

# Stop Swerving

Hosea 5:1-6:3

God has laid out His case against Israel. Chapter 5 speaks of the impending judgment of Israel.

Read Hosea 5:1.

1. What three divisions of leadership does God address in verse 1?

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2. **THINK:** What type of leadership do you think each of these could represent?

Priests - \_\_\_\_\_

House of Israel - \_\_\_\_\_

House of the king - \_\_\_\_\_

3. What specific charges did God have against the leadership of Israel?

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**Mizpah** – the southwest section of Israel

**Tabor** – the northeast section of Israel

4. **THINK:** What do you think God was pointing out about the effects of Israel's leadership with the mention of these two regions?

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**Snare** – source or agent of calamity

**Net** – a net for catching; of priests and rulers (as entangling people in sin)

5. **THINK HARDER:** How do you think different kinds of leadership can become a net or snare for the people under that leadership?

Spiritual Leadership:

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Governmental Leadership:

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Parental/Mentor Leadership:

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6. While Deuteronomy 30:15-18 is written directly to the Israelites, the principle still applies to us today. Read these verses, then explain how we can protect ourselves from the snares and nets of corrupt and sinful leadership in our personal lives.

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7. What promise does God give us in 2 Peter 2:9?

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8. Are you currently in a position of leadership? Pray and ask the Lord to show you any areas where you might be setting snares and spreading nets of entanglement (big or small) for the people under your leadership. How will you commit to change?

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Read Hosea 5:2-7.

**Revolver** – swerver, rebel, deeds that swerve

9. **THINK:** Interestingly, God used the word “revolvers” to describe the people of Israel. Their rebellion is obvious, but what do you think is meant by the idea of people swerving?

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10. In what areas do you struggle with swerving back and forth across God's narrow way and falling into sin? Look up and record at least one verse that you can commit to memorizing that will help you align yourself and stay on track.

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11. Next, we see God calling Himself as a witness against Israel. What are His qualifications to testify in this matter? (v. 3a, b)

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They may have refused to know God, but God knew them. He knew their character, and He knew every sin they had covered up with self-approval.

12. Read the following verses and record what you learn about God knowing you.

Psalm 139:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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Psalm 44:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 12:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 103:14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Thankfully, God remembers that we are dust. He is patient and long-suffering, extending great grace and mercy to us, but He is also holy and just.

It had been 200 years since King Jeroboam established idol worship in Bethel and Dan, an act intended to discourage the people from traveling to Jerusalem (in Judah) to make sacrifices and observe the feast days. For 200 years, God had sent prophets like Elijah and Elisha with a call to repentance.

13. List the charges against Israel.

3c - \_\_\_\_\_

4a - \_\_\_\_\_

4b - \_\_\_\_\_

4c - \_\_\_\_\_

5a - \_\_\_\_\_

7a - \_\_\_\_\_

7b - \_\_\_\_\_

14. Verse 3 indicates that Israel's idolatry had defiled them. How do modern-day acts of idolatry defile us?

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15. Verse 4 says, "They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God..."

What are their superficial deeds? (v. 6) \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the reason for not directing their deeds toward turning to the one true God? (v.4b)

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What is at the root of their problem? (v. 5a) \_\_\_\_\_

16. **THINK HARDER:** How can you direct your deeds to turn you towards God, and how can you direct your deeds to turn you away from Him?

Towards God: \_\_\_\_\_

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Away from God: \_\_\_\_\_

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17. **THINK:** What do you think the statement, “The pride of Israel testifies to his (Israel’s) face” means? (v. 5) Consider the result of this pride when answering: “Therefore, Israel and Ephraim (another name for Israel) stumble in their iniquity.”

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Israel thought they knew best. They prioritized their feelings, comfort, and opinions over God's laws and commands. Jeroboam thought it best to keep the people from traveling to Jerusalem. The people of Israel thought it best to follow Jeroboam’s direction, and so it began. One prideful decision (to place one’s own opinion over God’s) after another was made until Israel was a nation of individuals who no longer knew their own God.

18. What was the outcome of their swerving back and forth, serving their personal appetites (idols) while superficially seeking God through superficial acts of worship, and why? (v. 6)

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19. Read the following verses and record what you learn about insincere and sincere hearts and God’s response to both.

Deuteronomy 4:29 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Chronicles 28:9 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 Chronicles 7:14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What are some examples of superficial acts of worship and honoring God with our lips with insincerity in our hearts?

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21. How can we guard ourselves from becoming revolters and having the spirit of harlotry in our midst?

Matthew 7:24-27 \_\_\_\_\_

John 15:9-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2:12-13 \_\_\_\_\_

Read Hosea 5:8-15.

