

Lesson 14—May 31, 2020

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deuteronomy 8:11-20

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Hosea 11-12

PRINT PASSAGE: Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

Key Verse—Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually.
(Hosea 12:6, KJV)

.....

You must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.
(Hosea 12:6, NIV)

Measure Up!



Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Commentary: Teacher's Edition
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults
- (Optional: Adults/Young Adults Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things:

- Compare prosperity as a worldly goal with the godly virtues of love and justice.
- Regret occasions when one has adopted prosperity as a key goal.
- Practice love and justice as key virtues.



*Key Terms

Baals (11:2)—Hebrew: *Ba'al* (bah'-al): a Phoenician deity; a heathen god; plural: "Baalim" (KJV).

Burned Incense (11:2)—Hebrew: *Qatar* (kaw-tar'): made sacrifices upon; turned into a fragrance by fire, especially as an act of worship.

Ephraim (11:8)—Hebrew: *Ephrayim* (ef-rah'-yim): a son of Joseph's; also, his descendants and their territory.

Love (11:4 [Background Scripture])—Hebrew: *ahabah* (a-hab-aw): love; lovesick; lovingly.

Return (11:5 [Background Scripture])—Hebrew: *shub* (shoob): to turn back; "repent" (NIV).

Wealth (12:8)—Hebrew: *hon* (hone): sufficiency; "substance" (KJV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)

Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week's lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.
- See page 113 for the *Faith in 3-D* as it explains how to live out their faith in the world.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People often equate prosperity with righteousness. Is prosperity the standard by which people and society should be judged? Hosea reminds us that love and justice are God's standards.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Do you recall having parents introduce their method of prescribed punishment by saying, “This is going to hurt me more than it does you”? If you do, you probably also knew that it was safer to keep what you thought about that statement to yourself in fear of receiving a more intense version of your punishment. We now know that sentiment on their part reflected the hurt they felt because of our disobedience and a love that did not want to punish us. Too, if they had not punished us, it would have suggested that they did not really love us or cared about what could happen to us. God's relationship with Israel was like that from the beginning. He was their Father and they were His children. His love was so great that having to punish them hurt His heart, but He knew that the genuine love of a parent for a child involves discipline. He is not a permissive parent and expects His children to measure up to His standards. Israel (Ephraim), the Northern Kingdom, arrived at a point in their relationship with Him that forced Him to severely punish them

for their sins. Divine judgment and divine mercy were on opposite ends of the scale. His intense love and compassion for them tilted the scale toward divine mercy and saved them from total destruction.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Hosea's adulterous wife experience served as a mirror image of God's relationship with His adulterous people. After describing their sinfulness and punishment, Hosea turned to the theme of God's intense love for wayward Israel. Chapter 11 pictures Israel as a beloved, rebellious, and ungrateful child deserving discipline by a loving parent. Hosea also pictures the agony that God feels as He considers their experiencing His wrath. In chapter 12, the sins of Israel are reviewed and God's irrevocable indictment against the nation is given with a view of their future restoration.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below)

1. How did Israel continue to respond to God's love for them? (verse 2)
2. How are God's grace and mercy expressed in verses 8-9?
3. What is the basis of God's promise not to completely destroy Israel? (verse 9)
4. Describe the specific sins of Israel. (12:1)
5. Israel was called to return to God. What was to be the result of their returning to Him? (12:6)

INSIGHTS

Measuring up is an ongoing challenge in every area of society. For example, in sports, athletes strive to measure up through rigorous and continuous training and practice. Students in school who are serious about measuring up do so by developing and using good study habits and honing their study skills. This lesson's topic, “Measure Up!” is a reminder that pleasing God is not automatic and cannot be taken lightly, especially in light of His requirements for demonstrating love and justice. The first requirement for measuring up to any of His standards is obedience to His Word. Desiring to submit to His will and acknowledging Him as the source of all we

are, have, and do are foundational to living obediently and being used by Him in His work of justice. His people today cannot pattern after Israel by equating spirituality and righteousness to any forms of prosperity and success. God judges our standing with Him by the depth of our love for Him and how much we prove that love by loving others and promoting justice for all. How do you measure up?

