

## Dr. John Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5, Hosea 6

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5, Hosea 6, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. John Oswalt's lecture** analyzes Hosea chapter 6, verses 1-3, focusing on themes of repentance and God's unwavering love for Israel. **He interprets** the verses as a call for the Israelites to return to a loving relationship with God, emphasizing the concept of "knowing" God as an intimate, life-giving connection rather than mere religious observance. **Oswalt connects** this call to repentance with the consequences of Israel's unfaithfulness, highlighting God's restorative power despite the nation's suffering. **The lecture** also explores the roles of prophets and the nature of true and false prophecy, emphasizing the importance of genuine spiritual transformation. Finally, **it relates** Hosea's message to contemporary Christian life, urging listeners to examine their own relationships with God and others.

**2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →  
Minor Prophets → Hosea).**



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### 3. Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5, Hosea 6

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Hosea chapter 6:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Hosea Chapter 6

**Overview:** This lecture focuses on Hosea Chapter 6, specifically verses 1-3 as a bridge between the themes of "no knowledge of God" (Chapters 4-5) and "no love for God" (Chapters 6:4-10:15). Dr. Oswalt emphasizes the call to repentance, God's healing love, and the importance of an intimate relationship with God, contrasting it with mere religious observance. He connects these themes to the historical context of Israel and applies them to the modern-day believer.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. The Structure of Hosea:

- Oswalt frames the book of Hosea as being structured by themes of calls to repentance and expressions of God's patient love.
- Chapters 1-3 are understood through the metaphor of Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer.
- Chapters 4-5 are characterized as representing "no knowledge of God," emphasizing the lack of *da'at* (knowledge), *hesed* (love/devotion), and *emet/emunah* (truth/faithfulness).
- Chapter 6:1-3 act as a bridge.
- Chapters 6:4-10:15 are characterized by the theme "no love for God."

##### 1. Hosea 6:1-3: A Call to Return:

- These verses represent a turning point, a call to repentance. Possible titles include: "Let Us Return to the Lord," "Let Us Know the Lord," and "He Will Revive Us."
- Returning to the Lord is not just a change in direction but a renewal of a loving, intimate relationship with God. *"To know Him. As you will remember, in the Hebrew Bible, know is a term for sexual embrace"*.
- Knowing God is not merely knowing *about* God, but having a living, loving relationship with Him, involving intimacy, not merely knowledge of doctrine.

- The consequence of returning is revival and restoration, to “live in His presence”. God will restore their life, which was dead in sin and rebellion.
- Oswalt suggests that life, true human life, is found in a relationship with God, who is the source of all life.

#### 1. **God's Healing and Corrective Love:**

- God’s “tearing apart” is not done out of anger, but for the purpose of healing, *“He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us.”*
- Oswalt makes an analogy to a doctor breaking a bone to reset it correctly: *“God is saying, Yes, in order to restore you, in order to give you back your true life, it's going to hurt. But I hurt you only for the goal of healing you.”*
- God’s “last word” is always intended for restoration, not destruction, highlighting a Wesleyan Arminian perspective. *“God's intended last word is never destruction.”*
- The imagery of rain is used to describe God's life-giving presence: *“He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”*
- Exile, although painful, was ultimately a necessary step for Israel to return to a true faith and relationship with God. *“The exile became the fertilizing element for biblical faith.”* It was God's way of breaking down their sinful patterns.

#### 1. **The Problem of Superficial Love (Hesed):**

- Oswalt examines why God might use harsh judgments (prophets' words and negative circumstances).
- The prophet says "What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your hesed, your love, is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears."
- *Hesed*, the concept of passionate and devoted love, is emphasized. It is not just a feeling but an action, *“it is simply doing the best for someone at all costs.”*
- Israel's *hesed* is fleeting, lacking substance. This applies to both their relationship with God and with others.

### 1. The Purpose of God's Word:

- Prophetic words are described as cutting and “killing” in order to give life. *“The word kills in order that it can give life.”* Like peroxide being used to clean out proud flesh.
- True prophets speak hard truths that challenge and convict, while false prophets say only nice things. *“The true prophet says you're on the road to destruction. Keep that up, and you're going to separate yourself from God. Don't do that. That is disgusting to God. Stop that.”*
- *Mishpatim*, or God’s directions, are not inherently judgments, but they become judgments when people live in disobedience. *“This is the way I made the world to operate.”*

### 1. True Religion vs. Religious Behavior:

- God desires *hesed* and knowledge of Him (intimacy), rather than just sacrifices and religious acts. *“For I desire hesed, not sacrifice, and knowing God rather than burnt offerings.”*
- Religious activities are meaningless if they do not reflect a changed heart and a genuine relationship with God. *“I don't want your religious behavior unless it is an accurate reflection of your heart condition.”*
- Religious ritual without corresponding intimate relationship with God is meaningless to God.

