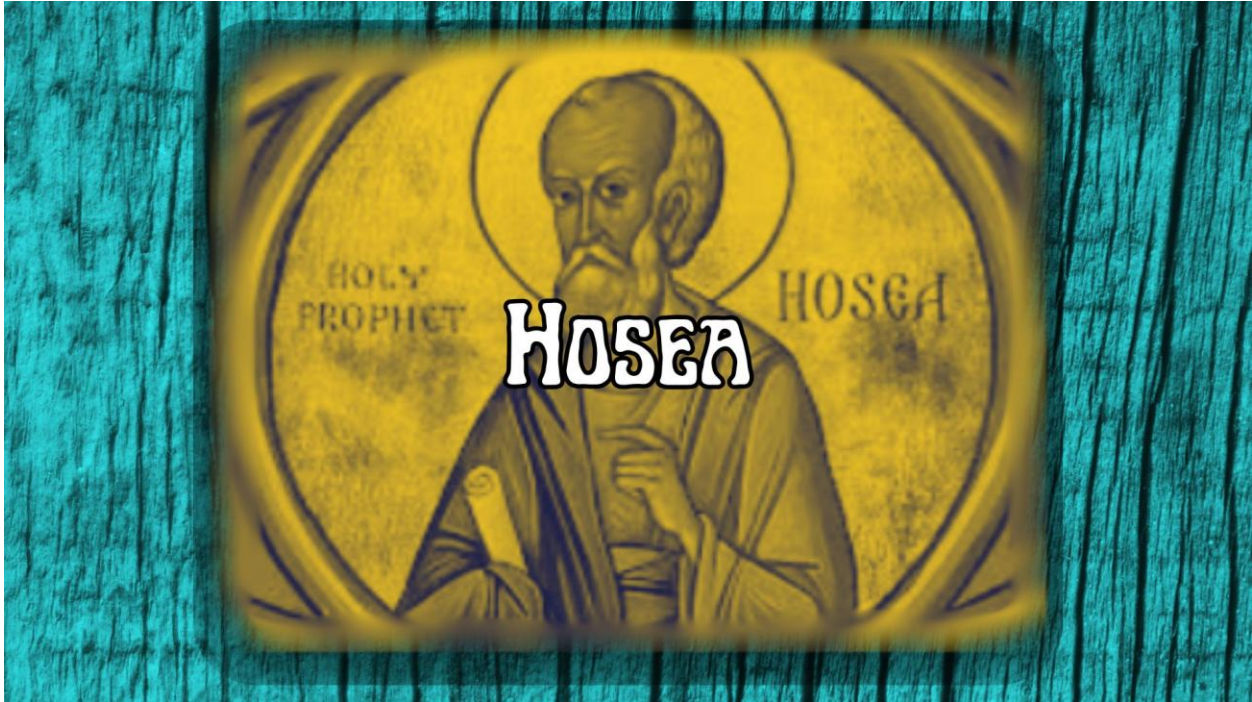


Small Group Guide: Hosea 4-6

The Consequences of Unfaithfulness and God's Promise of Redemption



Opening Prayer

Begin your group time with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help you honestly examine your relationship with Him.

Sermon Summary

This study explores Hosea chapters 4-6, where God charges Israel with unfaithfulness through idolatry, injustice, and spiritual adultery. Despite their prosperity, the people abandoned God's law and pursued pagan worship. God warns of coming judgment while ultimately promising restoration for those who return to Him.