EXPLORATION

The title of this lesson suggests a command from God to measure up or reach specific standards He has set. In this context, those standards are love and justice. The lesson will also remind your students that there are consequences for failing to be obedient; and despite His love, He will evoke divine judgment on the unrepentant. Emphasize to your students that they need to acknowledge God as the source of their successes and all He has allowed them to be stewards over. The heart of God is vividly revealed in this lesson's text passage. Encourage them to worship God for His love and compassion and to demonstrate their gratitude by committing to practice love and justice.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on Hosea 11:1-2, 7

KJV

WHEN ISRAEL was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto *Baalim*, and *burned incense* to graven images.

.....

7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

NIV

“WHEN ISRAEL was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

2 “But the more they were called, the more they

went away from me. They sacrificed to the *Baals* and they *burned incense* to images.”

.....

7 “My people are determined to turn from me. Even though they call me God Most High, I will by no means exalt them.”

Hosea presents a vivid portrayal of the love of God for His people. God's love for them was deeper than an emotion—it was love that focused on the recipient and not the giver. His love for them was from the beginning of their relationship. God spoke directly to Israel and reminded them that He had displayed His love toward them by calling them or delivering them out of Egypt (verse 1). The love He had for them compelled Him to do everything in His power to call them to repentance. He repeatedly called and commissioned prophets to communicate His desire for their obedience, but they continued to drift away from Him and into idolatry (verse 2). Just like a stubborn child or one that has not been appropriately disciplined, they were determined to go their own way and not His (verse 7). They continuously and deliberately rejected His call for repentance through prophets like Hosea. The terminal result of their disobedience and ingratitude would ultimately be military defeat and exile (verses 3-6). How do God's people reject His love today? One way is ingratitude, by taking for granted His grace. Daily He provides, and sometimes some fail to thank Him as they should. Another way is allowing other gods to have control of our hearts as did Israel. In his book *Gods at War*, Kyle Idleman says that idolatry is the root of every sin that God's people have to deal with. Anything we choose over God is an idol and idolatry is spiritual adultery, which was Israel's sin. Israel chose Baal and other idol deities of the nations around them. Just as Hosea experienced the pain of an unfaithful, adulterous wife, God was hurt by the unfaithfulness of His bride, Israel. When we reject His love for other worthless substitutes, God is the spurned lover. God did not want to be a choice for Israel, but their *only* choice because of His great love for them. If we are to measure up, then He expects nothing less from us.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

What factors can you suggest as causes of attitudes of ingratitude to God, our spiritual Father?

- **Young Adult Questions:**

As a parent, guardian, or adult, have you ever had to punish a child for disobeying, although you didn't want to chastise them? They were wrong and you had warned them several times beforehand. How did you feel as a chastising parent/guardian/adult?

Commentary on Hosea 11:8-10

KJV

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

10 They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

NIV

8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.

9 “I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man—the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities.

10 “They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west.”

Picture a loving father having no choice but to punish his child while contemplating the pain and discomfort the child will have to endure. The thought of executing judgment upon Israel was painful for God, like that of this father. The decision to punish remained intact, but reflection on the severity of this punishment on Israel evoked four rhetorical questions from God (verse 8b). Using anthropomorphic expressions, Hosea explained the depth of God's compassion for Israel. The prospect of complete destruction like the cities of Admah and Zeborim, along with Sodom and Gomorrah, was more than the Lord could bear (verse 8b). The outcome of the arousal of God's deep compassion would spare Israel from complete annihilation and His divine mercy would temper His divine judgment (verse 9a). This promise was reliable because of God's nature. He is the Holy One whose ways are not like humankind's (verse 9b). Looking forward to Israel's future restoration, God promised that the lion-like roar of His judgment would also call them back from exile (verse 10). God is the compassionate Father of all who have accepted His Son as Savior. He loves each of His blood-bought children with the same intense love He had/has for Israel. It is not His will that any be lost, but His holiness requires that He execute absolute justice. Israel failed to measure up to His expectations and was punished—but was not abandoned because of God's love. It is the same for those who are His today.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

What effect should the knowledge of God's intense love for His people have on their daily lives and their relationships with others?

