

**The Prodigal Wife
Love Desires Restoration
Hosea 2:1 – 7**

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Hosea has been called as a prophet of YAHWEH. His message is to be an example. Hosea has been commanded of the Lord to become unequally yoked with a woman who does not have the same ideas of faith, or purity, or anything else that he has. He has been asked to intentionally engage in a dysfunctional marriage in order to graphically portray just how dysfunctional Israel's relationship with YAHWEH truly is. He is also the first prophet to demonstrate the grace of God and the love of God.

“He is the first prophet of Grace, Israel’s earliest Evangelist.” Just as Luke presents the prodigal son, so Hosea portrays the prodigal wife. Nowhere in the whole range of God’s revelation do we find more beautiful words of love than in Hosea 2:14-16; 6:1-4; 11:1-4, 8, 9; 14:4-8. (Feinberg 1990, 14)

We still have one closing thought to cover from last week. In chapter 1 we discovered the calling of Hosea and the unique situation he was to be in, literally being a sign that can be seen by all regarding the faithlessness of the nation of Israel.

As we came to the end of chapter one, after discovering that Israel had rejected the covenant and the relationship that went with it, bringing judgement upon themselves, we were given a glimpse of the future.

Here in chapter 2 the first verse closes out that view for us.

Hosea 2:1

“Say to your brothers, “Ammi,” and to your sisters, “Ruhamah.”” (NASB 2020)

The picture appears to be one of Hosea telling his one legitimate child, Jezreel, to rename his brother and sister. However, the instructions are in the plural, brothers and sisters, meaning this is pointing to the nation of Israel again.

There is a time coming in the future where they will once again be YAHWEH's people, Ammi my people, and will obtain mercy, Ruhamah having obtained mercy.

Ammi (My People) reverses the judgment portrayed in the name of the second son, and Ruhamah (Mercy) is the emphatic reversal of the daughter's name. YHWH intends to save, and the voice of siblings crying out "mercy" is an emphatic affirmation that YHWH intends to overcome his people's failures. (Dearman 2010, 106)

The picture is for the future and the remnant is told "to proclaim to their brothers and sisters (other Israelites) that the nation's relationship with the Lord had been reestablished." (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1382)

This is not a new idea for the nation as it was originally stated by Moses in his last sermon to the people.

Deuteronomy 30:1–10

““And it shall be when all these words come upon you, the blessing and the curse that I gave before your face, and you take them into your heart in all the nations where the Lord may scatter you there, you also shall return unto the Lord your God, and you shall listen to his voice, according to all that I am commanding you today from the whole of your heart and from the whole of your soul. And the Lord shall heal your sins, and he will show mercy to you, and he will gather you again from all the nations into which the Lord scattered you there. If your dispersion should be from one end of the heavens as far as the other end of the heavens, from that place the Lord your God will gather you and from that place the Lord your God will take you. And your God will lead you from that place into the land that your fathers inherited, and you shall take possession of it; and he will make you well, and he will make you numerous beyond your fathers. And the Lord will cleanse your heart and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God from the whole of your heart and from the whole of your soul, in order that you may live. And the Lord your God will give these curses against your enemies and against those who hate you, who pursued you. And you shall turn unto the Lord and listen to the voice of the Lord your God and do his commands that I am commanding you today. And the Lord your God will bless you in all the work of your hands, in the offspring of your belly, and in the produce of your land, and in the offspring of your livestock. For the Lord your God will turn to delight in you for good things, as he delighted in your fathers. If you listen to the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commands and his ordinances and his judgments that have been written in the book of this law; if you turn to the Lord your God from the whole of your heart and from the whole of your soul.” (Lexham Press 2020, Deut 30:1-10)

Israel is not there yet as Hosea writes. The idea is one to be left for the future. One which we see beginning to be fulfilled today as the nation is being regathered in unbelief. We need to look at Ezekiel 36:22 – 24.

