

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE**How God Allures****Hosea 2:2—3:5**

*“Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.” Hosea 2:14*

Day 1: Read Hosea 2:2–5.

1. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated “rebuke” (NIV) or “plead” (ESV) has a legal sense, the pressing of a grievance. Do you think God is seeking a divorce, or is he seeking reconciliation? Explain.
2. The Canaanite culture (for example, the use of Baal idols in fields to increase crop production) has woven itself into the nation’s fabric, and generations of Israelites have known no other way of worship. Discuss how God considers this to be adultery. (vss. 4–5)
3. What is the self-deception of anyone who turns from God to idols? (vs. 5b, James 1:17)

Day 2: Read Hosea 2:6–8.

4. What is God’s strategy for winning back his people, his bride? (vss. 6–7a)
5. Why will Israel come crawling back to God? (vs. 7b) Share a time when you experienced God frustrating your path to your idols so that you would give up on them and come back to God.
6. Would you describe Israel’s attitude in 7b as a first-rate repentance and love? Consider the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. What “ground floor” level of relationship does God accept as beaten sinners come to him? (Luke 15:14b)
7. What does the unrighteous person think of all the good gifts she has received from God—food, talents, money, time, love, etc.? (vs. 8)

Day 3: Read Hosea 2:9–18.

8. Describe God’s “tough love” in verses 9–13. Describe God’s “tough love” in your own life.
9. What is God’s motive all along in his legal plea (vs. 1), in his blocking Israel’s path (vs. 6), and in his punishments (vss. 10–13)? (vss. 14–16)

10. How is God's vision for his relationship with Israel (and you) so much more than just bare forgiveness? (vss. 14–16)
11. What do you think verse 18 means?

Day 4: Read Hosea 2:19–23.

12. Verses 19 and 20 seem to be marriage vows. Find the word in these verses that indicates how long you can expect this renewed marriage to last. What 5 things does God “betroth” us with?
13. How do verses 21 and 22 paint a beautiful picture of God's lordship over all nature for the sake of his beloved people?
14. In the end, when God emblazons his ways on our hearts (Jer.31:31–33), how far will our love for him evolve from the enlightened self-interest of verse 7b to what God has had in mind all along? (vs. 23b)

Day 5: Read Hosea 3:1–5.

15. After the pick-me-up of a glorious future vision in 2:14–23, we return to the tawdry present reality of a faithless Israel. (vs. 1) Why do you think the book is laid out in this way? Any analogy to the messiness of your own life experience?
16. In verse 1, God spells out as plainly as anywhere in Hosea his object lesson in having the prophet marry a whore. How is God to Israel as Hosea is to his wife?
17. Did God set his love on you when you were godly or ungodly? (vs. 1; Romans 5:6)
18. It is striking that Hosea has to pay to buy back his own wife. (vs. 2) Who else had to pay for his own rightful possession? Who was that possession? What did he pay? (Jn. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:18–19)
19. Gomer's imposed isolation from her lovers pictures Israel's coming exile, her forcible removal from the Canaanites' debased religious rituals. But what is God's intended outcome? (vs. 5)
20. Israel will come trembling back to the Lord “in the last days.” When do you think that is? (Acts 2:16–17)
21. When we come “trembling back to the Lord,” is it akin to a trip to the doghouse? What also do we always come back to when we come back to the Lord? (Find the phrase in vs. 5)