- **Young Adult Question:**

**Reflect further on the question(s)/statement(s) posed in the previous section.*

Commentary on Hosea 12:1-2, 6-14

KJV

EPHRAIM FEEDETH on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

.....

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually.

7 He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out *substance*: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

9 And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

14 Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his LORD return unto him.

NIV

EPHRAIM FEEDS on the wind; he pursues the east wind all day and multiplies lies and violence. He makes a treaty with Assyria and sends olive oil to Egypt.

2 The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds.

.....

6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

7 The merchant uses dishonest scales and loves to defraud.

8 Ephraim boasts, "I am very rich; I have become wealthy. With all my *wealth* they will not find in me any iniquity or sin."

9 "I have been the LORD your God ever since you came out of Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of your appointed festivals.

10 "I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them."

11 Is Gilead wicked? Its people are worthless! Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal? Their altars will be like piles of stones on a plowed field.

12 Jacob fled to the country of Aram; Israel served to get a wife, and to pay for her he tended sheep.

13 The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him.

14 But Ephraim has aroused his bitter anger; his Lord will leave on him the guilt of his bloodshed and will repay him for his contempt.

In Hosea 11:12–14:9, Hosea concludes God's case against Israel and presents His final indictment. Both nations, Israel and Judah, were declared guilty of unfaithfulness to God. The evidence supporting this charge against them was social injustice (lies and violence) and forming foreign alliances with Egypt and Assyria (verse 1). God is just in all His ways (see Deuteronomy 32:4) and He had commanded Israel to measure up to this standard by showing concern for the welfare of the poor and the afflicted (see Deuteronomy 10:18). In addition, they had been forbidden to form alliances with foreign nations (see Exodus 23:32-33; 34:12-15; Deuteronomy 7:2), primarily because of the danger of being influenced by their idolatrous religious practices. Further, God was the only source of what they would ever need. Israel was also indicted for their evil ways (verse 2). After providing a brief history lesson from Israel's past, God through Hosea calls them to repentance to be demonstrated by their commitment to love,

do justice, and solely depend on God (verse 6). The result of their genuine repentance will be a reversal in their attitudes and behaviors (verses 7-8). Israel would discontinue economic dishonesty, pride, and insensitivity to her sin. The nation's estrangement from God had developed the mistaken idea that wealth and prosperity hid their sins from Him. Yet, God had been observing since He had delivered them from Egypt and was not going to overlook their disobedient attitude and arrogant ingratitude. His imposed judgment was their having to live in tents while in exile as their ancestors had in the wilderness (verse 9). Israel, however, was without excuse because God had repeatedly communicated His expectations through His prophets (verse 10). The nation ignored them and plunged deeper into idolatry and increased the number of altars across the land. In the coming judgment the stones of these altars would be scattered and reduced to piles of stone (verse 11).

Hosea climaxed this chapter by reminding Israel of her humble beginnings and God's goodness to them. He used Jacob, their ancestor, as the object lesson to illustrate God's faithfulness (verses 12-13). The prophet's ultimate purpose for using this illustration was to encourage them to humble themselves, repent, and obey so that they would continue to receive God's blessings. Israel refused and provoked God's anger. Despite His love, He was not going to extend His forgiveness and let the nation retain guilt, but would repay them for their sins (verse 14). It must be kept in mind that God's love will not prevent Him from executing His divine judgment. He can be relied on as a loving Father, but his expectation is that His children measure up by obeying His commands.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**
What indictment can God justifiably bring against His people today regarding His expectations of them?
- **Young Adult Questions:**
(1) *As concerned parents, we know that our*

children are going to misbehave and sometimes make wrong decisions. As loving parents, we must chastise them. As a church family, how can we chastise them and encourage them to move forward?