While primarily dealing with the regeneration of Israel, Ezekiel 36:22–24 nevertheless makes it clear that a regathering takes place before the regeneration. (Fruchtenbaum 1994, 718)

Ezekiel 36:22–24

““Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am bringing you back, but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. I will show how holy my great name is—the name on which you brought shame among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD. For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.” (NLT)

It is at the end of the Tribulation that the remnant is in faith and the words of verse 1 can be told to them. “This shows that the redemption is complete. The child named Jezreel has his name redeemed, and now

the next two children (Lo-Ruhamah, “No Mercy” and Lo-Ammi, “Not My People”) have their name redeemed as Israel is once again regarded as “My People” unto the LORD and “Mercy is shown” unto them. What was a sign of judgment is now evidence of redemption.” (Guzik 2000, Ho 1:10-2:1)

As we saw in chapter 1, Israel committed adultery, the word used is one for a prostitute. They have been living in a state of separation from God as Isaiah described in Isaiah 50:1 “Thus says the LORD: “Where is your mother’s certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.” (ESV)

While separated, the blessings that were available to be received if they were faithful, were withheld. This withholding of what would be considered marital provisions made many in Israel believe a divorce had already taken place. It had not, no bill of divorce per Deuteronomy 24:1 had been presented. Israel did not return to YAHWEH. So, divorce proceedings are in order for the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Hosea is talking about the inevitability of this proceeding to take place here in chapter 2.

Jeremiah talked about it in the past tense.

Jeremiah 3:6–8

“The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.” (ESV)

Hosea 2:2–3

“Dispute with your mother, dispute, Because she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; But she must remove her infidelity from her face And her adultery from between her breasts, Otherwise, I will strip her naked And expose her as on the day she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, Make her like desert land, And put her to death with thirst.” (NASB 2020)

This is not an idle threat that Hosea is making to Gomer. It is presented as a conversation to his children explaining to them what he is facing and the actions he is contemplating.

God calls upon the children to persuade their mother to reject her ways, lest they be disowned along with her (v. 4). The symbolism of a wife and children of whoredom carries over from the previous chapter, where Hosea is bidden to take a harlot to wife in order to dramatize the apostasy and waywardness of the nation (1:2–9; cf. 2:2). (Fishbane 2002, 210)

The divorce procedure is in Deuteronomy 24:1.

Deuteronomy 24:1

“But if someone takes a wife and he lives with her, and it happens that she does not find favor before him because he found in her a shameful thing, then he shall write her a document of divorce, and he shall give it into her hands, and he shall dismiss her from his house.” (Lexham Press 2020, Deut 24:1)

This “provides three guarantees against rash or arbitrary divorce: a definite and substantial ground must be alleged; a proper legal instrument must be prepared; and the case (it is implied) must be brought before some public functionary, who would not only secure the due observance of the requisite legal formalities, but also take care that the grounds alleged were sufficient, and consider any defence that might be offered. The deed, moreover, in order that the divorce may be legally valid, must be delivered into the wife’s hand, and she must be formally sent by her husband out of his house. (Driver 1902, 272)

Hosea has identified the shameful thing, her prostitution. “Undoubtedly the divorce document would contain something like the formula, “She is not my wife, and I am not her husband” (Hos 2:2).” (Gane 2001, 49)

Hosea is not talking about the letter of the law though. Under the law, a woman who committed adultery would be put to death (Deuteronomy 22:22). But this is Israel and Hosea loves Gomer.

Hosea wants to exercise grace. This is a picture of God’s love as well towards Israel. It is also entirely possible that the culture in Israel no longer thought of divorce as a big deal or as prostitution as a big deal. “It is true that YHWH could have rejected northern Israel for the spiritual equivalent of “indecency,” but in his mercy, he did not. He also could have destroyed Israel for her first spiritual adultery, i.e., idolatry. In fact, it was not until Israel had committed numerous idolatries that YHWH cast Israel off, i.e., divorced her, as mentioned in Jer 3:8. When God divorced Israel, it was not so that she could remarry, as in Deut 24:2; she was destroyed by the Assyrians (in 722 B.C.), as Jeremiah well knew.” (Gane 2001, 51)

What we see here in Hosea 2:2, this is a call for radical repentance. Israel will be ready to say they are sorry, so will Gomer, but there is that lifestyle thing going on. Radical repentance means a complete change.