### 1. The Issue of Idolatry (Spiritual Prostitution):

- Hosea uses the metaphor of prostitution to describe Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. *“There Ephraim is given to prostitution. Israel is defiled.”*
- This metaphor points to relationships that are self-serving, temporary, and ultimately destructive, rather than life-giving.
- The lecture calls for introspection regarding the nature of one's relationship with God: is it intimate and life giving or is it based on self-interest?

### 1. The Application to the Present Day:

- Oswalt applies these lessons to the modern-day church, warning against complacency and spiritual pride.

- He cautions against self-deception, asking how modern believers might be on the same track as Israel.
- The idea that a pastor can be a "murderer" if they are not faithfully leading people to repentance and deeper discipleship.
- He challenges the listener to reflect upon their own relationship with God. "Am I in a life-giving relationship with God? Or is it actually a prostitution relationship where I'm trying to use him?"

#### **1. Judah's Harvest & the Opportunity for Restoration:**

- The lecture concludes by addressing the coming "harvest" of Judah, which is linked to God's desire to restore.
- Negative experiences are not seen as punitive, but opportunities for people to recognize their need for God. *"We do not know our need for salvation until we've come to the end of ourselves."*
- Oswalt sees life falling apart as a chance to look to God, who longs to restore and renew.

#### **Concluding Thought:**

Dr. Oswalt uses Hosea 6 to challenge his audience to move beyond a superficial understanding of faith and to pursue an intimate, life-transforming relationship with God. He emphasizes that God's love is both healing and corrective, requiring genuine repentance and a commitment to live according to His will. The lecture serves as a warning against religious formalism and spiritual complacency, urging a deeper examination of one's own heart and relationship with God.

## 4. Briefing Document, Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5, Hosea 6

### Hosea 6 Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. How does the metaphor of Hosea and Gomer relate to the relationship between God and Israel? The relationship between Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer is a living metaphor for Yahweh's passionate love for his people Israel, highlighting their pattern of turning away from God despite His consistent love and commitment. This metaphor demonstrates a love that is pure and devoted alongside a love that is partial and divided.
2. What are the three key words, and their Hebrew counterparts, that are central to the concepts explored in Hosea 4-6? The three key words are *knowledge*, *love*, and *faithfulness*. These correspond to the Hebrew words *da'at* (knowledge), *hesed* (love), and *emet/emunah* (truth/faithfulness).
3. What does it mean to "know God" according to Hosea and how is this different than "knowing about" God? Knowing God is not simply an intellectual understanding of Him or His attributes, but rather it's about having an intimate, loving relationship with Him, similar to the sexual intimacy implied by the Hebrew word "know" (*yada*). Knowing God is not just about facts or ideas, it is about experience.
4. According to Hosea 6:1-3, what will happen when the people turn back to the Lord? When the people turn back to the Lord, He will revive them, give them life, and restore them so that they may live in His presence. This implies a renewal of their relationship with Him and a return to the source of life.
5. What does Dr. Oswalt mean when he says that God's word is like "peroxide"? Dr. Oswalt uses the analogy of peroxide to explain how the word of God, like the words of the prophets, has the power to "kill" or expose the "proud flesh" of sin in order to heal and bring new life. The word of God cuts away at behavior that leads to death.
6. What does *hesed* mean, and how is it demonstrated in the context of the lecture? *Hesed* is a passionate, undying devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when it is undeserved. This is shown in God's love for Israel despite their unfaithfulness and is demonstrated by acts of undeserved kindness and self-giving love.

7. Why does Dr. Oswalt assert that God is not primarily interested in sacrifice? God desires an intimate relationship with his people, demonstrated by acts of *hesed*. He does not prioritize outward religious practices like sacrifices if they are not accompanied by a changed heart and genuine love for God and others.
8. What are the two interpretations of "Adam" in Hosea 6:7, and which one does Dr. Oswalt prefer and why? One interpretation sees "Adam" as referring to the biblical figure who broke the covenant, while the other, preferred by Dr. Oswalt, understands it as a place near Gilgal that has unholy memories associated with sin and idolatry.
9. How are the priests described in Hosea 6, and what is the meaning of that description? Hosea describes the priests as "murderers" on the road to Shechem because, by not faithfully teaching the Torah, they are leading the people into sin and spiritual death for their own selfish gain, ultimately choosing to serve their own interests instead of faithfully leading others to God.
10. How does Hosea use the language of prostitution to describe Israel's relationship with God? Hosea uses the language of prostitution to emphasize how Israel is engaged in a false relationship with God and other idols based on pleasure and self-gain. Instead of a life-giving marriage relationship, they have turned to destructive and ultimately death-dealing forms of worship and allegiances.

