



HOSEA

A COMPLICATED MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE FOR LEADERS

INTRO

How to communicate the important message of Hosea and navigate through complicated and intense topics that may bring questions and scrutiny to the Bible.



MAIN CONCEPTS

1

God's
unchanging
love for Israel

2

God's jealousy
for His
covenant

3

God's just
judgement

4

God's healing
and restoration
of the remnant

DAD, WHAT ARE GAYS?

He asked innocently when driving back from his basketball practice. He had a real interest to understand what he had heard from his friends.

The question made my mind go in alert mode, even though I did not show any emotion. He was 9 at the time and for the longest time I had hoped that any tough conversation would be delayed for as long as possible...but with that question, I realized that this could not be stopped any longer.

It was not that I wanted to avoid tough conversations, because I know that those

conversations will come no matter what, and sometimes they will come after our children and young ones have had some exposure to things that we are trying to shield them from.

It is not wrong to try to protect our children and young ones, but even though it's not wrong, it's naive to think that we can avoid tough conversations about hard topics just by wishing our kids don't pay attention to what goes around them.

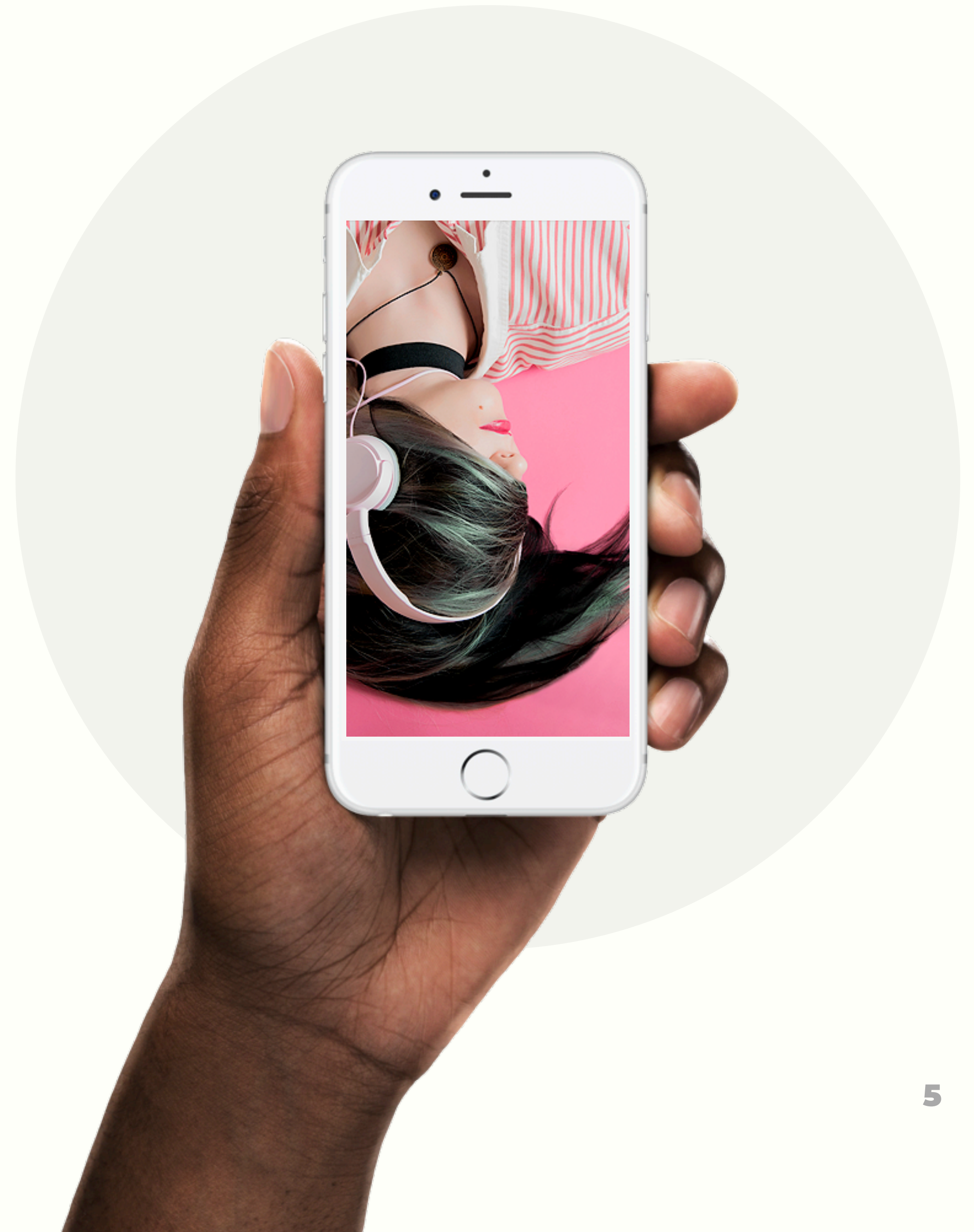
THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

