



[Leader Note: This series dives into some intense topics, so I suggest making a request for maturity from your students. You'll also want to make sure to address the fact that some students may not have a great situation at home. Remind them that this series is NOT about them or meant to condemn anyone. It's not a series about marriage as much as it is just a series about God's faithfulness.]

## INTRO

I'm so glad you're here! We're going to start a new series walking through the Book of Hosea. Just by a show of hands, how many of you are familiar with the story of Hosea?

Well, if you're not familiar with it, the Book of Hosea is right in the middle of the prophets in the Old Testament (it's the 28th book in the Old Testament). Here's a slide showing where it falls in the Old Testament. Hosea is a unique book, and we're about to find out why.

[Leader Note: I took this opportunity to tell a story about my own wedding day. This is a great way to open the message by sharing a personal story. If you have one, feel free to share it here! It could be that you show a picture, tell a story, or even read your vows like I did.]

## MARRIAGE ILLUSTRATION

When my wife and I got married, I was a mess! I can remember her walking down the aisle. She looked beautiful! So much of that day was a blur, but I remember a few specific moments. One of the biggest moments for me was when we got to share our vows with each other. If you've been to a wedding before, you might have heard something like this:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part."

When it comes to marriage vows, they can be sweet and romantic, but there's a good chance that we'll break those vows over time. I'm not the perfect spouse. There have been times when we don't live up to the kind of ideal reality that our vows might express.

And when it comes to marriage, vows, and faithfulness, we know that we are imperfect, but God is perfect. We lack faith, but He is faithful! Marriage was God's idea! That means that marriage predates government, countries, or anything else that people came up with! That leads me to this very important point. Marriage is a picture of our relationship with God.

### **DISCLAIMER / REQUEST FOR MATURITY**

Before we get started, I want to make a request and give you a little warning. We're going to be covering some PG-13 material throughout this series. Don't worry! It's all in the Bible. Sometimes, the Bible covers very serious material that impacts our lives in an important way. This is one of those moments.

So, the warning is that you'll hear some words you wouldn't normally hear in church! That leads me to my request. Let's all try to step up our maturity a little bit as we walk through this material so that we can all take this in with as few distractions as possible.

Here we go!

### **SCRIPTURE**

Hosea 1:1-2 (CSB) says, *"The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Jehoash, king of Israel. 2 When the Lord first spoke to Hosea, he said this to him: Go and marry a woman of promiscuity, and have children of promiscuity, for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the Lord."*

"Go marry a woman of promiscuity" doesn't sound like God, does it?

You're right. It doesn't. This is one of those moments in Scripture that we'll need to pay very close attention to the following verses to get the context of what's happening here.

God would have Hosea serve as a living illustration of what it's like to watch Israel be unfaithful to Him. But hold on. It gets a little crazier. And this is where I'm going to ask for maturity.

When you think of promiscuity, you might think of someone who doesn't have strong boundaries, especially in their relationships, how they live, and what they wear. In this case, we're supposed to assume the worst, as this word is translated even more harshly in other translations.

Your Bible might use the following phrases:

- "Take yourself a wife of harlotry."
- "Take yourself a wife inclined to infidelity."
- "Go marry a prostitute."
- "Go marry a woman of whoredom."

Now those words probably caught you by surprise. Most people don't realize those words are even in the Bible! But the Bible isn't using rude language or slang here. God simply told Hosea to marry a prostitute. If that's a new word for you, let me be clear. A prostitute is someone who engages in sex for money. God knew she would cheat on Hosea and make several poor choices. Even more so, God called Hosea to marry her! He didn't tell Hosea just be kind to her or help her, but to marry her!

I know, it's heavy! The Book of Hosea didn't waste any time getting started! You might be asking yourself why this is in the Bible or why we're doing a series on it. Stick with me until the end, as it's going to make a lot of sense.

The rest of the first chapter describes the three children who were born.

We find this in Hosea 1:3-9 (CSB).



1. What do you notice about the way God wanted His people to come back (“take words of repentance with you”)? Why does that matter?
2. In Hosea 6:4, God said Israel’s love was like “the morning mist.” What does that reveal about their commitment? How does it contrast with God’s faithfulness?
3. Verse 6 said that God desires “faithful love and not sacrifice.” What’s the difference between outward religious activity and genuine love for God?
4. The message compared wedding rings (symbols) to outward signs of faith (church attendance, Bible, etc.). Why isn’t the “ring” enough in either case?
5. Can you think of a time when you felt especially close to God (like camp, retreat, or a certain season)? What helped create that closeness?
6. The sermon ended with this question: “What would it look like for you to take a step toward Jesus today?” What’s your honest answer to that?
7. Which of these next steps feels most relevant to you right now—and why?
  - a. Honest prayer
  - b. Confession
  - c. Obedience in a hard area
  - d. Faith/surrender for the first time

**This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.**

**If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!**

**[downloadyouthministry.com](http://downloadyouthministry.com)**