In Biblical counseling, it is not uncommon in discussing issues with folks who are having marital issues, that there are some rather huge changes that need to take place. Sometimes with one party, usually with both. Where did we ever come up with the idea that our partner is there to meet all of my needs without anything being returned by me? Oh yeah, Genesis 3.

Gomer has created a situation for herself, just as Israel has. In this case though, the desire of Hosea is to make it work. That may not be the desire of Gomer though. Israel has God talk. We are Jews.

James 2:19

“You believe that God is one; well and good. Even the demons believe that—and tremble with fear.” (NET)

The call is to take a step back, and look at the situation you have created for yourself. “This oblique approach invites individual Israelites to stand apart from the community of which they were part, and to view matters more objectively, indeed from the LORD’S perspective.” (Mackay 2012, 74)

This call to repentance comes to Gomer while everything for her is good. She has money, she has boyfriends, she has someone taking care of her and the kids so she can live anyway she wants. Israel is doing the same. This is all about to come to an end unless radical repentance takes place. Israel is not in a good place.

If the idea was to simply divorce, there would not be a final call to Gomer to change her behavior then judgement. Hosea wants to see her behavior change and for restoration to take place. But changes must happen and happen now.

Hosea 2:2

“Dispute with your mother, dispute, Because she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; But she must remove her infidelity from her face And her adultery from between her breasts,” (NASB 2020)
Israel is being called to give up the lifestyle of idolatry. That lifestyle included prostitution, drug use, attributing what God provides to an idol. It included the wearing of certain types of jewelry as well as special clothes (2 Kings 10:22). “Israel deserves judgment because in celebrating Baal (festivals, incense, jewelry) they “forgot me, says the LORD.”” (Birch 1997, 34)

Apparently the unfaithful wife bejeweled herself with a nose ring (before her face) and a necklace or pendant (between her breasts) before committing adultery. Were these a prostitute’s symbols (cf. Jer.

4:30; Ezek. 23:40) or were they distinctive jewelry used in the worship of Baal? We lack the data to decide. (Guenther 1998, 58)

If there are no changes, then there will be consequences, and not just on Gomer.

Hosea wants to avoid the letter of the law...the death penalty. He wants to exercise grace as he truly loves his wife. So, Hosea makes very clear that unless there is a change, there are consequences, and he first outlines what will take place with Gomer.

The Old Testament gives the punishments for adultery as public stripping, divorce, and death. While the Old Testament law codes only command stoning as the death penalty for adultery, adulteresses may also have been burned (Deut 22:21; Lev 20:10; Gen 38:24). (Marsh 2016)

Hosea 2:3

“Otherwise, I will strip her naked And expose her as on the day she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, Make her like desert land, And put her to death with thirst.” (NASB 2020)

This sounds harsh, but it is what the law allowed for. The message being communicated to Israel through what Hosea is threatening Gomer with is that God “will strip her of her material and spiritual blessings and leave her bare and naked, dying of thirst in a strange land.” (Gingrich 2004, 10)

It was the custom among the Jews when any married that what dowry they brought their husbands was written down in a table; and if afterwards the husband should divorce his wife, except there could be proved some gross and vile thing against the woman, she was to go away with her table, with her dowry; she must not go away empty, or naked. But if there could be proved some notorious villainy which she had committed, then she was sent away naked, without her tables, her dowry. Thus God threatens this people. “She is not My wife.” She shall be sent away without any tables, naked and wholly destitute. (Exell n.d., 12)

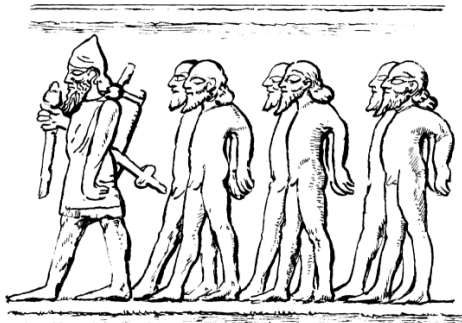
There are five consequences being outlined:

1. A forced and very public removal of all material and spiritual protections and blessings.
2. Complete public exposure of the prostitution.
3. Total abandonment by all in the community.
4. No help and no support from anyone in the community.
5. Even the basic needs for life will be withheld because of the sin and exposure of it.