Gibeah, Ramah, and Beth Aven were all in the land allocated to Benjamin, which sits just south of Ephraim on the northern border of Judah. So, the call to look behind them was to look to the north (or the better part of the Northern Kingdom).

22. What would they find when they looked north come judgment time? (v. 9)

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As with most rival siblings, Judah may have been tempted to behave smugly at God's rebuke of Israel, thinking themselves the better child.

23. What charge and warning does God have for Judah? (v. 10)

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In Hosea 5:10, the Lord condemned Judah's cruel and callous rulers, comparing them to "those who move boundary stones," that is, those who have no regard for justice or the traditions of the law.

24. **THINK:** What lesson can we learn from Judah's scolding?

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God had been patient and long-suffering with Israel. He sent prophets to call them to repentance and warn them of the coming judgment if they refused. But now, the time for judgment had arrived.

25. Note the three phases of judgment.

**Phase 1** (v. 12)

a. Israel/Ephraim: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Judah: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Do some research and record the ill effects of moths: \_\_\_\_\_

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d. Do some research and describe the process of rotting: \_\_\_\_\_

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e. What did Israel and Judah do when they saw the wound and sickness left by the "moth" and "rottenness"? (v. 13)

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f. Did they find the healing they needed? \_\_\_\_\_

**Phase 2** (v. 14)

a. Israel: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Judah: \_\_\_\_\_

c. How did God describe what He would do? (v. 14) \_\_\_\_\_

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d. Did anyone or any of their idols come to their rescue? \_\_\_\_\_

**Phase 3** (v. 15)

a. Israel and Judah: (v.15a) \_\_\_\_\_

b. What was the end result of this three-phase judgment?

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When we choose to live by our own standards, we choose to reject God's. We elevate our wisdom above His, which leads us to make foolish decisions and painful alliances with the world. As with Israel, God will allow us to be subtly weakened (a moth) in hopes that we will turn to Him in repentance. If that doesn't work, He may use a more sudden and terrifying way (lion) of getting our attention; and if that still doesn't work, in all His wisdom and love, He will withdraw and leave us to ourselves.

26. Why does God do this? (Psalm 119:67) \_\_\_\_\_

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27. God is currently using these three phases of judgment to bring the people of Israel back to Him. Record what these verses teach about God, Jesus, and the Jews.

Philippians 2:5-8 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 23:37-39 \_\_\_\_\_

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Mark 16:19 \_\_\_\_\_

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Zechariah 7:11-14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Hosea 6:1-3.

28. Record the three requests and two significant "buts" of Hosea's prayer as he looks forward to the impending judgment and future outcome of that judgment. (v. 1-3b)

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29. Do some research and see what you can learn about the significance of the latter and former rain. (Suggested resource: [www.gotquestions.com](http://www.gotquestions.com))

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Pray and confess any areas in your life where you are swerving to the left or to the right. Commit to taking heed of His Word and walking forward in obedience to His way over yours.

# A Closer Look at Seeking the Face of God

Hosea 5:15

30. Write out Hosea 5:15.

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Throughout Scripture, God's people are encouraged to seek His face. The Hebrew word for *face* in the Old Testament can be translated as *presence*. Therefore, to seek the face of God is to seek His presence.

In our Hosea passage, the people were called to seek the face of God because they had forgotten Him (“...they have dealt treacherously with the Lord...” v. 7).

31. As believers, we must continually seek His face. What does Psalm 105:4 teach us about this?

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<b>Seek</b> – to desire, exact, request, to search out, to strive after
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32. Personally, how can you seek His face *evermore*?

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To seek the face of God means desiring to know His character and desiring His presence. Seeking Him is worshiping Him, and He desires for us to do this.

33. Read Psalm 27:8. This is a Psalm of David. What did the Lord ask of David, and how did David respond?

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34. Now read the previous verses in Psalm 27. What do verses 6 and 7 reveal about what was going on with David?

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In times of trouble, need, or worry when you feel as if enemies surround you, seek His face.

35. Read Psalm 27:4. What was the one thing David desired?

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36. Read Matthew 6:33. What must we seek first? And what is the result when we do so?

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37. Read Psalm 63:1-3. How did the Psalmist desire God?

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You can seek the face of God by abiding in His Word. There, you will learn all about Him, His glory, majesty, and sovereignty. It is there that you will learn of His great love for you and His never-ending grace and mercy. The more you learn of Him, the more your soul will thirst for Him!

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.

- Proverbs 8:17

38. Ask yourself, is to dwell in the house of God the one thing I desire? \_\_\_\_\_

When God says, "Seek My face," what is your response? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness before all other things? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? Commit today to seek the face of God evermore.

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Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. - Psalm 24:3-6