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INTRO TO HOSEA

A Lived Parable

We live in a world awash in love stories. Most of them are lies. They are not love stories at all—they are lust stories, sex-fantasy stories, domination stories. From the cradle we are fed on lies about love.

This would be bad enough if it only messed up human relationships—man and woman, parent and child, friend and friend—but it also messes up God-relationships. The huge, mountainous reality of all existence is that God is love, that God loves the world. Each single detail of the real world that we face and deal with day after day is permeated by this love.

But when our minds and imaginations are crippled with lies about love, we have a hard time understanding this fundamental ingredient of daily living, “love,” either as a noun or as a verb. And if the basic orienting phrase “God is love” is plastered over with cultural graffiti that obscure and deface the truth of the way the world is, we are not going to get very far in living well. We require true stories of love if we are to live truly.

Hosea is the prophet of love, but not love as we imagine or fantasize it. He was a parable of God’s love for his people lived out as God revealed and enacted it—a lived parable. It is an astonishing story: a prophet commanded to marry a common whore and have children with her. It is an even more astonishing message: God loves us in just this way—goes after us at our worst, keeps after us until he gets us, and makes lovers of men and women who know nothing of real love.

He says,

“I will heal their waywardness.

I will love them lavishly. My anger is played out.

I will make a fresh start with Israel.

He’ll burst into bloom like a crocus in the spring.

He’ll put down deep oak tree roots,

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A Lived Parable

he'll become a forest of oaks!
He'll become splendid—like a giant sequoia,
his fragrance like a grove of cedars!
Those who live near him will be blessed by him,
be blessed and prosper like golden grain.
Everyone will be talking about them,
spreading their fame as the vintage children of God.
Ephraim is finished with gods that are no-gods.
From now on I'm the one who answers and satisfies him.
I am like a luxuriant fruit tree.
Everything you need is to be found in me."

Hosea 14:4-8

Once we absorb this story and the words that flow from it, we will know God far more accurately. And we will be well on our way to being cured of all the sentimentalized and neurotic distortions of love that incapacitate us from dealing with the God who loves us and loving the neighbors who don't love us.

From The Invitation - A Simple Guide to the Bible by Eugene Peterson

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MAP OF MIDEAST

in the Time of Hosea

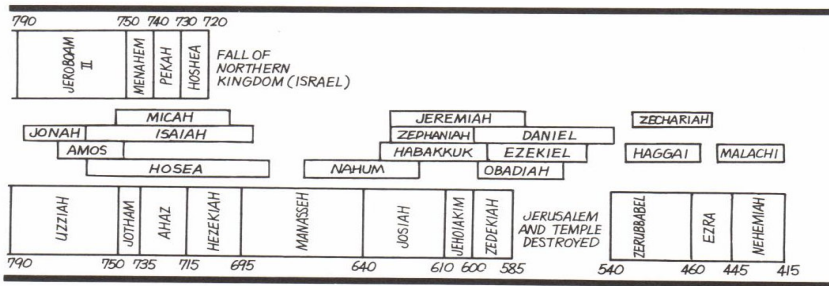


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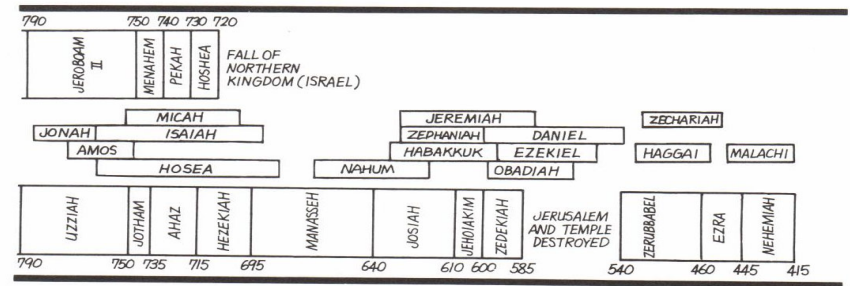
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PROPHET TIMELINE



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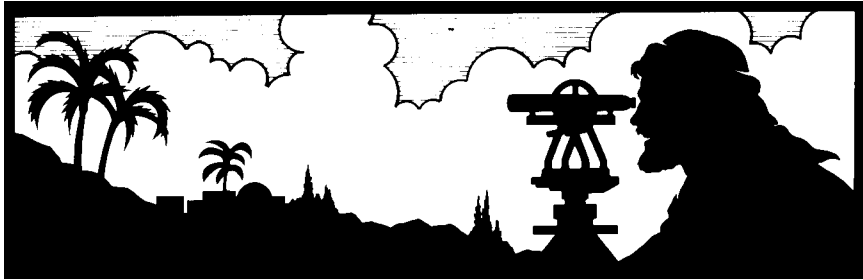