Since the people were acting like prostitutes, God would treat them like prostitutes and shame them publicly. He would no longer claim the nation as His wife because she had broken the solemn marriage covenant and consorted with idols. (Wiersbe 1996, 16)

This sounds incredibly harsh, but at that time, this was a common practice. The warning to Gomer is a warning to Israel. They know how captives are treated. They have done this themselves.

The Future for Israel



(German Bible Society 2009)

From the gate of the Assyrian city Balawat we see the press clippings of Salmanassar III providing us a picture of how the Assyrian's routinely dealt with those they defeated and placed into exile. They are stripped and led into exile.

We are not clear as to the exact timing of Hosea's warning. It is possible though that an event that had recently taken place was still fresh in everyone's memory. While Ahaz was King of Judah and Pekah King of Israel, Israel invaded Judah and took 200,000 captives back to Samaria with them. They were warned by the Prophet Oded not to continue with the captives and members of the army also, after hearing Oded, changed their mind about what they were as well. You see, the captives were all naked.

2 Chronicles 28:14–15

“So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the assembly. And the men who have been mentioned by name rose and took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them. They clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them, and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kinsfolk at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.” (ESV)

The problem in Israel has not just been solely the current generation. This has been going on ever since Jeroboam I split away from Judah after the death of Solomon and set up his own high places. And it will not end with the current generation either. Hosea moves on to talk about the consequences for the children of prostitution.

Hosea 2:4–7

“Also, I will take no pity on her children, Because they are children of infidelity. For their mother has committed prostitution; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’ Therefore, behold, I will obstruct her way with thorns, And I will build a stone wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not reach them; And she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband, Because it was better for me than now!’” (NASB 2020)

There are some commentators who believe this whole discussion with Gomer began as the direct result of Hosea having to, once again, go into town and find her and who she was living with now. She was not at home taking care of the kids, he has to do that and in the culture of the day, that would be a serious problem.

In this section of scripture, we will also see how much he truly loves her as Hosea is making sure she is taken care of, even while she is out living with another man who is either incapable of doing so, or does not want to.

She has been devolving downward in her selection of men. She may have started with one who had two chariots in the garage, but rapidly went to those who had a donkey tied up outside. Hosea continues with consequences in his discussion with his wife.

This consequence should encourage radical repentance, but Gomer, like Israel, may have reached the place where it no longer mattered what happened to the next generation. Adultery is incredibly selfish and that is one of the messages being conveyed. No one wins.

Are the kids now covering for mom? Are they refusing to denounce her?

Hosea 2:4

“Also, I will take no pity on her children, Because they are children of infidelity.” (NASB 2020)

Recall back in verse 2, Hosea called for the children to dispute with, effectively lodge a complaint with their mother about her ongoing behavior. But they are her children and she has not raised them the way Hosea would like to see, so they are becoming more and more like her.

This verse is a commentary on the names Lo-Ruhamah, “not loved,” and Lo-Ammi, “not my people.” He calls the children “her children” rather than “my children,” which again begs the question of whether Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi were really Hosea’s and again demands that we confess ignorance. (Garrett 1997, 79)

This would also point to Israel, who says they are God’s children, but hardly act like it.

The culture of Israel is not one centered around YAHWEH. They have prostituted themselves to false gods. The worship which also included, at the time, actual prostitution. They are illegitimate children that do not belong to YAHWEH at all. They no longer even know what it means to be a Jew and keep their end of the covenant.

