

As you begin to study pray that GOD will speak to you through His word. Read the chapter a few times, know the contents. After reading the introduction, answer the questions.

Chapter 14

RETURNING BRINGS BLESSING:

Hosea begins this chapter with a command and a statement of fact. The command, found in verse 1, is this: *Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God.* This is really the heart of God since the beginning of man, and still is today.

The statement of fact is also found in verse 1, and it reads, "*Your sins have been your downfall.*" Truer words have never been uttered. We fall short of God's expectations, of His mark for us, because of sin (Romans 3:23). In that same third chapter of Romans, Paul dares to proclaim that there is no one who does good. That is a strong statement, but the biblical evidence and the realities of life bear this out. Sometimes, even those acts which we are tempted to describe as being good, are tainted with pride or self-centeredness.

Hosea presents God's solution once again in verse 2: *Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips."* Confession, repentance, cleansing, and blessing: those are the steps toward pleasing God.

When repentance comes, so does God's blessings. God loves us freely and desires to heal us of our waywardness. He will turn His anger away from us as we turn to Him and repent of our sins. Because God blesses us we can, in turn, bring a blessing to others. But the secret is to maintain our love relationship with God.

The words of a song we sing sometimes at our Sunday services sums up the book of Hosea. A phrase from that song is as follows:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, new every morning; great is Your faithfulness, O Lord; great is Your faithfulness.

Would repentance from their evil behavior have brought forgiveness from God, not destruction? v1-2

The Lord urged Israel to "take words with me and return". In your own words what had God longed to hear Israel say? Is God longing to hear you say anything? What is verse 3 saying about Assyria? Find some additional information on Assyria.

Some times sincere repentance from the heart is difficult when speaking to God. What have you, if ever brought to the Lord, in place of honest words of repentance?

What does God commit to do for Israel? v4-8

What does verse 5 speak of?

Verse 6 says, His beauty shall be as the _____ . This speaks of what?

Why wouldn't the Lord just say " Don't worry about your idol worship; we'll overlook that"?

How does the book end? What does God require of the Israelites?

What did you learn from the book of Hosea? And how will you apply it to your life?