

# Return to the LORD Your God

Hosea 14

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

- 2 Timothy 2:13

Read Hosea 14:1-3.

1. What had God already instructed His people to do? (Hosea 10:12)

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2. When you read Hosea 14:1, you can almost hear its tone. What do you hear flowing out of God's heart when you read it?

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***Stumbled*** – of divine judgment; be overthrown, of nations, armies

***Iniquity*** – perversity, depravity, iniquity, guilt

3. Rewrite Hosea 14:1c using the definitions above.

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4. Once again, why did Israel fall to Assyria?

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5. What does Psalm 119:75 teach us about God's judgment and the affliction that comes with it?

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6. What did this same psalmist discover about his own life and the role judgment and affliction played in it? (Psalm 119:67)

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7. When he looked back on what he had been through, how did the psalmist feel God had treated him, and what did he long for now? (Psalm 119:65-66)

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God knew that Israel was about to face year after year of **good** judgment for their sin. Judgment that would eventually bring them to the place where they will return to the LORD their God. So, He encourages them with promises of the future.

8. In Hosea 14:2, God gives very detailed instructions on how to return to Him when they do. What are those instructions?

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9. What two things did God instruct them to ask for?

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10. **THINK:** Why do you think these should be the first two things we ask for?

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11. What are we often tempted to pray for first when faced with good judgment and affliction?

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No doubt, when we are faced with discipline for sin, our biggest concerns should be forgiveness and the removal of the sins that warrant the discipline, rather than the easing of our trouble.

12. What is promised in return for forgiveness? (v. 2f)

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Record the statements David made about God.

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Record what David would do moving forward.

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15. In Hosea 14:3, God continues to reveal, step by step, what Israel is to do when this good judgment has accomplished its desired outcome (repentance). Describe in your own words what each of these statements represents in Israel's prayer of repentance.

Assyria shall not save us

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We will not ride on horses (Deut. 17:16, Isaiah 31:1)

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Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hand, 'You are our gods.'

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16. **THINK:** What do you think these same things would represent in a person's personal prayer for repentance?

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17. What will Israel acknowledge about themselves and about God when they say, "for in You the fatherless find mercy"?

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True repentance always includes: concern for forgiveness and the taking away of sin, the desire to be received by God, the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, a promise to forsake our sin moving forward, the recognition of our distress without God's mercy, and the acknowledgment that God is the only one who can help us.

Read Hosea 14:4-7.

After so much sin, so much rejection and betrayal, God is ready to heal, ready to love, and ready to refresh the repentant sinner.

18. What effect does repentance have on the heart of God? (v. 4)

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19. Record the answer to each request of God.

Request	God's Answer
Take away all iniquity	v. 4a
Receive us freely	v. 4b

20. In repentance, they will discover God's great mercy, and in His mercy, they will experience His renewing and reviving grace. Record what God will be to Israel and what shall happen as a result. (v. 5-7)

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21. **THINK:** What is the primary action that takes place as a result of God being like dew?

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True repentance, met with God's mercy and grace, always results in growth. It is impossible to remain the same as you were if repentance is the true posture of the heart.

22. Describe all the directions and ways in which the repentant will grow, and what this might look like in the life of a person.

v. 5b \_\_\_\_\_

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v. 5c \_\_\_\_\_

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v. 6a \_\_\_\_\_

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v. 7b \_\_\_\_\_

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v.7c \_\_\_\_\_

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23. **THINK:** Describe what their beauty and fragrance will be like, then record what you think this means. (v. 6b,c; 7d)

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In Hosea 9:15, God admits that in the darkest place of Israel's sin, He hated them. But here He promises that a day is coming when He will look at Israel and see a beautiful olive tree whose leaves are always green. A tree that, by His righteousness, will never wither. A nation that will be a sweet aroma to His soul and a blessing to all those around them.

24. Go back and read Hosea 4:17. What was Ephraim's relationship with idols at this time?

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Read Hosea 14:8-9.

25. After all that will have transpired, from Assyria to the 7-year tribulation and everything in between, what will Ephraim's relationship with idols be when they recognize Jesus as their Messiah and call out to Him at the Second Coming? (v. 8)

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Consider the power of God. Only He could take a nation that had joined itself to idols while being in a covenant relationship with the One True God and bring them to the place of true repentance. God is working over centuries of time to create a change so real and so deep in a nation's heart and mind that it will want nothing to do with the idols it is currently so fond of.

26. What has always been true about God and Israel? (v. 8)

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Even in the midst of great sin and harlotry, God remains steadfast in His love for us. He is faithful to do all He can to bring us to the place where we will take our words and return to the Lord in full repentance.

27. **THINK:** What do you think God means when He says, "I am like a green cypress tree; your fruit is found in me"? (Try looking this verse up in several different versions.)

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Do you have an idol you are currently joined to (even while you are doing this Bible study and regularly attending church services)? An idol that you want gone, but at the

same time are afraid to acknowledge because you don't know what your life will look like without it?

28. What would Hosea say to you today if he could? (v. 9)

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29. What have you learned about God in your study of Hosea?

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30. How is God calling you to apply your study of Hosea to your life today?

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The book of Hosea gives us a beautiful glimpse of the unconditional, long-suffering love of God. But we would be remiss if we failed also to recognize how our actions can dishonor Him. Consider all that God has done for you, and then ask yourself, "Am I dishonoring God?" "Am I committing harlotry against God, Who is like a green cypress tree to me?"

31. Take some time to write a letter to God in response.

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