Believe that friends, media and the devices that they use will make those conversations come sooner than you think.

The good thing is that even if we think that we could help our children avoid some of those tough conversations by not mentioning them, trust me, reading the Bible story can bring some of those same topics and issues to the forefront very quickly.

This is the reason for this series of Bible study guides that we will start to produce to help you navigate some of the tough issues that Pathfinders will encounter while they memorize, read and discuss the books of the Bible.

We pray this helps you as you help them understand God's intent in His word!



LESSON 1

STRANGE LOVE STORY

HOSEA A STRANGE LOVE STORY

How do you approach the theme of a prophet marrying a prostitute because God said so? But within that phrase, how do you explain what prostitution is?

LOVE
PROSTITUTION
UNFAITHFULNESS

THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

What do you biblically say that can help your Pathfinders as they understand the bigger message of the story instead of the minor details that explain the situation?

Let's give it a try:

- What is the main message of the request from God?
- After you read chapter 1, and after your Pathfinders have read it, can you ask them what they understand is the main message about it?
- Within the story there are a few elements that can be troublesome, so while understanding the main message of the chapter is God's love, there are a couple of things that pop out clearly:
 - Prostitution
 - Unfaithfulness

SPEAKING BIBLICALLY

Don't ask Pathfinders to google anything, but ask them to think Biblically by speaking from the Bible itself. To be able to speak about prostitution, first explain what adultery (unfaithfulness) means.



ABOUT UNFAITHFULNESS

In the beginning, God created man and woman to be one and to be united in marriage (Genesis 1 and 2). Most Pathfinders will understand what marriage is.

RELATIONSHIP
MARRIAGE
COMMITMENT

ABOUT **UNFAITHFULNESS**

You can help them understand that in a marriage relationship, the couple shares a space, a bed, shares a room. And that means that they are committed to each other and no other person comes in between. Marriage unfaithfulness (adultery) is what Hosea 1 is talking about.



PERSONAL STORY

While trying to explain Exodus 20:14, I explained to my sons that a Godly marriage would share everything with each other. I told them that their mom and I were the only ones to share a bed together. There were no other people in the same bed, only mom and dad. I explained that because that was what God said, we were following the ideal. Then, I mentioned that the word adultery meant that one of the married couple had shared the bed with someone who was not their spouse without getting into too much detail about sexual relationships (they were both under 10).

I used the simple example of bed sharing to explain to them what the Bible said about adultery (marriage unfaithfulness) and made it available to their level of comprehension. While this is a nice explanation for younger PF, you may need to ask parents of older PF if they want to talk about what adultery means with their PF if the PF ask more details.

ABOUT PROSTITUTION

Biblically and morally speaking, the reality is that a prostitute is someone who gets money in exchange for sexual favors. It is clearly something that may be tough to comprehend for the younger pathfinders.

he context in Hosea is that Gomer was a prostitute who Hosea married and she had 3 children that were given weird names that represented rejection and disgrace.