Their “mother” had taught them nothing but greed, immorality, and idolatry. Yahweh looked at this misbegotten generation and in effect declared them to be Baal’s offspring and not his. (Garrett 1997, 79)

The harsh punishment threatened in verses 3–4 seems to imply complete termination of the marriage. The wayward wife would be executed and her children disowned. However, the context clearly demonstrates that this would not occur. (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1383)

Rather than having Gomer put to death and formerly disown the children, effectively making them orphans, Hosea says what he will do.

Hosea 2:5

“For their mother has committed prostitution; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’” (NASB 2020)

Why is it that Hosea says he is contemplating these actions...simple. Gomer is acting like a prostitute and at least two of the children are probably not Hosea’s anyhow, but there have been so many partners, there is no clarity as to who they actually belong to.

Gomer is going to the highest bidder. She is going after lovers who promise to take care of her needs and wants with no other strings attached. Is Gomer a gold digger? This seems to point that out. Rather than stay with her husband, she is shopping herself around looking for whoever can provide her the goodies she feels like Hosea has not provided her. This is classic ingratitude.

The nation of Israel did the same. They turned to other gods thinking that they would get a better deal than they had with YAHWEH. After all God did for them, they went elsewhere.

We have the same problem today. Ingratitude. Jesus has given us so much and provided so much for us, yet we want more. We actually think we have done all of this on our own.

In our current culture, we want everything but on our own terms rather than the Lords. Jesus addressed this problem in His letter to the last days church of Laodicea. Just like Israel, we think we have everything we need because we did it ourselves...or at least the culture wants us to think that. Our culture is selfish which leads to the need to take care of me above all else. What Gomer is doing is a me problem.

As much as television, movies, and videos try to convince us otherwise, adultery is not funny. The media have convinced too many people that adultery is no more serious than exceeding the speed limit. “Everybody does it.” “This is a new age.” “Don’t be so old-fashioned.” “Get with the program.” You can hardly watch a current sitcom without illicit sex as part of the story. (Jenkins 2005, 73)

Revelation 3:15–21

“I know what you have done; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth! You say, ‘I am rich and well off; I have all I need.’ But you do not know how miserable and pitiful you are! You are poor, naked, and blind. I advise you, then, to buy gold from me, pure gold, in order to be rich. Buy also white clothing to dress yourself and cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy also some ointment to put on your eyes, so that you may see. I rebuke and punish all whom I love. Be in earnest, then, and turn from your sins. Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they will eat with me. To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit beside me on my throne, just as I have been victorious and now sit by my Father on his throne.” (GNB)

Like Gomer, Israel and us, we all have the same enemy and his lies have not changed in thousands of years. He wants us to take our minds off of Christ, put it on the world and believe that we can do better on our own than we ever could with the Lord.

Colossians 2:6–8

“Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving. See to it, then, that no one enslaves you by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the teachings handed down by human beings and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ.” (GNB)

Paul’s warning to the Colossian believers cautions us that the world will actively seek to turn our minds in a different direction than that which God intends. If we keep in mind that we are involved in a battle for our hearts, minds, and souls, then this view takes on added significance. In the competitive marketplace of ideas and images, there will be many seductive alternatives awaiting us, many of which will seem reasonable because our enemy disguises evil in attractive packaging. We must carefully consider each option and reject those that do not conform to God’s ways. (Barna 2003, 9)

Seductive alternatives:

- Gomer – other men and the things they could give her while avoiding the responsibilities that go with being a parent. It is all about me.
- Israel – attributing all you have to Baal rather than to YAHWEH essentially doing life all on your own and avoiding guilt and responsibility since Baal has very different standards. It is all about me.
- Us – All the above. We don’t openly worship a false god, we worship convenience, choice, and pleasure...all at the expense of avoiding all responsibility. It is all about me.