STUDY SCHEDULE

Assignment	Form	Discussion Date
1. Orientation		_____
2. Book Survey	Book Survey	_____
3. Hosea 1:1-2:1	ABC Bible Study	_____
4. Hosea 2:2-25	ABC Bible Study	_____
5. Hosea 3:1-5/ James 4:1-12	ABC Bible Study ABC Bible Study	_____
6. Hosea 4:1-19	ABC Bible Study	_____
7. Hosea 5:1-15	ABC Bible Study	_____
8. Hosea 6:1-7:16	ABC Bible Study	_____
9. Hosea 8:1-14	ABC Bible Study	_____
10. Hosea 9:1-17	ABC Bible Study	_____
11. Hosea 10:1-15	ABC Bible Study	_____
12. Hosea 11:1-12:1	ABC Bible Study	_____
13. Hosea 12:2-14	ABC Bible Study	_____
14. Hosea 13:1-16	ABC Bible Study	_____
15. Hosea 14:1-9	ABC Bible Study	_____
16. Book Summary	Book Summary	_____

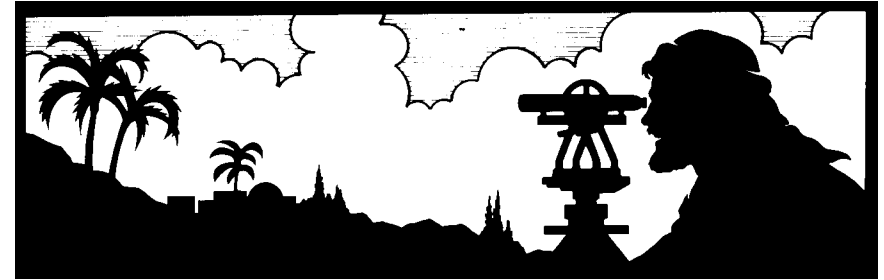
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HOW TO DO A BOOK SURVEY

1. Read the book as many times as you can.
 - A. Read it in different versions.
 - B. Do this in at least 3 different settings.
 - C. Go through the same book in Quiet Time.
2. List the major themes and highlights of the book.
 - A. Look for key words and phrases.
3. Make a loose tentative outline.
 - A. Look for major divisions in the book- also transitions on words.
 - B. Choose a title that is unique to the book.
4. Summarize the historical background of the book:
 - A. Sources to use: (www.biblestudytools.com/)
 - Bible Handbook
 - Study Bible
 - Bible Dictionary
 - Commentaries (www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/)
 - Concordance
 - B. Information to include:
 - To whom was it written
 - By whom was it written (Do life investigation.)
 - When was it written
 - Why was it written



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5. Make a chart to summarize what you have discovered in your survey. Make it on one sheet of paper. Use the chart on the following page or design your own. The value of such a chart is that it enables you to picture visually the contents and divisions of a book.
6. Read the book again.
7. Make an application. Consult the application page in this handout for help on making applications.

OPTIONAL

8. Write a paragraph answering this question: "What is the importance of this book to Christian knowledge, life and service?"
9. Look up key people in the book in a concordance and/or Bible dictionary.
10. Look up key cities. (Use a Bible atlas or a Bible dictionary.)

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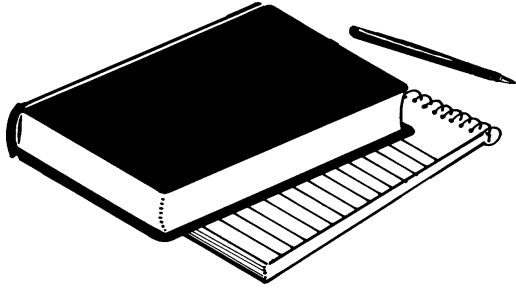
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BOOK SURVEY

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	Time of Book:
	People in Book:
	Places in Book:
Theme of Book:	
Significance of Book:	
Titles	
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Key Verses	
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HOW TO DO ABC BIBLE STUDY

You can use the charts on the following pages or your own paper to record your ABC study.

A- A title

Jot down two or three titles that come to mind as you study, then select the best one or make a composite of them. The title should give the summary of the chapter in the form of a heading.

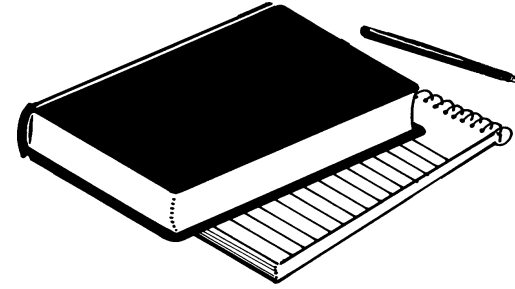
B- Basic Passage

Choose the verse or group of verses (no more than three) which includes the central meaning or is the key to the contents of the passage. This passage should connect with the title.