Key Themes

1. **Spiritual Adultery:** Israel's worship of false gods instead of remaining faithful to the Lord

2. **The Danger of Prosperity:** How comfort and blessing can lead to spiritual complacency
 3. **Sin's Enslaving Power:** How sin captures our hearts and becomes our identity
 4. **Generational Impact:** Parents passing down false worship instead of God's truth
 5. **God's Redemptive Plan:** Despite judgment, God's ultimate goal is restoration
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **God's Charges Against Israel** (Hosea 4:1-3)
 - What specific sins does God list against Israel in these opening verses?
 - How do these sins affect not just people but also creation itself?
 - What does this teach us about the far-reaching consequences of sin?
2. **The Problem of Prosperity** (Hosea 4:7)
 - The sermon notes that "the more they increased, the more they sinned." Why do you think prosperity often leads to spiritual decline rather than gratitude?
 - When is it actually hardest to follow God—in good times or difficult times? Why?
 - Share an example from your own life when comfort led to spiritual complacency.
3. **Sin's Enslaving Nature** (Hosea 4:11)
 - What does it mean that "harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart"?
 - How does sin become part of our identity rather than just our actions?
 - Have you seen examples of people (including yourself) whose identity became wrapped up in their sin or struggle?

Personal Reflection

4. **Mixed Worship**
 - Israel mixed God's commands with pagan practices. What are ways modern Christians might mix biblical faith with worldly values?

- Are there areas in your life where you've taken something God gave you and twisted it by mixing it with the world's perspective?

5. **Leadership and Influence** (Hosea 4:14)

- God held the men responsible because their daughters and wives learned from their example. Who looks to you as a spiritual example (children, coworkers, friends)?
- What legacy of faith (or unfaithfulness) are you passing down to the next generation?
- How does this challenge you to live more intentionally?

6. **Stubbornness and Pride** (Hosea 4:16)

- Israel is compared to a "stubborn calf" that won't be moved. In what areas of your life are you being stubborn toward God?
- What would it look like to soften your heart and become teachable again?

Application

7. **When Things Are Going Well**

- The sermon suggests we're most vulnerable spiritually when things are easy. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What spiritual disciplines or practices help you stay connected to God during seasons of blessing and comfort?

8. **Returning to the Lord** (Hosea 6:1-3)

- After all the judgment, Hosea ends with a call to return to God. What does genuine repentance and return look like practically?
- Is there an area where you need to "return to the Lord" this week?
- What gives you hope that God will receive you when you return?

Key Takeaways

1. **Sin has consequences** that affect not just us but others around us and even creation itself.

2. **Prosperity can be spiritually dangerous** when it makes us self-reliant instead of God-dependent.
 3. **Sin enslaves** and can become our identity if we don't find our true identity in Christ.
 4. **We influence others** whether we intend to or not—especially the next generation.
 5. **God's judgment serves His redemptive purposes**—He disciplines those He loves to bring them back to Himself.
 6. **Return is always possible**—God's ultimate plan is restoration for those who come back to Him.
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Examine Your Heart:** Set aside 30 minutes for honest self-examination. Ask God to reveal areas where you've been spiritually unfaithful—pursuing comfort, success, or other things instead of Him.
 2. **Gratitude in Prosperity:** If you're in a season of blessing, create a daily practice of thanking God specifically for what He's provided and acknowledging your dependence on Him.
 3. **Check Your Influence:** Have a conversation with someone who looks up to you spiritually (child, mentee, younger believer). Ask them what they've learned from watching your faith.
 4. **Return to the Lord:** If you've drifted from God, take a concrete step back toward Him—restart a spiritual discipline you've abandoned, confess a specific sin, or reconnect with Christian community.
 5. **Identity Audit:** Write down what you've been identifying with lately (job, struggle, relationship status, etc.). Then write down who God says you are in Christ. Commit to replacing false identities with your true identity.
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Reflection Exercise

The Stubborn Calf

Take 5 minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- In what area of my life am I being like the "stubborn calf"—refusing to move or change?
- What is God asking me to do that I've been resisting?
- What would surrender look like in this area?

Share with the group if comfortable.

