



Discussion Guide

Week 2 | Amos

Gather together between October 26-November 1

Open prayer of thanksgiving and a check-in. If you are in a group, ask each person to name how they are, on a scale from 1 (not great) to 10 (awesome). Nobody needs to explain why they name the number they identify, but all are welcome to do so. If prayers need to be offered in response as a group, this is always a helpful beginning.

This week, Pastor Clare taught on the Book of Amos. We invite you to read Amos this week (its only 9 chapters) or watch the [Bible Project's Book of Amos Summary video](#).

Prophets are often outsiders in culture who are speaking a critique of their own people. Amos is a prophet in the Old Testament who is speaking to Israel at a difficult point in their history.

Who is Amos?

Amos describes himself this way: "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

Amos' words didn't come from formal education or his family's power; he didn't even initially claim to be a prophet. Amos is able to speak beautifully about the impact the people have on the land, and his book is full of farming metaphors.

Amos' perspective also shows a "bias toward the bottom." He is able to speak this way because he was a person from the bottom. Richard Rohr says, "In our society and in our churches, we invariably been from the top to the top."

Who are you? What about who you are might help you know what is yours to say?



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Speaking to the collective

Amos begins the book with intense anger. He is speaking judgement to a culture that is failing to live justly. But Amos refuses to scapegoat. He does not focus his criticism on specific leaders but recognizes the broader problem.

“The church has been trying for centuries to save individuals while ignoring the corrupt system in which those individuals operate. God, by definition, deals with the whole, but our egos keep us lost in the small parts that we think we can control. This is why millions of individuals who walked the aisle to repent at the Billy Graham crusades did not add up to a nonviolent Mississippi, or a decrease in lynching in Alabama, or a reduction of poverty in California.” - Richard Rohr

Do you have a tendency to blame certain people for problems in our world? Certainly, leaders have more power to change systems but what are ways that all of us could care for our neighbor and increase the justice in our world.

Love them into loving me back

Often, we can hear the criticism of the prophets and feel shame. Prophets often start angry, become sad, and then end with beautiful praise. The prophets are teaching us to love by showing us their own journey of becoming loving.

Amos begins declaring that horrible things would happen as a result of the people's unfaithfulness. Yet, the book ends with God's promise of faithfulness.

“I will restore David's fallen shelter—
I will repair its broken walls
and restore its ruins—
and will rebuild it as it used to be”

God wants to love you into loving God back. How might you have been trying to prove yourself to God instead of letting God prove God's self to you?

Concluding question: How can you see yourself in Amos' story or how does Amos help you to find your voice?