

Devotional Guide

August 17-21, 2026



The Choice to Pursue

Big Idea

God's loving-kindness pursues unfaithful people paying the price to bring them home.

Speaker: Mike Kleven, Lead Pastor

The message explores the painful questions people ask about God: Can I ever come back? Has God given up on me? Have I gone too far? Through the prophet Hosea, God gives a living picture of His heart. Hosea is called to marry Gomer and later to buy her back, becoming a parable of *hesed*—loving-kindness that will not walk away. Even when Israel's unfaithfulness is named in judgment, God promises to allure, restore, and betroth His people forever.

That pursuit reaches its fullest expression when Jesus, the Son of David, pays the greater price on the cross. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This truth invites wanderers to come home and followers of Jesus to take costly steps of pursuing love toward others.

How to Use This Guide:

Set aside 10-15 minutes daily. Read the Bible, reflect on the thought, answer questions, pray, and take the action step. Commit to this for growth—journal insights and share with a friend for accountability.

Day 1: Painful Questions

Bible Reading: Hosea 1:2; Romans 5:8

The sermon begins where many of us live: with questions we are almost afraid to speak. Can I ever come back? Can God love someone like me? Has God given up? Have I gone too far this time? Those questions belong to two kinds of people—those who have never turned toward God, and those who once trusted Him and then wandered away. God does not ignore the wound of unfaithfulness. He names it.

Then He does something unexpected: He calls a prophet not only to speak a message but to live it. Hosea's marriage becomes a window into the heart of God. Before we rush to the happy ending, sit with the ache. God takes rejection seriously. That is why His pursuit is so costly and so kind. The big idea steadies us: God's loving-kindness pursues unfaithful people paying the price to bring them home.

Reflection Questions:

1. Which of the painful questions in the sermon most resembles one you have asked?
2. What does Hosea 1:2 show about how seriously God treats unfaithfulness?
3. How does Romans 5:8 answer the fear that you have gone too far?
4. Where do you see "wandering" in your own story or in someone you love?
5. How does the big idea give you language for those questions today?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, You know the questions I have been afraid to ask. Meet me in them. Thank You that Your love does not wait for me to get it all together. Amen.

Action Step: Write down one honest question you have for God. Bring it to Him in prayer today without dressing it up.

Day 2: H̄esed — Love That Will Not Walk Away

Bible Reading: Hosea 2:19-20; Psalm 136:1

The key word of this message is loving-kindness—h̄esed. H̄esed is love that will not walk away. It is love that stays when leaving would be easier. It is God's love binding Him to His promises even when others break theirs. In a culture that treats relationships as disposable, h̄esed sounds almost unreasonable.

That is the point. Hosea is not a story about a man who felt romantic. It is a story about a God who refuses to abandon His covenant. When God says He will betroth His people forever in righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and faithfulness, He is describing His own character. Jesus later shows us that h̄esed has a face and a cross. If you have been the one left, or the one who left, this word is for you. God is not looking for an exit. He is looking for a way home.

Reflection Questions:

1. How would you explain h̄esed in your own words?
2. Where have you seen love that stayed when it would have been easier to leave?
3. What phrases in Hosea 2:19-20 describe the kind of relationship God wants?
4. How is h̄esed different from affection that depends on how we feel?
5. Who in your life needs to experience this kind of love from you this week?

Prayer Prompt: Faithful God, thank You that Your love does not walk away. Teach me h̄esed. Bind my heart to Your promises and make me a person who stays. Amen.

Action Step: Send a message or make a call today to someone you have been tempted to write off. Let them know you have not given up.

Day 3: Names of Judgment and a Promise That Remains

Bible Reading: Hosea 1:4-11

God told Hosea to name the children Jezreel (Judgment), Lo-Ruhamah (No Mercy), and Lo-Ammi (Not My People). The names are severe because persistent rejection of God is severe. The northern kingdom of Israel never produced a faithful king.

Eventually that kingdom fell. God does not pretend unfaithfulness is a small thing. And yet—right in the same chapter—He refuses to cancel the promise He made to Abraham. “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore.” The place of “not my people” will become the place of “children of the living God.” Judah and Israel will come together under one leader. That leader is the Son of David, Jesus. Judgment is real. Mercy is more stubborn still. If you feel named by your failure, hear the “yet.” God keeps His promises even when we do not keep ours.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do the three names reveal about the seriousness of walking away from God?
2. Why is the word “yet” in Hosea 1:10 so important?
3. How does God’s promise to Abraham still stand in this passage?
4. Where have you felt like “not my people,” and how does this text speak to that?
5. How does knowing Jesus is the one Leader change the way you read Hosea 1:11?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, I take Your holiness seriously. I also take Your “yet” seriously. Rename what shame has named in me. Make me a child of the living God. Amen.

