

# Love & RESPECT

## RECALL

### Discuss Your Experience:

Throughout this series we have learned that great marriages are built on the principles laid out for us in God's word which emphasize a relationship of love and respect. We have also learned when that God will bless our spouse, family and those with whom we come in contact when we follow His guidelines. If given the opportunity, what words would your neighbors use to define your marriage?

### Icebreaker:

Materials needed: Bags of marshmallows (1 per team), boxes of spaghetti noodles (1 per team)

Divide the group into two or three teams. Give each team a bag of marshmallows and a box of spaghetti noodles.

**The challenge:** each team must build the tallest, most stable, creative structure it can.

**The catch:** no talking. Teams have 5 minutes to finish the project. Have the group decide which structure is the tallest, which is most stable and which is most creative.

**The Take Away:** the importance of a solid foundation.

### Introduction:

How would you feel if your marriage was used as an illustration to depict a nation that lied, cheated, abandoned and freely prostituted their bodies in defiance of God's word? That's exactly what we will be discovering in the biblical marriage of Hosea and Gomer. We will witness incredible acts of love, mercy, grace and forgiveness that will extend hope and inspire any marriage, no matter how successful or hurting.

## REVEAL

### Pray For Guidance:

Take a few moments and ask God to help you understand, grasp and apply the spiritual truths of this week's selected Bible passage(s).

Hosea 1- 3 (HCSB)

Chapter 1

1 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 promiscuous wife and have children of promiscuity, for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the Lord. 3 So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the Lord said to him: Name him Jezreel, for in a little while I will bring the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel. 6 She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and the Lord said to him: Name her No Compassion, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel. I will certainly take them away. 7 But I will have compassion on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the Lord their God. I will not deliver them by bow, sword, or war, or by horses and cavalry. 8 After Gomer had weaned No Compassion, she conceived and gave birth to a son. 9 Then the Lord said: Name him Not My People, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God. 10 Yet the number of the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. And in the place where they were told: You are not My people, they will be called: Sons of the living God. 11 And the Judeans and the Israelites will be gathered together. They will appoint for themselves a single ruler and go up from the land. For the day of Jezreel will be great.

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## Chapter 2

Call your brothers: My People and your sisters: Compassion. 2 Rebuke your mother; rebuke her. For she is not My wife and I am not her husband. Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face and her adultery from between her breasts. 3 Otherwise, I will strip her naked and expose her as she was on the day of her birth. I will make her like a desert and like a parched land, and I will let her die of thirst. 4 I will have no compassion on her children because they are the children of promiscuity. 5 Yes, their mother is promiscuous; she conceived them and acted shamefully. For she thought, "I will go after my lovers, the men who give me my food and water, my wool and flax, my oil and drink." 6 Therefore, this is what I will do: I will block her way with thorns; I will enclose her with a wall, so that she cannot find her paths. 7 She will pursue her lovers but not catch them; she will seek them but not find them. Then she will think, "I will go back to my former husband, for then it was better for me than now." 8 She does not recognize that it is I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil. I lavished silver and gold on her, which they used for •Baal. 9 Therefore, I will take back My grain in its time and My new wine in its season; I will take away My wool and linen, which were to cover her nakedness. 10 Now I will expose her shame in the sight of her lovers, and no one will rescue her from My hands. 11 I will put an end to all her celebrations: her feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths— all her festivals. 12 I will devastate her vines and fig trees. She thinks that these are her wages that her lovers have given her. I will turn them into a thicket, and the wild animals will eat them. 13 And I will punish her for the days of the Baals when she burned incense to them, put on her rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but forgot Me. This is the Lord's declaration. 14 Therefore, I am going to persuade her, lead her to the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. 15 There I will give her vineyards back to her and make the Valley of Achor into a gateway of hope. There she will respond as she did in the days of her youth, as in the day she came out of the land of Egypt. 16 In that day— this is the Lord's declaration— you will call Me, "My husband," and no longer call Me, "My Baal." 17 For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth; they will no longer be remembered by their names. 18 On that day I will make a covenant for them with the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the creatures that crawl on the ground. I will shatter bow, sword, and weapons of war in the land and will enable the people to rest securely. 19 I will take you to be My wife forever. I will take you to be My wife in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion. 20 I will take you to be My wife in faithfulness, and you will know •Yahweh. 21 On that day I will respond— this is the Lord's declaration. I will respond to the sky, and it will respond to the earth. 22 The earth will respond to the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. 23 I will sow her in the land for Myself, and I will have compassion on No Compassion; I will say to Not My People: You are My people, and he will say, "You are My God." ,

## Chapter 3

Then the Lord said to me, "Go again; show love to a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." 2 So I bought her for 15 •shekels of silver and five bushels of barley. 3 I said to her, "You must live with me many days. Don't be promiscuous or belong to any man, and I will act the same way toward you." 4 For the Israelites must live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without •ephod or household idols. 5 Afterward, the people of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come with awe to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days.

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# REFLECT

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### Understand the Context:

As a group, use your study bibles or online resources to answer as many of the following questions about the selected passage as you can. Keep in mind, these questions are intended as a guide; you may not be able to find all the answers or have time to address each one in the group.

- 1) Who? Who wrote the book of Hosea? Who was the book written to?
- 2) What? What was the nation of Israel experiencing during this time period? What events were looming in the near future? What was Hosea's biblical title/occupation?
- 3) When? When was the book written?
- 4) Where? Where was Hosea when he wrote the book?
- 5) Why? Why did Hosea write the book?

