



Hosea 1:1–3; 3:1–5; 14:1–9

Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. **Hosea 6:6**

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

MEMORY VERSE

Somehow forgiveness has to begin with the heart of God. It certainly doesn't begin with us. Forgiveness is not a part of our nature, but is very much a part of His. So, how do we teach our teenagers to forgive if we find it so difficult ourselves? Maybe it begins by taking them back to the heart of God.

Read Hosea 1:1–3, 3:1–5, and 14:1–9. God paints a perfect picture of His awesome love and grace. It would be easy to judge someone like Hosea's adulterous wife, Gomer. However, God wanted Hosea and all of Israel to see that they were the adulterous ones, and that He could not only forgive them, but would also restore them.

So where do we begin with our own teenagers? We can start by showing them forgiveness as a pattern in the home. When our spouse hurts us we need to rush to show forgiveness. When our children hurt us we need to let them see that it's forgiveness we long to offer instead of grudges or bitterness. Then, when others outside of our family hurt us our children need to see us take immediate steps to forgive, maybe even when it isn't easy to forgive.

Forgiveness always means that we carry the circumstance back to the heart of God. We find our ability to forgive through Him and because of Him.

FAMILY DEVOTION TIME

Connect . . .

The family discusses: **What would be the most challenging offense that you would find hard to forgive? What steps toward forgiveness would this require?**

Explore . . .

Three family members share in the reading of Hosea 1:1–3, 3:1–5, and 14:1–9. Then, the family discusses: **What was the picture God painted for Israel? Who had been like the adulterous woman, Gomer? Who did Hosea represent? How does this metaphor work in terms of Christ and the Bride of Christ, the Church? What does it mean to be redeemed?**

Transform . . .

A family member takes a sheet of paper and creates a diagram, drawing a circle with arrows moving in a clockwise direction. At 12:00, put the words, *Offense committed*. At 3:00, write the words, *The heart of God*. At 6:00, write *Active steps to forgive*. At 9:00 write, *Forgiveness given*. Display the diagram you have drawn, stating that we have to be proactive in taking steps to forgive. It is not of our nature, but of God's, so we have to be ready ahead of time. Point to *Offense committed* and say: **When an offense is committed against us it hurts and our nature is to want revenge or to bear a grudge.** Point to *The heart of God* and say: **We have to go back to God's Word and stand on what He says and what He has done concerning forgiveness. We have to follow His example, asking for His enabling power.** Next, point to *Active steps to forgive* and say: **Forgiveness is a deliberate act just as it has always been for God. We choose to forgive and then we commit to carrying it out, understanding that this releases the offender and us, opening us to love and restoration.** Last, point to *Forgiveness given*. Say: **All we can do is offer forgiveness. We are not responsible for the other person's response. We will have done what God would do and has done, releasing ourselves from bitterness and a destructive spirit.**

Pray that your family members will develop a healthy, godly nature of forgiveness, becoming part of God's pattern of grace.