

**LOVE STORY**  
**WEEK 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE**  
**"PAYING THE PRICE"**

**READ**

This week we concluded our Love Story series. Through this series we have been looking at the life of the prophet Hosea, whose love story is a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel. Hosea married a promiscuous woman named Gomer to symbolize Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Israel had been breaking their covenant with God for several hundred years by worshiping other gods and oppressing people. Last week we looked at how God would withdraw his protective hand and allow Israel to reap what they had sown. This is a principle known as redemptive withdrawal and is not intended as punishment, but as a means to restore people to God.

This week, through Hosea and Gomer's marriage, we saw an illustration of God's continued love for Israel.

**Hosea 3:1**

*...Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.*

Even though Israel broke the covenant, and hurt him, God is not going to respond with bitterness or anger. He is going to show them love again. He is going to forgive them. This is not a blueprint for how to deal with marriage infidelity, this is not really about Hosea and Gomer, their love story is symbolic of God's relationship with Israel, with humanity.

**Hosea 3:2**

*So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.*

Gomer was not just sleeping around, she had become indebted to someone who was trafficking her to other men. To get her back, Hosea would have to pay the price to clear her debt. There is always a price to forgiveness, it costs something. If you have ever been really wronged you know this, you cannot just ignore the hurt. If you want experience restoration in the relationship you have to deal with it. You can either try to make them pay for it, or you can pay for it yourself.

This is why God came to earth in the person of Jesus, and why he died. Jesus died to pay the price we never could, so that we could live the life God created us to live.

**Hebrews 12:2**

*...For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Out of joy, Jesus willingly gave his life, paid the price, so we could be forgiven, restored. Many of us struggle with the idea of forgiveness, and we struggle with it on two fronts. Most of us feel like we have not been forgiven and at the same time we struggle to forgive others.

### **Mark 11:25**

*And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

What Jesus is saying here is that forgiving others and being forgiven go hand in hand. You cannot do one without the other. They both happen in the same place inside of us. If our heart is hard to one, then it is hard to both. Jesus asks us to please forgive, so we can experience forgiveness. It will hurt, because you will release your anger and pain, but it will open you up to experience forgiveness in yourself. If you want to be free then you have to be willing to free others.

### **Hosea 3:3**

*Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."*

Hosea pays the price and brings Gomer home, but also makes it clear that things will have to change. These restrictions are not punitive, they are intended to bring about restoration of the relationship. Something key to faith is seen here, the relationship will change by being together and treating each other lovingly. Transformation is relational. Growth, change, and transformation happen in the context of relationships.

Hosea and Gomer's relationship will change by being together in a loving environment. Same with God and Israel's, and also with us. Some people think that Christianity is about sin management or behavior modification, but it's not. It's about a person, Jesus, and the difference Jesus makes in our life.

Christianity is about change and transformation but that happens in relationships. First with God, secondly with other people. Connecting with God through things like scripture, prayer, and connecting with others in both large and small groups. We have to live these if we want to experience the love, forgiveness, grace, restoration, and transformation of Jesus.

## **DISCUSS**

Reflect on someone in your life who you have seen transform through a relationship with Jesus. What has this looked like in their life?

Transformation happens in relationships when we connect with God and others. How do you connect with God? And with others?

How is your life different as a result of your relationship with Jesus?

**Mark 11:25**

*And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

What do you think about the relationship between forgiving others and experiencing forgiveness?

Reflect on a time you experienced restoration in a relationship as a result of forgiveness. Share this with your group.

**PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP**

Pray for God to search our hearts and bring to mind any areas of unforgiveness, pray that we would forgive others and experience restoration.

**PRAY FOR FCC**

Pray that we would connect in relationship with God and others, and that this would be reflected in the way we live and love others.

**PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS**

Please pray for encouragement for ministry partners, who are in various countries throughout the world, reaching out in love and service in the name of Jesus. Pray for them to find time for self-care and rest. Pray that they would be strengthened in continuing the work they do. Please pray that many would come alongside them in support through prayer and financial blessings, and that they would feel loved even in the most difficult of circumstances.