

***RISKING ALL FOR LOVE*****Lessons From Agriculture****Hosea 10:1–15**

*“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD....” Hosea 10:12*

**Day 1: Read Hosea 10:1–2.**

1. To what is Israel likened in verse 1?
2. What sinful use does Israel make of its “fruit”? Look at Hosea 2:8 and Isaiah 5:1–4, 7. How do these passages show the depth of Israel’s sin?
3. Think of a recent time when you used a gift from God in a selfish or unholy manner. How can you use this gift in a way that honors God?
4. Despite God’s tender care, Israel the “choice vine” grew to become a “corrupt, wild vine” (Jer. 2:21), unwilling and unable to give God faithful love in return. Who in fact fulfilled Israel’s end of the covenant? (John 15:1)
5. Where do we as believers today fit into the vine analogy? What are we called to do? (Jn. 15:1–5, 10–12)

**Day 2: Read Hosea 10:3–15.**

6. Verses 3, 7, and 15 refer to Israel’s king. When Israelites first settled the Promised Land, they had no king. Read 1 Samuel 8:4–7, 19–22, which relates how Israel came to have one. Where in this request for a king do you find the seed of Israel’s sin in Hosea’s time?
7. The word translated “lawsuits” in verse 4 is more commonly translated “justice” or “judgment.” What do you think the comparison of Israel’s justice with “poisonous weeds” conveys? (cf. Is. 5:7; Amos 5:10–12)

**Day 3: Read Hosea 10:5–8.**

8. What will be the fate of the “calf-idol” Israel has been worshipping?

9. Discuss the irony of an idol's being captured and carried off by the enemy. (cf. Is. 44:12–20) What deep emotions overtake people at the capture of their idols? (vss. 5–6; compare Rev. 18:14–19)
  
10. Bovine statuettes seem foolish idols to us, yet we so often fail to realize that our clinging to things around us is just as foolish. Think of something or someone you tend to depend on instead of God. How do you rationalize this dependence as reasonable? Why isn't it?
  
11. Look again at the people's chilling cries at the end of verse 8, and compare them to a similar cry of desperation in Revelation 6:15–16. What is it that inspires such terror?

**Day 4: Read Hosea 10:9–15.**

12. In verse 9 (as in 9:9), Hosea likens Israel's sin to an earlier series of events in the town of Gibeah, recounted in Judges. Skim Judges 19:1, 10–30; 20:1–48; just how bad is Hosea saying Israel's sin is?
  
13. Hosea compares Israel ("Ephraim") to a heifer who will be forced to wear a yoke. What does this image suggest about what will happen to Israel?

**Day 5: Read Hosea 10:1–15.**

14. What is Israel's crop? (vs. 13) What kind of crop is Hosea exhorting the Israelites to produce instead? (vs. 12) What hope is there for Israel if she will seek the LORD? (vs. 12)
  
15. We have a saying that "the punishment should fit the crime." This chapter highlights two of Israel's sins: her idolatry and her failure to trust in the LORD for protection. How are these two sins connected? How are the punishments prophesied here fitting? (vss. 2b, 5–6, 8, 13b–14)
  
16. When have you experienced God's removing or breaking an idol of yours? What effect did this have on you?
  
17. According to verse 12 and Hebrews 3:13, 15 when is the best time to repent from idols and seek the LORD?