

As we closed the previous lesson, lesson number two, we found Hosea's home in shambles. He is pleading with the children, one legitimate and two illegitimate, to approach their mother and ask her to return to her senses. Gomer, Hosea's wife, has gone astray. She is chasing after her lovers. She coveted her lovers because they gave her substance. They gave her *food* (bread and water), *clothing* (wool and flax), and they gave her *comfort* (oil and drink). Seems Gomer is satisfied chasing after other men.

Hosea never stopped loving her. Despite the fact she defiled their marriage and broke the vow of their marriage, he still loved her. Israel was stooped in idolatry, and God never stopped loving Israel. The more sinful her behavior became the more God loved her. Aren't you glad for the mercy of God? Sin can separate men from the fellowship of God, but sin cannot stop God from loving men. Why would Gomer do such a cruel and sinful thing when she had such a precious husband as the prophet Hosea? I'm not sure man has the answer for this question.

(Verse 6-8)

While Gomer is chasing her lovers, Hosea has a plan he is about to put in place to get her back. Likewise, God has a plan to entice Israel back to Him. In verse six He says I'm going to put up a hedge with thorns around her. Also, I will make a wall so that she is confused and cannot find the path she would want to travel. You see, God never accommodates one of His children walking in sin. God will not make it easy for you to "raise hell." That is the Devil's job. If you are a child of God, you cannot transgress against God and be comfortable. Israel was God's people. They must pay for their sin. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:15 "*Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.*" So, you may say, "I am saved and I am having fun in sin." Such an attitude defies the word of God. Men and women who are saved cannot prosper in sin. If you are saved and you are away from God walking in the sinful path, you're going to bump into thorns. There is going to be confusion in your life. You will not be able to think clearly. Your path will be blocked by walls. Who is doing this? It is God doing this to make the "way of the transgressor hard."

I see the thorns of verse six as physical and financial pain suffered by Gomer while in sin. Why are there so many people sick today? I do not have the answer, but from God's word we can believe that some are sick and suffering financially and in other ways because they are backslid from the ways of God. Please understand not all sickness in one's life is due to sin. Folk who walk uprightly may still experience sickness.

I see the wall in verse six that blocked the path as a picture of how a saved person away from God cannot think clearly. Have you ever walked in a maze? I have seen backsliders do some of the most irrational things one could ever imagine. Your mind is messed up when you're away from God. Have you ever heard someone say "I can't believe she did that?" Someone may have said in your hearing "I just never thought he was capable of stooping that low." Why do we have such thoughts? It is because men and women saved by God's grace living in broken fellowship have an altered mind. SIN AFFECTS THE MIND. They are capable of doing unimaginable things. Check the life of King David. Check the life of Simon Peter. Check the life of Lot. See what these men did that was irrational and beyond the thinking of man! Why? They were walking in rebellion against God. When you do so, your mind is not clear.

A saved person will never prosper in sin. Gomer was chasing her lovers, but she could not catch them. Why chase something impossible to catch? Is that rational? The faster she ran the faster they ran. If you are prospering in sin, you have never been saved. You are not one of God's children. All children of God at some time in their Christian walk may stray. If you do stray, you are not happy. You are miserable. Something comes along that entices a person just as was the case with Gomer. God will apply the brakes. The truly saved person will at some point come to the realization that they are vainly chasing a fantasy, and the only real peace and prosperity they will know lies in their relationship with their Lord and Savior. Ultimately, Gomer will come to the realization that it is best to *"return to my first husband: for then was it better with me than now."* The prodigal son of Luke 15 came to this conclusion as well. Children of God who have strayed and have come back to God have often cried bitter tears wishing they had never strayed. It is not possible to recover those wasted days you spend at odds with God.

Verse eight substantiates our earlier comment that a saved person who is dabbling in sin has an irrational mind. Verse eight says *"for she did not know."* Gomer is out of her mind! Israel went out of her mind! When you see a person astray from God just prepare yourself for some bizarre happenings. Gomer is off track mentally. She is chasing that which she can never catch. Now, that is a crazy person! That is the cat chasing its tail.

