

08

HOSEA 6:1–7:2

EMPTY PROMISES



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

No one likes to be used. We let people into our lives so we can enjoy genuine fellowship with them and be appreciated for who we are. Unfortunately, sometimes people enter into friendships for selfish reasons. Sometimes we even do this without meaning to. We sometimes use our relationships with others to get what we want and serve our own purposes, without giving anything to the friendship in return. Although we find this practice disgusting when other people do it to us, we often do the same to God without realizing it. Like Israel, we wound the God who loves us most and jeopardize the best relationship we could ever hope to have. Fortunately, God forgives and restores us when we truly repent. Like us, God hates fake repentance, but loves sincere devotion.



CENTRAL **truth**

God hates fake repentance, but loves sincere devotion.



EXPLORE

scripture

HOSEA 6:1-7:2

HOSEA 6:1-3

1 Come, let's return to the LORD. For he has torn us, and he will heal us; he has wounded us, and he will bind up our wounds. **2** He will revive us after two days, and on the third day he will raise us up so

we can live in his presence. **3** Let's strive to know the LORD. His appearance is as sure as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring showers that water the land.

HOSEA 6:4-6

4 What am I going to do with you, Ephraim? What am I going to do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist and like the early dew that vanishes. **5** This is why I have used the prophets to cut them

down; I have killed them with the words from my mouth. My judgment strikes like lightning. **6** For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

HOSEA 6:7-7:2

7 But they, like Adam, have violated the covenant; there they have betrayed me. **8** Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with bloody footprints. **9** Like raiders who wait in ambush for someone, a band of priests murders on the road to Shechem. They commit atrocities. **10** I have seen something horrible in the house of Israel: Ephraim's promiscuity is there; Israel is defiled. **11** A harvest is also appointed for

you, Judah. When I restore the fortunes of my people, **7:1** when I heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim and the crimes of Samaria will be exposed. For they practice fraud; a thief breaks in; a raiding party pillages outside. **2** But they never consider that I remember all their evil. Now their actions are all around them; they are right in front of my face.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE HOSEA 5:15

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

HOSEA 6:1-5

DWELL

Did you know that if you break your leg and don't get it set by a doctor soon enough, it can heal incorrectly? If that happens, a doctor might need to cut or "re-break" it so that it can be set properly and heal the right way. It may seem strange, but sometimes you need to cause more harm in the short term so that something can heal properly in the long term. God did a similar thing with the Israelites. They had strayed so far from Him that they didn't even know how to repent anymore. The only solution was to tear them away from His side entirely, and then, when they were ready, restore them so they could live in His presence once again.



In verses 1-3, Hosea pleaded with Israel to return to the Lord. How does his plea compare to how they were actually acting, according to verses 4-5?



How can you be sure that you really mean it when you repent? Why is this important?

MEMORIZE

Add reminders to your phone, computer, or calendar to read Hosea 5:15 every morning and night this week.

PRAY

Thank God that "His appearance is as sure as the dawn" (v. 3). We can trust that when we seek Him, we will find Him.

day 2

HOSEA

6:6-10

DWELL

A lot of the time, a false apology is really easy to spot. For example, when our sibling fights with us and our parents make them say they're sorry, we can usually tell when they don't really mean it. God is even better at spotting fake apologies than we are. He doesn't just want us to follow rules in our worship, like "When you do this wrong, you make this sacrifice or memorize this prayer to make things right." He wants us to love Him faithfully—He wants us to seek Him out and talk to Him. He wants a genuine relationship with us. Israel didn't want a genuine relationship with Him, and their behavior showed it.

← Why did God compare Israel's betrayal to Adam's in the garden of Eden? (See Gen. 3:1-13.)

↔ Have you ever made a fake apology and then you acted even worse in the future? How can you avoid doing this?

MEMORIZE

Write Hosea 5:15 on a sticky note and place it on your bathroom mirror. Read it to yourself each time you brush your teeth or wash your hands.

PRAY

Pray that God would help you to live with integrity, repenting truly and apologizing genuinely when you sin against Him or others.

day 3

HOSEA

6:11-7:2

DWELL

↓ If God already knows everything, why did He need to expose Israel's sins?

→ What does it look like to expose our own sin? What should we do afterward?

In order to heal a disease, a doctor needs to first run tests and give a diagnosis. Can you imagine a doctor trying to treat a broken arm without performing an X-ray first to find out exactly which bone was broken? Of course, human doctors don't do this perfectly because disease can be complicated, but God is the perfect physician for our souls. He digs to the root of our sin issue and exposes it so that we can be healed. And Israel's sin disease was bad. Judah wouldn't be spared from the coming judgment, either—both the northern and southern tribes would face God's anger. God needed to show them just how bad things had gotten before they had any hope of getting better.

MEMORIZE

Pick a song you enjoy and read or sing Hosea 5:15 aloud to the beat of that song. Read the verse this way throughout the week, trying to recite more of it from memory each time.

PRAY

Thank God that He sees every part of us and knows exactly how to "heal" us of our sin: we need to know His Son, Jesus.

day 4

MARK

2:13-17

DWELL

The Pharisees and law experts were offended that Jesus would eat with “sinners”—shouldn’t the Son of God be spending His time with people who were holy and following God’s laws perfectly? The Pharisees thought they were righteous and didn’t need a “doctor,” but Jesus knew their hearts. A person who doesn’t think they’re sick doesn’t go to a doctor to get treated, and it was that way with the Pharisees, too. Jesus hadn’t come to earth for them. He had come for the people who knew that they needed the forgiveness and healing of their soul sickness, healing that He could offer them.



What was Jesus trying to teach the Pharisees in these verses? Do you think they understood? Why or why not?



Why is it good news for us that Jesus came for “those who are sick” (v. 17)? How should this affect the way you pray?

MEMORIZE

Write Hosea 5:15 on the center of a sheet of paper, then add drawings or doodles around the edges that relate to the verse. Hang it somewhere you will see it every day.

PRAY

Pray that Jesus would show you the places in your heart where you need healing. Ask Him to forgive you for sometimes acting as though you don’t need Him.

day 5

1 PETER

4:1-5

DWELL

The more we follow Jesus, the more He changes our priorities. Rather than focusing just on what we want without worrying about other people, we will begin living in a way that lines up with God’s will. We will do our best to love our neighbor well and pursue justice for people around us. But this won’t always make sense to others who aren’t following Jesus. The Romans in Peter’s time probably thought the Christians were pretty boring, since they avoided the life of excess and gluttony that was common in Roman culture. Our job isn’t to judge others for their choices—Jesus will be the final judge of human behavior. But we should aim to show others what a better life looks like in Christ.



What does it mean that we “suffer in the flesh” because Christ did (see v. 1)?



When are you most tempted to judge people who don’t follow Jesus? How could you respond instead?

MEMORIZE

Write each word of Hosea 5:15 on a separate note card. Shuffle the cards and try to put them in the correct order. Do this throughout the week until you can do it without checking the answer.

PRAY

Ask Jesus to keep you away from temptation and to help you live according to His good will.