Hosea 2:6

“Therefore, behold, I will obstruct her way with thorns, And I will build a stone wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.” (NASB 2020)

Because Gomer insists to continue her lifestyle, Hosea decides that it is time to place impediments for her to continue with that choice. This includes making it physical painful to continue to leave the house and go to her lovers. He would place physical barriers to try and stop the action. In other words, Hosea is going to oppose Gomer’s insistence to continue her lifestyle.

He wants to construct hedges. Some need to be physical, but some can be behavioral, an alteration of how we do life day to day to avoid those opportunities for sin. Gomer is going out of her way to sin. So is Israel. Hosea plans to put up a few hedges, God was going to do the same. We need to consider this as well.

How do we do this? Things I have heard parents do with kids: take the car keys, curfews, cell phone trackers, military school in another state, Outward Bound, Scared Straight, or simply suffer the consequences of what it is they are doing.

When we love someone, and they cannot see how destructive they are being, we simply want to see them change and stop doing the destructive behavior. Satan lies though and wants to enslave us to sin and through centuries of trial and error, he knows how to do this. Many times, it is simply letting us become enslaved to our brains production of endorphins. We need our bar of soap.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (ESV)

Endorphins and enkephalins are endogenous neuropeptides that act as neurotransmitters in the nervous system and as hormones. The endorphins are similar in structure and effect to the opiate morphine, hence the term (endorphin: endogenous + morphine)...Aerobic exercise stimulates endorphin release and is probably responsible for “runner’s high” and exercise addiction. (Norman 1999, 401)

Another area that Satan enslaves is the area Gomer, Israel and our culture today has problems with and that is sex. Gomer was seeking comfort anywhere she could and did so for money. Even when encountering consequences for this action, she continued. Just like Israel continued in their idolatry and prostitution to other gods. These “activities or substances that calm, comfort, or reduce tension or anxiety, usually resulting in a release of endorphins.” (Clinton and Scalise 2013, 11)

For many today, the hedge or obstruction that must be built is blocking access to certain websites and content. Pornography, a subset of Gomer’s problem, is epidemic today. “The brain of the person exposed long-term to pornographic images, however, does undergo changes that include creation of an endorphin response—biological neurochemicals with a narcotic-like effect, without the physical symptoms of withdrawal when interrupted.” (Cutrer 2013, 68)

The slavery is very real and is only one of the addictions being dealt with by Conquerors and Celebrate Recovery. Gomer, Israel and our culture have problems with besetting sin. “Besetting sins are habitual sinful behaviors or attitudes that victimize and enslave people. When you are a victim of a besetting sin, you do not clench your fist in the face of God and transgress His purpose; you are helpless and broken before Him because of your sin. A besetting sin makes you a slave and takes away your will.” (Towns 1996, 30)

As a believer in Jesus Christ, we have victory over this as we are enabled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. He keeps us on a straight line as long as we let Him. Also, setting up hedges helps.

Unlike Gomer, who will need hedges; unlike Israel who also needs hedges, we have the Holy Spirit.

Step One – radical repentance – 1 John 1:9

Step Two – radical reliance – Galatians 5:16 – 18

Galatians 5:16–18

“But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (NET)

“Walking” is a common Hebraism for “conducting one’s life” and thus is synonymous with “living.” If the verb is taken as imperative here, the promise in the latter half of the verse (where “the desires of the flesh” is also emphatic by virtue of its position before the verb) will then be regarded as the inevitable result of life lived by the Spirit. That the guidance of the Spirit can be experienced as a reality in the life of

the believer is a sign that Jeremiah's prophetic word about the new covenant has been fulfilled. (Fung 1988, 248)

I told you upfront that the prophets deal with repentance, and for us as believers, this is a reality for us as we become more and more like Jesus. He shows us what needs to go, we repent, we move on. But if we keep falling into the same hole, then we have a besetting sin problem (see Gomer). His love is the same as His love for Israel, He wants us to be faithfully following and He gives us the tools to be able to do so.

Remember, Satan was defeated on the cross.