ABOUT PROSTITUTION

Personal take

Before marrying Hosea, Gomer was a prostitute. That means that she would sleep (have sexual relations) with any man who would give her money. The best way to describe that exchange to younger pathfinders who may not have had a conversation about sexual relations with their parents or at school would be to use the “sleeping” terminology. When I was trying to explain what sex was to my 9-year-old, I used that description in the following way: “Son, according to the Bible, only married people can sleep with each other. If someone starts to sleep with other people that are not their spouse, remember we talked about adultery?”

Well, there is another part of that too, when people who are not married sleep with other people. That is not acceptable either since that is called fornication” Once you establish the fact that people should not be sleeping with other people unless they are married, the conversation can be a lot easier.

Tip: Allow conversations to flow if PF is not asking for details. If they are ok with the Biblical explanations, don't try to add more details to the explanations. If they don't ask more about what a prostitute does, or what adultery is after you explained it, just move on. If they do ask, make sure that you stay within the context of the stories, the context of the Bible. Also, get the parents involved in this too, as they are the ones who will probably deal with more questions as their PF keep the conversations going home.



LESSON 2

CONSEQUENCES

HOSEA THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES

If you think that speaking about an adulteress, and prostitution (harlotry) was complicated, it gets tougher

LOVE
MERCY
CONSEQUENCES

THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

It gets tougher when a prophet starts to speak about what God will do and you then read and it speaks about God just being “mean” (of course, that is how someone may perceive that).

So, what about the justice of God? Here is one of the themes throughout the book of Hosea that start right away in chapter 2: There are consequences!!!

THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

PERSONAL STORY

There are moments that are embedded into my memory, but me having to speak to a store manager and return something that I had taken without paying for it was one I will never forget. From the moment I could start to understand, my parents were pretty clear that taking things that did not belong to me was not right.

Throughout my early life, reading and learning about God's commands, it was clear that "stealing" was not something we did. But temptation is at the door and if you listen, it may take you down a road you did not believe you would go through.

Entering the store, my mind was not intent on stealing, but lingering at the section where my favorite toy was, and after being told by my parents that they would not buy me the toy, I listened to temptation and took the toy hoping that my parents would never find out.

There were no store cameras and I thought I was free to enjoy my toy, and had the audacity to play with it right in the car behind my parents, right after we exited the store...Needless to say, my parents found out pretty quickly (seems parents have eyes behind their heads) and with a disappointed look in their eyes, they decided to turn around and head to the store.

Crying and feeling so guilty, I apologized to the store manager, my dad paid for the toy and we did not take it home. I don't remember much after that, but I am sure I was grounded and maybe given a strong reminder (on my backside).

One of the things I remember from that is that, well, there are consequences to every action, and the consequences to broken trust, to broken partnerships, to broken covenants and agreements tend to be so painful and so hurtful for all involved!

Another thing to see here is that even though the punishment of Gomer (Israel in the future) may feel one sided, helping the PF understand that a broken relationship hurts everyone, they may be able to see that God is also hurt by this.

1 THE LANGUAGE

The language about the unfaithfulness of Gomer: When the PF reads about lovers, nakedness, and very tough language in regards of actions by God, it may be difficult to understand. There is no way to fully explain all these things without understanding that this is a metaphor, an example of what Israel has done before and will do in the future: Break God's heart by leaving Him and going after other gods!!!

Tip: Any explanation of the chapter has to have Hosea's story of chapter 1 as a reference. Also, if you want to explain why there are very tough consequences for Gomer (Israel) you can go back in the Bible and show PF just a few places where the people of Israel were unfaithful to Him (the book of Judges would be a good place to see that constant falling out from the Israelites and God's mercy and grace to take them back).

2 GOD'S JUSTICE

It may seem like God is just trying to be tough and unmerciful to Israel (Gomer) and the words and illustrations may seem to be strong and merciless, but the intention of Hosea is to lead the people of Israel to a better understanding of consequences. You cannot be part of an agreement if you constantly break it.

