



“Justification Part 1: Divine Romance”

DIVINE DICTIONARY

Small Group Plan

Hosea’s life is made to be a walking lesson of the message he had to preach. He is commanded by the Lord to marry a woman of harlotry ... He married Gomer.

To the family there were born three children, each of whom is given a name that is part of the prophet’s preaching.

The 1st, a son, is called Jezreel ... possibly meaning “God scatters”

The 2nd child, a daughter named “not pitied” is a threat that God will not pity and forgive the house of Israel.

The 3rd is a son called “not my people”

When it is remembered that the formula of the covenant is “I will be your God, and you shall be my people” (Lev 26:12), the threat contained in the child’s name obviously is that of the breaking of the relationship

From, The Minor Prophets, by Dr. Jack Lewis

As the story progresses Hosea’s wife betrays and deserts him. And what makes this book so powerful is that it comes straight from the heart of a wounded marriage partner. In chapter two Hosea pleads with his unfaithful wife, and his voice becomes one with the voice of God addressing Israel. The people are worshipping the Canaanite fertility god. They think he is the one bringing the good harvests when all the time it is God. Beginning in chapter four there is no further mention of Hosea’s family, but the experience is there, and it colors the rest of the book. It is the story of the twin-pain of God and his prophet as they struggle to preserve their marriages, Hosea to Gomer, God to his people. What is amazing is that God is the innocent party in the story, and yet, he is the one taking the steps to save and renew the marriage.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How would you feel if God commanded you to marry someone you knew was going to be unfaithful to you? Would you obey? Why or why not?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

THE PERSISTENCE

Hosea 2:14-15

¹⁴ *“Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.”*

- Israel has been unfaithful, but still God wants to win her back. Why?
- Do most marriage partners today react to “unfaithfulness” as God does? Explain.
- God is often thought of as a powerful warrior, but here he is simply a tender, determined husband. Why do we need to see and understand both?

THE PARTNERSHIP

Hosea 2:16-18

¹⁶ *“In that day,” declares the LORD, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’ ¹⁷ I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.”*

- By removing “master” and putting “husband” in its place, God is introducing the idea of partnership. Husband is the word “ish.” Wife is the word “ishah.” They are constructed from the same word. Linguistically they are partners.
- How can God risking partnership help to restore human faithfulness?
- How has God made us “partners” with him today?

THE PROMISES

Hosea 2:19-20

¹⁹ *I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.*

- In spite of Gomer’s unfaithfulness, he promises to be faithful. Why?
- Look at God’s wedding vow (v. 19). We usually associate the word “righteousness” with salvation or deliverance. What deeper promise is God offering to Israel?
- What does he mean “forever”?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Even though Hosea knew Gomer was going to be unfaithful, how do you think he felt when it actually happened?

- How did Gomer's unfaithfulness provide an illustration of Israel's unfaithfulness to God?
- Why does God pursue us even when we ignore his love?
- Why does God want to be with us when we stray so far?
- As a group, make a short list of the many things God did for Israel through the centuries. Then make a similar list of what he has done for you and your family?
- In what ways are people unfaithful to God today and what do we need to see, understand and do in order to be faithful?
- Spend some time in prayer, first in silent confession, and then in vocal recommitment?