

# Commitment

## GOD'S COMMITMENT TO AN UNFAITHFUL BRIDE

Focal Verses • HOSEA 1:1-11

### Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will: **EXPLORE** how God commanded Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman as a model for His love for Israel; **REFLECT** on God's desire for the restoration of broken relationships; and **DEMONSTRATE** faithfulness to God through a commitment to maintain faithful relationships with other people.

### In Focus

Cheryl pushed her cart through the produce section, trying to hurry. She had to be at Justin's soccer game in half an hour. Wheeling into the cereal aisle, Cheryl suddenly stopped and quickly turned around. "Darlique," she muttered. What was her sister doing in this part of town? Cheryl left her cart and darted to the restroom, determined not to be forced into a confrontation.

Later, at home, Cheryl thought about what had happened in the grocery store. "That was so silly," she said out loud. When had their little misunderstanding turned into this colossal issue? She had felt ridiculous hiding in the bathroom to avoid her sister. Cheryl thought about what she had read in her devotional that morning. It talked about being the first one to take a step toward reconciliation in a relationship, even if you felt you had been the one wronged.

"God, please help me to want to forgive Darlique," she prayed. "And please forgive me for not committing to humble myself enough to be the one to take the first step."

*God is a God of relationships. He is also a God of reconciliation. When you commit to restoring a broken relationship, what are some key factors you find helpful in fostering reconciliation?*



### Keep in Mind

"The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD" (Hosea 1:2, KJV).

## Focal Verses

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**KJV** **Hosea 1:1** The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

**2** The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.

**3** So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

**4** And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

**5** And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel, in the valley of Jezreel.

**6** And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have

mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

**7** But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

**8** Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

**9** Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

**10** Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

**11** Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

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### The People, Places, and Times

**Hosea.** Hosea, son of Beeri, was likely a native of the Northern Kingdom (Israel). He lived about the middle of the eighth century B.C., and his ministry appears to have begun around the same time as the prophet Amos. Hosea ministered for almost 40 years—prophesying throughout the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel. Not much is known about Hosea outside of what we learn about him in the book which bears his name.

**The Covenant.** In ancient times, “cutting” a covenant was essential to life. Parties would covenant together for many reasons: to protect their land or possessions, to show honor or earnestness in a business deal, to seal a marriage

arrangement, and so forth. All people in biblical times understood how a covenant worked. It was more than just a contract; it was a pledge of loyalty and the giving of your entire life. God’s covenant with Israel, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, was well-known to the people of Israel. It contained very specific blessings and curses, each tied to a specific point in the Law of Moses. If they disobeyed a specific law, God would curse them with a specific curse. If they obeyed a specific law, God would bless them in a specific way.

### Background

The valley of Jezreel was located in an area of central Israel that is today often called Megiddo.

During the ministry of the prophet Elijah, Jezreel came to be a significant place. It was the place of Naboth's vineyard, which was coveted by King Ahab (1 Kings 21). Naboth refused to sell his vineyard to Ahab, so Ahab's queen Jezebel had Naboth murdered. The prophet Elijah reprimanded Ahab and Jezebel and foretold that their demise would take place on the very same land they had schemed to acquire.

Later, King Jehu did indeed defeat Ahab at Jezreel and began to rid the land of the blatant idolatry brought to the nation by Jezebel. By the time of Hosea, the third generation of Jehu's descendants, Jereboam II, was on the throne. At this time, Israel appeared to be prosperous, vigorous, and strong. They had won back much of the territory previously stolen by their enemies. The house of Jereboam II was in power during the first three chapters of the book of Hosea. After that, we see a sad, quick succession of six kings in 25 years.

God instructed Hosea to prophesy that the strength of the Northern Kingdom would again be defeated at Jezreel, this time by the brutal Assyrians, because of the Israelites' continual desertion of God and turning to idolatry. They took their military victories for granted and worshiped the false gods of Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech.

## At-A-Glance

1. The Prophet's Challenge (Hosea 1:1-2)
2. The Prophet's Children (vv. 3-9)
3. The Prophet's Promise (vv. 10-11)

## In Depth

### 1. The Prophet's Challenge (Hosea 1:1-2)

The prophets would often use demonstrative examples or imagery to convey a message to the people. In the book of Hosea, the life of the

prophet himself serves as the example of God's message to the people of Israel and Judah. When God speaks His Word through the prophet Hosea, He gives him a startling command: marry an adulterous woman. Hosea obeys and marries a woman named Gomer. There is some debate over whether Gomer had adulterous tendencies or if she actually practiced prostitution when Hosea married her, but regardless, she was known to be sexually unfaithful.