James 1:17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..."* If the Devil ever gives you a big juicy apple, he stole it from God. The Devil may entertain you, but it will be short-lived. Our corn and wine and oil and silver and gold come from above. God gave you the house you live in. The money in your pocket, God put there. God gave you the sound mind that you have. God put food on your

table. The Devil can't make it rain so the crops grow and bring forth food. In fact, everything the Devil has of any value he stole from God. Gomer does not realize that all she has is from Hosea and the God Hosea serves. Yet, she is giving credit to her lovers for her provisions. How sad it was when Israel took the very things God gave them and passed those things on to Baal as spoken in verse 8.

(Verse 9-13)

God is now going to speak in detail of His plan to allure Israel back. These verses indicate the lengths to which He is prepared to go in order to bring her to repentance and restoration. By application, these verses also indicate the extent to which Hosea is prepared to go in bringing Gomer back as his wife.

We note that God first must bring judgment upon Israel before reconciliation can come. Sometimes straying children of God are so stubborn that God cannot allure them back with love. He must administer judgment to their lives. In verse nine the Lord is prepared to take away the corn and the wine and to take back His wool and flax that He gave to cover her nakedness. Please notice in verse nine that there is a "my" before all these commodities. God said it is "my corn" and "my wine" and "my wool" and "my flax." You came into this world naked. You did not own anything. You did not have a bank account. Now, look what you have! Do you think what you have just happened? Do you think what you have came your way by chance or fate? Everything belongs to God and whatever you have is simply on loan to you from God. It really is "His" car. It really is "His" house. It really is "His" clothes.

When God's people persist in rebellion, they lose. A rebellious life is a "no-win" situation. Hosea is prepared to remove his provisions from Gomer to break her stubborn will and bring her back home where she belongs. God uses affliction like this to teach us important lessons and keep us from straying away from Him. Psalm 119:67 *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept my word."* The woods are full of people today who say they are saved that are not saved. How do we know? They walk in sin and God does not administer judgment. Hebrews 12:8 reads *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."* Not my words- but God's!

We all remember reading about the prodigal son in Luke 15. He was in the pigpen. He had muck and mire all over him. He even desired to eat the same food as the pigs. Perhaps if we could look into the pen it would appear the man and the pig were the same. Yet, there was a magnificent difference. The difference is that the pig could not say to himself *"I will arise and go to my father."* Thank God we can go to our heavenly father and get right with Him when we stray.

Verse 10 reminds us “the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” In verse 10 the Lord speaks of how He will expose her lewdness in the sight of her lovers. Her lovers only know her beauty. Her lovers only know her sensuality. But now when she is exposed she looks different to them. Have you ever seen a “before-and-after” picture of a person on meth?

Sadly, when she has er covering taken away and is exposed, verse 10 says *“none shall deliver her out of mine hand.”* Who came to rescue the prodigal son? Where was his many friends that sat at the bar with him while he bought drinks? If you dabble in sin, God can make a fool of you in front of your lovers. Psalm 83:16 reads *“fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.”*

Verse 11 points to the lost fellowship Israel once enjoyed with the Lord. A song my family once sang had a line that goes “there is nothing sadder in all creation than a soul in isolation away from the Father’s fold.” God said “I will fix it such that you will not enjoy the celebrations.” God can make life miserable for a backslider. He can take away joy, happiness, and peace. God promises to take away Israel’s joy they once had on the Sabbath day. Have you lost your joy concerning church, the house of God? If so, return to God. Again I say, God can make it extremely miserable for a backslider. Your world can cave very quickly when you, as a child of God, go against your heavenly father. The Psalmist David begged God in Psalm 51:12 *“restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”* He had lost his joy when he sinned with Bathsheba. Has sin robbed you of your joy? Is the Lord pressuring you now and making your life miserable because of broken fellowship with Him?

We see a reference to Baalim in verse 13. The name Baal came to be used generally as the designation of any idol or false God. The “days of Baalim” were the days that were consecrated for the worship and reverence of Baal. I have always believed that God created man to worship something. How can we be created in the image of God and not have an aptitude of worship? If a man will not worship God, he will worship Baal. If a man will not go to church, he will go hunting. If a man will not pray and worship god, he will worship sports. If a man will not go to church, he will go to the mall. Something is going to be the object of worship in your life.

When you get away from God, you tend to forget about Him and establish new gods and priorities in your life. Things other than God becomes so much more important to you. What is your relationship with the Lord right now? Is the Lord your good friend? Between you and the Lord, is it as it was when you were

first married to your spouse and celebrating the wedding? Are you faithful to the Lord? It remains a mysterious question “why do people forget about the Lord in their lives?”