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# RECOGNIZE

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## Know the Truth(s):

Keeping in mind the context of the selected passage (see Reflect), read the Scripture as a group and carefully take note of the truth(s) and/or promises God provides. Look for God's promises, plans, provisions, & purposes. What did it mean? What does it mean? What meaning is unclear?

- 1) The very first word God spoke to Hosea was a command for him to "Go and marry a promiscuous wife and have children of promiscuity, for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the Lord." Some scholars believe God was telling Hosea to marry a former prostitute. Others contend that taking a wife of harlotry would merely refer to marrying a woman from the northern kingdom of Israel, a land which was guilty of spiritual adultery. In either case, it is obvious that she was a woman who had been deeply affected by the moral decay of her society.
  - Is it typically a good idea to marry a person who does not share the same spiritual values?
  - 2 Corinthians 6:14 says "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers." What difficulties can be associated with being mismatched?
  
- 2) After Hosea marries Gomer, three children are born God gives each child a name symbolizing some aspect of Israel's disobedient relationship with Him. The first child was named, after Jezreel, which was both a city and a territory in the heart of Israel. It was from Jezreel that much of the wickedness associated with Israel's history originated. The meanings of the names were (Jezreel ---"God Will Scatter", "Lo-ruhamah---"No Compassion" & Lo-ammi--- "Not My People")
  - How do these names express God's feelings toward Israel?
  - What negative effects do their meanings have in a marriage relationship?
  
- 3) In Hosea Chapter 2, we find that Gomer (symbolizing Israel) has gone back to her former ways of prostitution and adultery. It is even plausible to conclude that the third child (Lo-ammi) is not Hosea's. In Hosea 2:2 God says "Rebuke your mother; rebuke her. For she is not My wife and I am not her husband."
  - What do you think Gomer is looking for?
  - What are the main reasons marriages end up in divorce?
  - The Bible indicates that divorce is allowed under certain circumstances as stated in Matthew 19:9: & 1 Corinthians 7:15. Do you believe this is God's preference?
  - Read Mark 10:5-9 & Malachi 2:16. Why is divorce so prevalent?
  
- 4) Read Hosea 2: 7- 8. Gomer (Israel) reluctantly goes back, but only out of frustration at not being able to get what she thinks she wants. Verse 8 says she does not yet acknowledge Hosea (symbolizing God) as the one that provided all she was yearning for. Perhaps Hosea was working behind the scenes to make sure she had what she needed and she attributed it to others. Her heart wasn't changed so she was cut off. Throughout history, God provided for the Israelites without their acknowledging Him and even used His provisions for their idol worship. The only way to get their attention was to stop providing for them.
  - In what ways has "tough love" been used by your spouse or God to help you realize your actions were hurting your marriage?
  - Have there been other situations where God has used pain in your life to shed light and awaken your spirit to reality? Are you resentful or thankful?

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5) Read Hosea 2:14-23. In this passage we see redemption and the lengths God will go to entice us. God knows what we need and what we long for. Even at our worst, God tenderly works to bring us back to Himself. Notice the words of unconditional love and commitment God speaks in verse 16. “you will call Me, “My husband,” and no longer call Me, “My Baal (My Master).” And verse 19 “I will take you to be My wife forever. I will take you to be My wife in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion.” Notice also in Chapter 3:2 that Hosea actually pays to purchase Gomer out of slavery to bring her back home.

- How does this story of incredible forgiveness challenge our attitudes when we feel we have been wronged by our spouses?
- Compare Hosea’s reconciliation with Gomer to Jesus’ reconciliation with us.

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## RESPOND

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### Take Action:

You’ve now prayed asking God to Reveal Himself and help you understand the selected passage; you’ve Reflected on the context in which the passage was written; you’ve Recognized God’s timeless truths; and now you must Respond. To help determine your response, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1) In the story of Hosea and Gomer we find that Gomer has succumbed to sexual promiscuity and marital infidelity promoted by the society she lives in.

- How has the media of today influenced the way we think about sex and marriage?
- What are some practical ways we can protect our marriages and families from the onslaught of perversion bombarding our homes?

2) In Hosea 2:2 we see Hosea calling on his children to rebuke their mother for her adulterous ways. It is obvious that the children’s lives have been affected in every way by their mother’s sin.

- What areas in your life have been affected by the mistakes of your parents’ marriage?
- What are some things you said you would never do when you became a parent but found yourself doing?

3) After Hosea rescues Gomer from her life of adultery, he graciously receives her back into his home and restores her as his wife. Although Gomer may have expressed her sorrow and asked forgiveness we have no mention of it in Hosea’s writings.

- Why is it so hard for us to say the words “I’m sorry”? How important is it for us to apologize to our spouses for wrongs?
- What consequences do marriages endure when apologies are not expressed?

4) Ask your group members to react to this statement: I am no better than a prostitute who has deserted my spouse, left my children and slept with many other people and yet Jesus loved me enough to take me back as His own.

### This Week:

Your assignment is to read the poetic beauty in the romantic wedding and marriage of Solomon and the Shulamite in the book Song of Songs. Apply the five (5) spiritual learning steps (Recall, Reveal, Reflect, Recognize and Respond).