God asks Hosea to be a living example to vividly point out the unfaithfulness of His people. By their continued and blatant idolatry, God's people had committed adultery, breaking the covenant relationship they had with Him.

### 2. The Prophet's Children (vv. 3-9)

Hosea obeys God and marries Gomer. Just as God had once made a binding covenant with the people of Israel, Hosea is now bound by a covenant to Gomer, and just as God loves His people, Hosea loves his wife. She soon bears a son, whom God instructs to be named Jezreel. As noted above, Jezreel was the name of a place of significance in Israel's history, and means "God scatters." By instructing Hosea to name his son this, God sends a clear message to the Israelites that judgment is coming.

Hosea continues to proclaim God's warning, but the Israelites pay no attention. Soon, Gomer bears a daughter. As instructed by God, Hosea names the little girl "Loruhamah," which means "not loved" or "not pitied." This is a stronger warning than the first, clearly conveying that if Israel continues in their idolatry, God will no longer love nor forgive them. Israel still refuses to listen. Their worship of other gods reveals a flagrant and wanton disregard for God's love, which ultimately leads to their alienation from Him.

After she weans Loruhamah, Gomer gives birth to another son. His God-given name is Loammi, which means "not my people." Sadly, this

child's name sums up the break in the covenant relationship between God and His people that He had warned would come. God's heart still longs for His people, but they will not turn back to Him.

### 3. The Prophet's Promise (vv. 10–11)

Though the Israelites persist in their wicked ways, God foresees a time when His people would repent and return to Him. In His great mercy and love, God reveals that their punishment would only be for a time. He has a plan for renewal and blessing. God, through Hosea, tells the people of Israel that one day they will be restored to God, and in the very place where He had said, "You are not my people," they would be called the "sons of God." This is in great contrast to verse 2, where the people of Israel are called "children of whoredoms."

God would not only restore His covenant with Israel, but He promises that Israel and Judah will someday be reunited into one nation. Though we are not told the eventual outcome of Hosea and Gomer's marriage, we can clearly see the promise of blessings and joy that result when reconciliation takes place between God and His chosen people.

### Search the Scriptures

1. Who was king of Israel when Hosea speaks to Israel (Hosea 1:1)?
2. What is the significance of the last mention of Jezreel in this passage (v. 11)?

### Discuss the Meaning

God longs for us to be faithful in our relationship with Him and with others, but sometimes we are unfaithful. What does it mean to be unfaithful to God or to someone else? In what ways might a believer act unfaithfully toward God?

### Liberating Lesson

Unfaithfulness in relationships leads to brokenness and alienation. The tragedy of

divorce, the ugliness of a breach between lifelong friends, or the pain of separation between siblings or other family members are all too common. Yet God longs to bring reconciliation to those relationships. He also desires for believers to develop empathy and compassion for others who have been hurt in relationships. When we experience restoration and forgiveness in our relationship with God, we can learn to extend that same grace to others.

It can be hard to extend grace when we have unresolved issues in our own lives from past relationships. Many who are unaware of the significance of the hurt and pain they have incurred from these relationships have become toxic in their current interactions with others. This results in more unhappy marriages and families, and ultimately it affects society overall, as the foundation of society—the family—is in need of serious repair.

### Application for Activation

Knowing that God is a God of reconciliation means we can be optimistic and hopeful even during trying circumstances of a difficult or broken relationship. Ask God to show you your part in forgiving or asking for forgiveness. Make a commitment to God that you will do your best to maintain faithfulness in all relationships.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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### Say It Correctly

Beeri. be-AY-ree.  
Diblain. div-LIE-eem.  
Jezreel. JEZ-ree-el.

### Daily Bible Readings

**DAY 148**

Job 38–39

Psalm 62:1–8

**DAY 149**

Job 40–42

Psalm 62:9–12

**DAY 150**

Songs of Solomon 1–8

Psalm 63:1–5

**DAY 151**

Isaiah 1–4

Psalm 63:6–11

**DAY 152**

Isaiah 5–8

Psalm 64:1–6

**DAY 153**

Isaiah 9–12

Psalm 64:7–10

**DAY 154**

Isaiah 13–17

Psalm 65:1–8

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