### Answer Key

1. The relationship between Hosea and his unfaithful wife Gomer is a living metaphor for Yahweh's passionate love for his people Israel, highlighting their pattern of turning away from God despite His consistent love and commitment. This metaphor demonstrates a love that is pure and devoted alongside a love that is partial and divided.
2. The three key words are *knowledge*, *love*, and *faithfulness*. These correspond to the Hebrew words *da'at* (knowledge), *hesed* (love), and *emet/emunah* (truth/faithfulness).
3. Knowing God is not simply an intellectual understanding of Him or His attributes, but rather it's about having an intimate, loving relationship with Him, similar to the sexual intimacy implied by the Hebrew word "know" (*yada*). Knowing God is not just about facts or ideas, it is about experience.

4. When the people turn back to the Lord, He will revive them, give them life, and restore them so that they may live in His presence. This implies a renewal of their relationship with Him and a return to the source of life.
5. Dr. Oswalt uses the analogy of peroxide to explain how the word of God, like the words of the prophets, has the power to "kill" or expose the "proud flesh" of sin in order to heal and bring new life. The word of God cuts away at behavior that leads to death.
6. *Hesed* is a passionate, undying devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when it is undeserved. This is shown in God's love for Israel despite their unfaithfulness and is demonstrated by acts of undeserved kindness and self-giving love.
7. God desires an intimate relationship with his people, demonstrated by acts of *hesed*. He does not prioritize outward religious practices like sacrifices if they are not accompanied by a changed heart and genuine love for God and others.
8. One interpretation sees "Adam" as referring to the biblical figure who broke the covenant, while the other, preferred by Dr. Oswalt, understands it as a place near Gilgal that has unholy memories associated with sin and idolatry.
9. Hosea describes the priests as "murderers" on the road to Shechem because, by not faithfully teaching the Torah, they are leading the people into sin and spiritual death for their own selfish gain, ultimately choosing to serve their own interests instead of faithfully leading others to God.
10. Hosea uses the language of prostitution to emphasize how Israel is engaged in a false relationship with God and other idols based on pleasure and self-gain. Instead of a life-giving marriage relationship, they have turned to destructive and ultimately death-dealing forms of worship and allegiances.

## Essay Questions

1. Explore the theme of repentance and restoration in Hosea 6:1-3, considering both the individual and communal implications of turning back to God. How does this passage challenge modern understandings of faith and salvation?
2. Analyze the concept of *hesed* as presented in the lecture, discussing its significance in the relationship between God and humanity, as well as in human relationships. How does the understanding of *hesed* alter traditional perceptions of religious practice?
3. Discuss the role of prophetic language and its impact on the people of Israel, using Hosea's words as an example. In what ways do his pronouncements of judgment relate to the theme of restoration?
4. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the priests and Israel's unfaithfulness in Hosea 6. How does Hosea's critique challenge the listener's concept of religious leadership and their place in God's covenant?
5. How does the imagery of prostitution, used to describe Israel's relationship with God, clarify the nature of idolatry and its consequences? How might this language challenge modern believers?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hesed (חֶסֶד):** A Hebrew term signifying steadfast love, loyal kindness, mercy, and devotion. It is often used to describe God's covenantal love for His people, a passionate, undying devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when undeserved.
- **Da'at (דַּעַת):** A Hebrew term referring to knowledge, understanding, and intimacy. In the context of the lecture, it speaks of knowing God through a loving relationship rather than merely knowing about Him.
- **Emet (אֱמֶת) / Emunah (אֱמוּנָה):** Hebrew words that can both be translated as truth or faithfulness, emphasizing the reliability and steadfastness of God's character and the commitment expected in a relationship with Him.
- **Mishpatim (מִשְׁפָּטִים):** Hebrew for "judgments," but more accurately interpreted as God's patterns for life, His directions and guidance for how the world is meant to function.
- **Nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ):** A Hebrew term that encompasses a wide range of meanings including soul, self, person, life, and energy. It emphasizes that a person is not just a body, but also a self, a personality enlivened by spirit.
- **Prophet:** A messenger of God who speaks on His behalf, often delivering messages of both judgment and hope. In the context of the lecture, the true prophet confronts sin and challenges people to return to God.
- **Repentance:** Turning away from sin and back towards God, involving a change of heart and a commitment to follow Him. In Hosea, it is the necessary response to God's call to return to a loving relationship.
- **Exile:** A forced removal from one's homeland. In the context of the lecture, the exile of Israel is described not as God's ultimate intention, but as a means to bring His people to repentance and restoration.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement between God and His people, involving promises and obligations on both sides. In this lecture, Dr. Oswalt discusses different views on the nature of the first covenant.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of anything other than the true God. In Hosea, it is depicted as a form of spiritual prostitution where people engage in destructive relationships and try to use something instead of worshipping Him.

