

Guided Bible Study

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Hosea 9 v. 10 - 10 v.15

A modified Version of Scripture Union's
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by
Dale & Sandy Larsen



About These Bible Studies

These Bible studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. We will be looking at the book of Hosea, that is found in the Old Testament. The studies were originally written by Dale & Sandy Larsen, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study during this time of lockdown.

Hope that you enjoy it!

Pastor Ian

Context

God never gives up on us. When we stray or make a mistake, God continues to pursue us with a relentless love. In Hosea's unfailing love for his wayward wife, he lived out the way God loves his people. His story is a reminder that God will never abandon us.

In choosing to study Hosea, we venture into a turbulent place of love and justice, promise and pain, close to the heart of God. The prophecy of Hosea does not progress logically from beginning to conclusion. Its writing is circular, going back and forth between judgment and mercy. We get a sense of God arguing with himself about Israel – not that God has trouble deciding what to do, but he feels the pain of conflict between what he wants for Israel and what he must do because of their sin.

Hosea shares God's conflict when at God's command he marries – and stays married to – the immoral woman Gomer. It is the conflict of anyone who cares deeply about a wayward person. God condemns Israel's sin and knows Israel deserves to be written off; yet he hangs on, unwilling to give up on them. God eventually let Israel be defeated in the Assyrian conquest, but he did not ultimately abandon his people whom he loved.

Study 8 -

Recalling Young Love

The Russian Orthodox wedding in the cavernous cathedral clearly followed ancient tradition. The gold – robed priest droned his endless chant, incense filled the air, attendants held crowns over the heads of the bride and groom. There was one jarring anachronism: a person in casual dress videotaped the ceremony from all angles.

Why do people videotape their weddings or pay a small fortune for a wedding photographer? They never want to forget the day they began their life together. It's an event and a pledge to which they can return in times of doubt or conflict.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. *What are some highlights of your Christian experience? What helps you remember those times? What keepsakes or mementos remind you of God's grace towards you*

Could God be disappointed? In this passage from Hosea, God's joy when he began his connection with Israel turns to bitterness when they do not yield the spiritual fruit he desires.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

Read Hosea 9 v. 10 – 17

- Over the years, how has Israel's relationship with God changed?
- Why are the 'fruit' images appropriate for the changing relationship between God and Israel (**Hosea 9 v. 10, 16**)?
- When have you experienced times of dullness or sourness in your relationship with the Lord? How do you explain them (if you can)?
- Besides the unfruitful vine, what other images of barrenness fill these verses (**Hosea 9 v. 11 – 14, 16**)?

Read Hosea 10 v. 1 – 15

- Notice how the vine image continues in verse 1. Because they had abandoned their early love for the Lord, what did Hosea predict for Israel's future (**Hosea 10 v. 2 – 8**)?
- How do you think abandonment of God has affected your own culture?
- How does God's purpose for Israel contrast with the way they lived (**Hosea 10 v. 9 – 13**)?
- What did God challenge Israel to do and with what promise (**Hosea 10 v. 12**)?
- What would it mean for you to personally take up the challenge that is found in **Hosea 10 v. 12**?

- What particular failing led to Israel's harvest of evil (**Hosea 10 v. 13 – 15**)?
- In what areas do you think you have lost some of the vitality of your first love for the Lord?
- What new choices (or renewal of former choices) will you make in order to purify your loyalty and restore your first love for God

Now

or

Later

Think of an area of your life where you tend to keep God out or at least do not let him have the last word. Or perhaps it is an area where you have never considered that God has a part or is interested. Draw a flat, unploughed field to represent that area of your life, which is your 'unploughed ground' to be broken up.

Pray about what it would mean for you to invite him fully into that area of your life. Draw lines to represent furrows that you are ploughing in the field.

In the middle of the field, draw yourself as a sower with a shoulder bag for seeds.

Make a commitment to pray that you will 'reap the fruit of unfailing love' in that newly ploughed and planted part of your life. Stay alert to the results that God may bring.

To help you in your study

The studies purpose is: To trace the decline in Israel's love for God since he chose them and began his relationship with them.

*'There is a sense of unexpected pleasure to be found in grapes growing in the early part of summer . . . They are considered such a delicacy that they are to be eaten immediately after picking' (see **Isaiah 28 v. 4; Nahum 3 v. 12**) (IVP Bible Background Commentary). The vine is used in other places in Scripture as a metaphor for Israel (e.g. **Psalms 80**).*

The incident at Baal Peor (**Hosea 9 v. 10**) came during Israel's wanderings after they left Egypt (**Numbers 25**). It was not their first fall into idolatry after the exodus. Aaron set up a gold calf idol even when Moses was receiving God's law at Mount Sinai (**Exodus 32**). The Moabite idol at Baal Peor, like the Canaanite religion, was specifically connected with sexual immorality.

Israel would be taken into exile in Assyria, and Samaria and its king would vanish. 2 Kings 17 v. 1 – 17 tells how Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, attacked Israel during the reign of its last king, Hoshea. Shalmaneser deported the Israelites and imported his own people. The Bible is clear that this happened because of Israel's idolatry.

*'It may be that young oxen were first trained to accept the yoke by putting them to work on the threshing floor. This relatively simple task, during which they had the opportunity of the reward of grazing (**Deuteronomy 25 v. 4**), made them more docile (**Jeremiah 50 v. 11**). Once they had achieved the stage when direction was easy, then a sledge could be added that would get the animal used to pulling a load (**2 Samuel***

24 v. 22). *This in turn prepared them for the more disciplined task of ploughing a furrow in a virgin field (1 Kings 19 v. 19; Jeremiah 4 v. 3). In like manner, God, chooses to use the docile and strong Israel to fulfil the divine plan'. (IVP Bible Background Commentary p. 758).*

Israel trusted in their own strength instead of in the Lord. Like all humanity through the ages, they met the question: 'Who is God?' with the answer: 'We are!' Self – reliance rather than God – reliance has been at the heart of sin ever since Adam and Eve decided to take things into their own hands rather than to obey God.

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