

# Finer Grounds

## Hosea

### Lesson 1: Introduction

*This week we will begin our emotional study of the book of Hosea. Before we dig into the actual text itself, let's take some time to understand a little about the history of the Israelites and what brought them to this point. Our journey through this book will be filled with sorrow and tears, but most of all hope. I am so glad you are joining me as we take this journey to restore heartfelt sincerity in our faith.*

*Hosea lived during the time of the divided kingdom and preached to the northern kingdom of Israel. Let's go back and look at this split in the kingdoms and some of the events that will turn the Israelites' path away from God.*

***Read 1 Kings 11:26-40 and lists all of the things he tells Jeroboam that He will do after King Solomon's death.***

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***Why does God say He will do these things?***

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***It is very easy for us to look to the idols of the world around us and worship them ourselves. What are some of these idols?***

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***In a culture where we are inundated with false gods, how can we be sure that we are holding fast to the truth and placing God as number one in our hearts?***

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***Read 1 Kings 12:25-33. What foolish decision does Jeroboam make because they no longer had access to the temple in Jerusalem?***

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*Jeroboam let his selfish motivations get in the way of true worship. He craved power more than he desired to be right in the sight of God. For this reason he deceived the people and told them it was these new gods that brought them out of Egypt. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for spiritual leaders to bend and twist the truth to fit with their own agenda just as Jeroboam did. Because of this we must be very vigilant in our studies so that we are not led astray by false teachings.*

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*In what ways have you experienced the truth being twisted to fit someone's selfish motivations?*

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*What are some precautions you can take to prevent yourself from being deceived?*

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*Until this point in the Israelites history the idolatry that they faced was tempting them from the outside. Many had married foreign women and allowed small idols into their home; however, this was the first time in Israel's history that public idols were being put up for corporate worship in the camp. This was the beginning of a huge downward spiral for the Israelites.*

*This idolatry is at the core of the many condemnations that God throws their way in the book of Hosea. Throughout the book we will see God laying out his accusations of the Israelites as if they were on trial in a courtroom. They had made an oath to adhere to the law and broke their covenant. God would be true to His word just as one would expect from a righteous judge.*

***Read Leviticus 26:1-14 and list all of the blessings the Israelites would receive for adhering to their covenant with the Lord.***

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***Read Leviticus 26:15-39 and list the consequences for disobedience.***

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***Read Leviticus 26:40-46 and list the benefits of returning to God.***

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*The Israelites were warned in no uncertain terms what would happen if they violated this law. But, as often happens throughout history, the further time removed them from the situation the easier it was for them to dismiss their covenant. They forgot their first love. If they were obedient to the Law it was out of nothing more than habit and repetition. The love affair this great nation once had for Jehovah was growing cold and like the scorned lover He would not take this offence lightly.*

*When we became Christians each of us made our own covenant with God. When we made this commitment we invited Him to be the absolute ruler of our lives. We agreed to adhere to His law and in exchange He offered us countless blessings.*

*Unfortunately, many times we let our everyday lives get in the way and forget the blazing love that we had for God when we first committed ourselves to Him.*

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*What are some things that may dull your passion for God?*

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*What is one thing you can do this week to begin to rekindle that old flame?*

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*As you read through the book of Hosea, pay special attention to the words listed below and their synonyms. Look for how they are used and sections where they are repeated. Throughout each of the lessons we will address the use of these keywords. Here are some questions to think about as you read.*

- **Prostitution/Harlotry:** Who is being called a prostitute or harlot and why? What did they do?
- **Love:** Who is doing the loving? What actions are taking place?
- **Covenant:** What covenant is being spoken of? How has it been treated?
- **Know/Knowledge:** What is this knowledge of? How is it obtained? What are the consequences for its absence?
- **Iniquity/Guilt/Wickedness:** Who is guilty? What are they guilty of? What is the consequence of this guilt?

*I know there has been a lot of reading this week, but I will leave you with one more assignment. Examine the first three chapters of Hosea. They are the setting for one of the most heart-wrenching love stories of all time. As you read these chapters, keep in mind that God is setting up this real life example to serve as*

*an illustration of His relationship with the Israelite people. Look for parallels in the story of the Israelites and God and the story of Gomer and Hosea. This is one of the most emotional and penetrating books in the entire Bible. As we study be sure to allow it to permeate your heart.*