Action Step: Read Hosea 1:10 aloud twice today. Thank God that His promise is stronger than your worst name.

Day 4: From Courtroom to Betrothal

Bible Reading: Hosea 2:13-20

Chapter 2 opens like a lawsuit. God lists Israel's sins: crediting false lovers for food, water, wool, oil, and drink; refusing to acknowledge Him as the Giver. Then the courtroom changes. "Therefore I am now going to allure her." God will speak tenderly. He will turn the Valley of Achor—a place of trouble—into a door of hope. The people will no longer say "my master," but "my husband." He will betroth them forever. This is the heart of the sermon: God's loving-kindness does not only confront; it courts. He does not merely expose unfaithfulness; He pursues restoration.

Many of us know the courtroom voice in our heads. Fewer of us linger long enough to hear the tender voice. Prayer this week is learning to listen for the God who allures, not only the God who accuses. He wants you home.

Reflection Questions:

1. What charges does God bring against Israel in Hosea 2?
2. How does the word "therefore" in verse 14 surprise you?
3. Where has a "valley of trouble" become, or could become, a door of hope?
4. What is the difference between relating to God as Master only and as Husband?
5. How will you make space this week to hear God speak tenderly?

Prayer Prompt: Father, I have often expected only judgment. Allure my heart. Speak tenderly. Turn my trouble into a door of hope. Amen.

Action Step: Spend five quiet minutes today with Hosea 2:14. Ask God to speak one tender word to you, and write it down.

Day 5: Paying the Price to Bring Them Home

Bible Reading: Hosea 3:1-5; John 12:32

Hosea had to buy back the woman who was already his wife. Fifteen shekels and some grain—the price of a life in the marketplace. God asked him to do it so we could see what God would do for Israel and for all people. Exile would come. Kings and sacrifices would disappear. But afterward they would return and seek the Lord and David their king. That promise is kept when Jesus, the Son of David, is lifted up. His cross costs far more than fifteen shekels.

Hesed becomes the agape love of Jesus giving everything. If you think, “You don’t know what I’ve done,” you are right about the preacher—and wrong about Jesus. He knows. Ephesians 5 says He gave Himself up to make His people holy, cleansing them, presenting them radiant, without stain or wrinkle. The price has already been paid. Home is not earned. It is purchased.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why does it matter that Hosea paid a price for a wife who already belonged to him?
2. How does Hosea 3:5 point forward to Jesus?
3. What does John 12:32 tell you about the reach of Jesus’ pursuit?
4. Which part of Ephesians 5:25-27 do you most need to believe about yourself today?
5. How does the big idea become personal at the cross?

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, thank You for paying a price I could never pay. Draw me to Yourself. Wash me. Make me Yours. Amen.

Action Step: Read Romans 5:8 slowly three times. Thank Jesus out loud for one specific way He has pursued you.

Day 6: Living Pursuing Love Today

Bible Reading: Romans 5:8; Ephesians 5:25-27

Review the week: painful questions, hesed that will not walk away, names of judgment answered by promise, a courtroom that becomes a betrothal, and a price paid to bring the unfaithful home. If you follow Jesus, make loving-kindness the way you approach people. Have you written someone off? Take a costly step—an overdue conversation, an apology, a refusal to walk away, forgiveness that costs you something.

If you are the wanderer, stop running. He has not given up. He has pursued you all your life. Jesus did not count out silver. He poured out His own life so that those who were “not my people” can find their true home as God’s people. The big idea is not only comfort. It is a way to live: God’s loving-kindness pursues unfaithful people paying the price to bring them home.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is one key insight you are taking away from this guide?
2. How has your view of God’s love changed over these six days?
3. Who is God bringing to mind that needs a costly step of pursuing love?
4. If you have been running, what would “stop running” look like today?
5. How will you help someone else find their true home in Jesus this week?

Prayer Prompt: Loving Father, thank You for pursuing me. Make me a person of hesed. Use my life to bring wanderers home. Amen.

Action Step: Memorize Romans 5:8 this week. Take one costly step toward a person today, or take one honest step back toward Jesus.



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