Tip: Help PF understand the importance of keeping promises and words. There is honor and a sense of holiness when someone makes an agreement with God Himself. And specially when God has also come into an agreement with us, well that is just wow!!! The agreement (covenant) that God and Israel entered into is sacred, and God will fulfill His side of the agreement. We are asked to fulfill our part... and if we don't, well, there are consequences.

LESSON 3

GOD'S AMAZING GRACE

HOSEA GOD'S AMAZING GRACE

You can never stop a Bible message telling only one side of the story. When you start a story you don't stop when everything is going so bad! Not even the Bible does that.

GRACE
JUDGMENT
RESTORATION

THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

Since you start in a perfect world, go through The Valley of the shadow and death literally and then end on a perfect world too!! You just gotta tell the whole story so that everyone understands why they had to listen to all the bad stuff in between.

It reminds me of the times when there are multiple books, a series, and you finish one to be left hanging... you know that you need to read the rest of the story because there is no way that this ends this way!!!

Can you imagine the story of Jonah? Can you imagine if the story teller would finish right when Jonah is in the belly of the big fish? If we read the story, there is a process and yes, Jonah deserved to be where he was, and yes he was basically done, but can you imagine the story stopping there and him having no hope? That is why we have to keep reading and we have to keep the context in mind!

As you help PF navigate the book of Hosea, know that it can be very rough to just see judgment and tough moments for those who have been unfaithful. Many of these PF probably never even thought of these kind of words and descriptors of judgement. Its our duty to help them see the grace and mercy in this book too!!!

The best way to guide the difficult conversations of Hosea, is to finish everything, every conversation with the description of God's amazing grace and love for His people. Throughout the chapters of Hosea, your PF will have encountered 2 constant themes:

- Israel's (Ephraim) unfaithfulness
- Israel's (Ephraim) judgment

THE COMPLICATED MESSAGE OF HOSEA

In the previous 2 lessons we have tried to give pointers on how to help your PF understand the complicated situations and issues that are expressed with these 2 themes. Strong words and illustrations are not easy to comprehend, specially after most of their young lives, the Pathfinders have been given a message of a God that is love. There is no problem with that, but as they grow and read more of the Bible, and as they grow in an imperfect world, they will start to face some of those difficult issues and conversations.

That is the reason that when we read Hosea (and some of the other books of the Bible), we need to think Biblically and put all the stories in the context of God's amazing grace!!! After you finish the other 2 lessons, you must start a conversation about God's grace, because the book of Hosea has so many verses where it's clear that God does not give up on His people, on Israel.



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PERSONAL STORY

There was a time when I did not know God...yes, I knew of God, but did not know Him personally. Growing up as a pastor's kid, and learning about God from the cradle, going to Adventist Christian schools, it was easy for me to think that I was all right. But like every other human being in this earth, temptations were strong and many times I just felt that I could cover my mistakes on my own, that if I put a masquerade, people would not notice that I was messed up. I mean, I was even studying to be a pastor!!!

But after a strong mess on my part, where my friends and family members were affected, I realized that there was no way that I could get out of that mess on my own. It was at my lowest point, a point with no clear exit and no clear future, where I finally listened to God's voice. He had always been there for me, yet I resisted Him for years.

Until that moment, in the darkest time of my life when He reached out and reminded me that I was loved, that He had never left me, that even though there had and were consequences to my actions, that I had a place in His heart!!! For the first time, I felt a peace that gave me hope for the future and I knew that He loved me even in my darkest moment.

Tip: Be sure to speak about the texts of Hosea that deal with God's forgiveness and love and mercy. The PF needs to hear the full story. After the unfaithfulness and judgment, there is love...there is grace...there is restoration. Ask the PF to share if they have experienced a moment of forgiveness or mercy in their lives. Make sure that they leave the conversation knowing that God never gives up on them, even if they have messed up or if they mess up in the future.

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