- (2) *The next time you are faced with a choice to do right or wrong, ask yourself how your parents or our heavenly Father will respond.*

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— This lesson should remind us of how much God loves His own even when they do not measure up. It should motivate us to examine the quality and depth of our love and commitment to His commandments (see John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 5:3; 2 John 6).

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— This world is the embodiment of the internal conditions of Israel during Hosea's ministry: economic dishonesty, intentional social injustice, moral corruption, and spiritual bankruptcy. The danger of allowing these conditions to influence His people's relationship with Him must be recognized and addressed. Like Israel was in Hosea's time, this world is on an unalterable course headed into irrevocable divine judgment. The challenge is to heed His Word and remain faithful to Him by embracing love and justice.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— As Christians living from day to day, we can never be flawless. However, as faithful followers we can set positive goals and strive to do our best through just and loving attitudes in every situation.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— In our world today, we must be careful not to idolize and worship things or people such as houses, cars, husbands, or wives. God is a jealous God and we should not put any others before Him.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, June 7, 2020, is “Listen Up!” The Devotional Reading is Psalm

34:11-18, the Background Scripture is Proverbs 1, and the Printed Text is Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11, 20-22, 32-33.



Closing Prayer

Dear God, forgive us for failing to measure up to Your standards. Help us to keep our focus on doing what You expect and not on acquiring material prosperity and self-promotion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY , June 1	“Faith Community Discerns Path of Wisdom”	(Acts 6:1-7)
TUESDAY , June 2	“Parents Joyfully Pass On the Faith”	(2 Timothy 1:3-9a)
WEDNESDAY , June 3	“Learning the Fear of the Lord”	(Psalm 34:11-18)
THURSDAY , June 4	“Violence Is Not a Wise Choice”	(Matthew 26:47-52)
FRIDAY , June 5	“The Vast Scope of Solomon’s Wisdom”	(1 Kings 4:29-34)
SATURDAY , June 6	“Prize Wisdom and Insight”	(Proverbs 4:1-9)
SUNDAY , June 7	“Godly Wisdom for Life’s Decisions”	(Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11, 20-22, 32-33)

INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to provide a more interactive approach to the teaching of today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. It can be formulated to use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

Materials needed:

- The movie *Gosnell*
- Computers/Speakers; note cards
- Wi-Fi

Interaction—Introducing the Lesson (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Measure Up!"
- Have someone read the "Life Happens" section on page 75 aloud and then, as a class, discuss the corresponding questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "People often equate prosperity with righteousness. Is prosperity the standard by which people and society should be judged? Hosea reminds us that love and justice are God's standards."

Exploring the Word (25-30 minutes)

- Show the clip "Nobody Wants to Know" from the movie *Gosnell*, directed by Nick Searcy. This can be found at www.wingclips.com. Share this: "Lexy describes the heinous acts of Dr. Gosnell and her indignation about how nobody has yet brought him to justice." Discuss the challenges in believing that God will indeed bring out justice, even if we never see it.
- Give a brief overview of the book of Hosea and summarize what happened in the previous ten chapters.

- Have someone read Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10.
- Unpack the significance of God's calling His son out of Egypt.
- Discuss Baal and why the acts of God's people toward Baal were disappointing to say the least.
- Discuss God's heart for His people as shown in verses 7-10. Debate God's jealousy for His people and list the blessings from today's text that God gave to His people.
- Have someone read Hosea 12:1-2, 6-8.
- Discuss various ways that material prosperity goes hand in hand with unbiblical views of self and others. Discuss the pros and cons of one's taking a vow of prosperity.
- Have someone read Hosea 12:9-14.
- Discuss God's history with Ephraim and why now is He willing to leave him on the guilt of his bloodshed and repay him for his contempt.

Life Application (10 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page 80.

Life Response (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page 80.
- Be sure everyone has a note card. Lead the students to write a personal prayer of confession, asking God's forgiveness for pursuing prosperity instead of love, justice, and righteousness.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.