C- Challenge

As you study the passage ask God to challenge your heart in a personal way from a particular portion of the chapter. As God reveals this to you write out in your own words the corresponding verse(s) from which you are taking your challenge. Then write out how the challenge applies to you and state what you plan to do about it. Make your applications specific (What exactly do I need to do?), measurable (How will I know when I have applied this to my life?), and attainable (Can I finish it this week?).

Examples: Bad: I need to be more loving.
 Good: I will show love to my roommate by making his bed all week.



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Examples: Bad: I need to be more loving.
 Good: I will show love to my roommate by making his bed all week.

Types of Application:

- S- Is there a **sin** I need to avoid, confess or make right?
- P- Is there a **promise** God makes in this passage that I can ask Him to do for me?
- E- What **examples** are there to follow? Not to follow? Why?
- C- Are there any **commands** I need to obey?
- K- Is there any **knowledge** I received about God or found out I need to research?

D- Difficulties

Write down the number of the verse or verses that raise any questions in your mind as you study the passage. Then write out what specific question(s) you have about the verse. If time permits research the answer(s) to some of these questions.

E- Essence

Write out a summary or brief condensation of the passage. Summarize all parts of the passage equally not giving too much space to one part. One way to do this is to write one sentence in a rough draft for each successive thought in the passage, using your own words instead of the words of the text. Then condense your summary into fewer words, combining your sentences and making them shorter. You should average two to eight words per verse.

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C Challenge _____

Verse of the Challenge: _____

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ABC BIBLE STUDY

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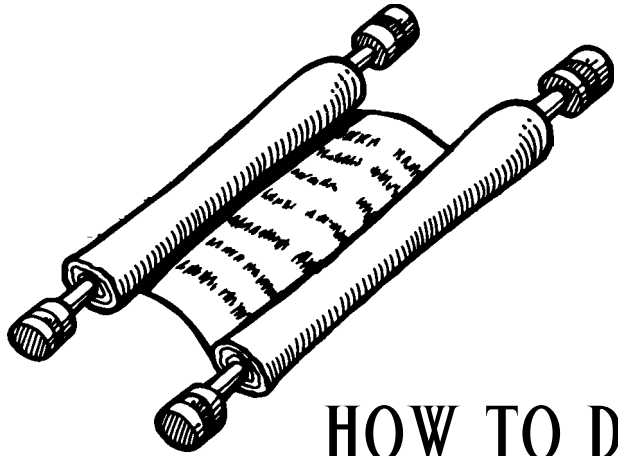
Truth of the Challenge: _____

Personal Application of the Challenge: _____

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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

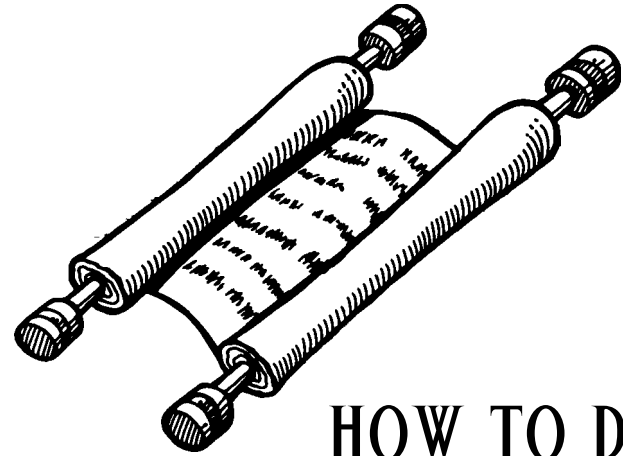
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HOW TO DO A BOOK SUMMARY

You can use the chart on the following page or your own paper to record your insights on the book summary.

1. Review your Book Survey.
2. Reread the book one to three times.
3. List chapter titles and key verse for book. Revise if necessary.
4. Write out what you believe to be the theme of the book and its significance for today.
5. Outline or summarize the book using your chapter outline as a guide. Do not necessarily limit yourself to chapter divisions. A good outline has 2-4 main divisions.
6. List your applications.
7. Reread the book, comparing your chapter titles and your outline.



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OPTIONAL

9. List major lessons and challenges from the book.
10. Memorize book title, chapter titles, and key verse(s).
11. Mark sections that would be especially helpful in teaching or helping someone else. You can make a diagram, an outline, or an illustration to help communicate the truth of these key passages.
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	Key Verse:
	Theme of Book:
	Significance of Book:
Titles	
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Book Outline and/or Summary	
Applications	

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