Suggestions for Killing Besetting Sin

- Renounce the spiritual bondage holding you, it isn't from Christ but from the other guy, Satan. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John 10:10, NET)
- Recognize you have deceived yourself. You listened to a lie and fell for it, now you repeat the lie to yourself. Stop it. "If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8–10, NET)
- Clean the slate. Forgive others and get rid of the bitterness. Yes this is hard, but it is necessary. "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no one be like a bitter root springing up and causing trouble, and through him many become defiled." (Hebrews 12:15, NET)
- Clean the address book. There are some relationships that are toxic or are invitations to us to fall into what we are asking the Lord to resolve for us. "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."" (1 Corinthians 15:33, NET)
- Take ownership. Responsibility for who has caused the problem with this sin can be seen when I look in a mirror.

But God hasn't changed. He held out repentance to Israel and never stopped loving them. He holds the same out to us.

1 John 1:8–10

"If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us." (NET)

Hosea 2:7

"And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not reach them; And she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my first husband, Because it was better for me than now!'" (NASB 2020)

Hedges have been prayerfully established. Those physical, sociological, spiritual and emotional barriers have been erected and even when the behavior continues, the joy is now gone from it for Gomer.

The scene resembles that described in Proverbs 7. The prostitute or adulteress observes passersby on the street below. When she sees a likely client, she rushes down to advertise her wares and services personally. But the Lord delays her just long enough for her to miss the prospective customer. Running, she searches the nearby streets and alleys to find him (2:7a), but he is gone. Persistent failure to catch her prospective clients frustrates her, so she resolves to return to her husband. (Guenther 1998, 61)

The hedge works. It slows down. It removes the attractiveness. There are consequences. "This action is not so much retributive as preventative. In his loving commitment to the people the LORD first seeks to restrain their folly and keep them in his path which he wishes them to follow." (Mackay 2012, 84-85)

The frustration encountered to go around the hedges works. The desired action is the decision to return. This is called repentance.

So far in Hosea 2, the message has been one designed to make it clear that the desire of Hosea is to be fully reconciled with his wife, Gomer. He desires to see her radically repent of what it is she has been doing and change her life.

This is also reflective of what it is that God wants for the nation of Israel as well. In both cases, judgement is pending, the consequences have been fully outlined so an intelligent decision can be made. But that is the problem, sin corrupts so completely that the mental state of the sinner becomes a dicey issue.

Deuteronomy 28:28–29

“The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind, and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways. And you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you.” (ESV)

Is it madness to say abortion is holy? Is it madness to reject the creator of the universe in favor of yourself? Is it madness to rely on the government to meet your needs rather than the Lord? Is it madness to continue doing life as you always have and expecting a different outcome?

The answer to all the rhetorical questions is emphatically yes. This was the problem for Gomer, Israel and for us today in our culture. Madness due to the complete and utter rejection of the Lord.

The intent of those proposed actions in the first 6 verses of chapter 2 is to bring Gomer, as well as Israel to the place of reality we see in Hosea 2:7 “And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not reach them; And she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband, Because it was better for me then than now!’” (NASB 2020)

That possibly works for Gomer, but for Israel, their history does not reflect a return and they did indeed go into exile.

The people of Israel “did not come to appreciate how serious her situation was, and so did not in fact utter the words of 2:7, or anything like them. Since repentance, no matter how deficient, was still a long way off, a further indictment is lodged against the LORD’S errant wife—that she fails to acknowledge the true source of her prosperity.” (Mackay 2012, 87)

There is still more that has to happen for this relationship. The hedge slows down or blocks the return to the sinful behavior, but the real goal for Hosea is to permanently change behavior. That is what God wants to have happen for Israel as well.

How stubborn are we? A loving Lord does what is necessary and needed to lead towards restoration. He wants His creation to be in relationship with Him. The invitation is open, and the offer of salvation is free for the taking.

1 Corinthians 15:1–5

“Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.” (NLT)

Romans 10:8–10

“What it says is this: “God’s message is near you, on your lips and in your heart”—that is, the message of faith that we preach. If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.” (GNB)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

Coming to Christ is no more complicated than that.

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