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, Hosea, Session 5, Hosea 6, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Hosea Chapters 5-6

- **What is the central metaphor used in the book of Hosea, and how does it relate to the relationship between God and Israel?**
- The book uses the marriage of Hosea and his unfaithful wife, Gomer, as a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel. Hosea's passionate love for Gomer, even after her infidelity, mirrors God's unwavering love for His people, despite their turning away to other "lovers" (idols and other nations). This illustrates a constant back-and-forth dynamic where Israel expresses love for God but also pursues their own desires, dividing their devotion. The metaphor emphasizes God's pure and fully committed love in contrast to Israel's partial and divided affections.
- **What are the three key concepts emphasized in Hosea, and how are they used to structure the book?**
- The key concepts are "knowledge" (da'at), "love" (hesed), and "faithfulness/truth" (emet/emunah). While the book doesn't have a strict outline after chapter 3, these concepts help divide it into sections based on calls to repentance or expressions of God's love. Chapters 4-5 are described as representing "no knowledge of God," while chapter 6:4 through chapter 10:15 represent "no love for God". Chapter 6:1-3 serves as a bridge, featuring a call to repentance and a reminder of God's patience and love.
- **What does it mean to "return to the Lord," and how is "knowing the Lord" described in Hosea 6:1-3?**
- "Returning to the Lord" is portrayed as a complete turnaround, a rejection of idolatry and a renewed commitment to a loving relationship with God. It means stopping the pursuit of idols and turning towards God. "Knowing the Lord" isn't just about intellectual understanding but about a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with Him, similar to the intimacy of sexual embrace, a connection that transcends simple knowledge about Him. It involves restoring fellowship and a close, personal connection with God, moving away from alienation caused by sin.

- **According to Hosea, what does God desire more than sacrifice or burnt offerings?**
- God desires *hesed*, which is often translated as "steadfast love," "kindness," or "devotion," more than religious rituals like sacrifices and burnt offerings. *Hesed* represents a passionate, self-giving, and consistent devotion of a superior to an inferior, demonstrated by acts of undeserved kindness. In the context of Hosea, it emphasizes God's desire for genuine relationship and transformed behavior as a reflection of a true heart condition rather than empty religious performances. It also refers to our loving actions towards others. God desires genuine change in how we live in relationship to him and to others.
- **What does Hosea mean by stating that God has "torn us to pieces," and how does it relate to God's intention for His people?**
- When Hosea states that God has "torn us to pieces," it is not an act of cruelty but an action meant to heal and restore. This tearing can be understood as the consequences of sin and the judgments God allows, including hardship, exile, and other forms of suffering. God's intent, however, is not destruction but rather the breaking down of false notions, behaviors and pride. These things must be broken to make space for a genuine relationship to Him. Like a doctor breaking a bone to reset it, God may inflict pain to bring about healing, restoration, and a return to true life.
- **How does Hosea view the role of prophets and the "words of God's mouth?"**
- Hosea portrays the prophets as messengers sent by God to confront people with their sin and call them to repentance. The "words of God's mouth" act like a two-edged sword, cutting through deception and self-deceit. These words can "kill" by exposing the pride and behavior that leads to death and separation from God. However, this "killing" is ultimately meant to be restorative and life-giving, similar to the necessary cleansing of a wound. True prophets speak difficult truths that may be uncomfortable but are essential for spiritual growth and true discipleship.

- **What is the significance of the concept of "mishpatim" (often translated as "judgments") in Hosea?**
- *Mishpatim*, which could be better translated as "directions" or "God's pattern for life," represents the way God designed the world to operate. These are the guidelines for successful living. When individuals or nations ignore or reject these directions and live according to their own will, there will be consequences. These consequences appear as judgments, a result of straying from God's way, but they are not His ultimate intent. God intends these "judgements" to help us to conform to His pattern. Living in accordance to these directions results in abundant life, while living contrary leads to destruction.
- **How does Hosea address the issue of religious ritual and what is the difference between a "life giving relationship" and a "prostitution relationship" in our connection with God?**
- Hosea criticizes religious practices, such as sacrifices and temple worship, that are not coupled with genuine love for God and acts of kindness to others. He stresses that outward rituals without inward transformation are meaningless to God. A "life-giving relationship" with God involves intimate fellowship, changed behavior, and self-giving devotion, where we are seeking His purposes. A "prostitution relationship", on the other hand, is transactional, where we use God to achieve our own selfish ends rather than seeking His heart and His purposes. Hosea calls believers to examine their relationship with God to see if it is based in authentic love or self-serving manipulation.