Prayer Focus

Close your time by praying for:

- **Honest hearts:** That God would reveal areas of unfaithfulness in our lives
 - **Tender hearts:** That prosperity wouldn't harden us but make us more grateful
 - **Faithful witness:** That we would pass down genuine faith to the next generation
 - **Return:** For anyone in the group who has drifted from God
 - **Hope:** That we would trust God's redemptive plan even in seasons of discipline
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Closing Thought

"Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up." (Hosea 6:1)

No matter how far we've wandered, God's arms are open. His plan is always redemption for those who will return to Him.

5-Day Devotional: Returning to the Lord



Day 1: When Blessing Becomes a Stumbling Block

Reading: Hosea 4:1-7; Deuteronomy 8:10-18

Devotional: Israel's prosperity became their downfall. "The more they increased, the more they sinned against me," God declared. In comfort, they forgot their Provider. This pattern warns us today: spiritual complacency often grows in seasons of ease, not hardship. When life flows smoothly, we're tempted toward self-reliance, crediting our success to our efforts rather than God's grace. The Israelites had everything—land, wealth, security—yet lost the one thing that mattered: their relationship with God. Take inventory today. Has comfort dulled your dependence on God? True spiritual vitality requires intentional gratitude and remembrance, especially when things are going well. Don't let blessing become your stumbling block.

Day 2: The Captivity of Sin

Reading: Hosea 4:11-14; Romans 6:15-23

Devotional: "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart." Sin doesn't just affect us momentarily; it takes captive, reshaping our identity until we can't distinguish ourselves from our struggles. The Israelites' idolatry became so consuming that their very essence was defined by rebellion. Yet Scripture declares you are more than your past mistakes, more than your addictions, more than your failures. Sin wants to become your personality,

but Christ offers a new identity. Recovery begins when we recognize that our true self is found in Him, not in what enslaves us. What has captured your heart's attention? Today, acknowledge that freedom is possible. Your identity is "beloved child of God," not the sum of your struggles.

Day 3: When Holy Places Become Hollow

Reading: Hosea 4:15-19; Matthew 15:1-9

Devotional: Beth-El, where Jacob wrestled with God, became Beth-Avon—a center of idolatry. Places once sacred were corrupted when mixed with worldly practices. The Israelites maintained religious ceremony while abandoning true worship, thinking ritual could substitute for relationship. This happens today when we confuse church attendance with authentic faith, when traditions become empty habits divorced from heart transformation. God doesn't want our religious performance; He desires genuine devotion. The new moon feasts meant to honor God became pagan rituals because hearts had wandered. Examine your spiritual practices. Are they life-giving connections with God or hollow routines? True worship flows from surrendered hearts, not merely from showing up in holy places.

Day 4: The Stubbornness That Leads to Wandering

Reading: Hosea 4:16-19; Luke 15:11-24

Devotional: "Israel is stubborn like a stubborn calf. Now the Lord will let them forage like a lamb in open country." Sometimes God's judgment means giving us what we demand. Like the prodigal son, Israel insisted on independence, so God released them to experience the consequences of their choices. This isn't divine abandonment but loving discipline—allowing natural outcomes to teach what warnings couldn't. The father didn't chase the prodigal; he let him go, knowing the far country would reveal what home truly meant. If you're wandering in "open country," know that God hasn't forgotten you. He's waiting, like that father, for your return. Stubbornness may lead us away, but humility brings us home.

Day 5: The Promise of Restoration

Reading: Hosea 6:1-3; Joel 2:25-27

Devotional: After chapters of judgment comes this beautiful cry: "Come, let us return to the Lord, for He has torn, but He will heal us." God's discipline always aims toward restoration. The same God who brings necessary judgment promises to bind up wounds and revive His people. "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up"—a prophetic glimpse of resurrection hope through Christ. No matter how far you've fallen, no matter how deep the consequences of sin, God's plan culminates in redemption

for those who return. He will be like rain to parched ground, bringing life where death reigned. Today, hear His invitation: return. Acknowledge your need. He who struck the blow will heal the wound. Restoration is always His ultimate goal.