

GRACE for Getting Back in the Race

Lesson One • Hosea 11

Runners Stumbling, God Loving

A Race of Endurance

Every Christ-follower is like a RUNNER in a race that requires endurance until you finish the race and reach the goal.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1 NKJV

Realities of Running in the Race:

- We often STUMBLE in the race due to sin, and may begin to turn away from the Lord. *Hosea 5:4-5; 14:1*
- This turning away from the Lord is called BACKSLIDING, a season of increasing sin and decreasing obedience. *Hosea 11:7*
- But with God's GRACE we can get back in the race and finish it well. *Hosea 14:4*

Grace for Getting Back in the Race

1. We Are Bent on BACKSLIDING from God!

My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, none at all exalt Him. Hosea 11:7 NKJV

Why Do We Backslide from God?

We are prone to the sin of IDOLATRY.

Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute's wages on all threshing floors. Hosea 9:1 ESV

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Hosea 11:1-2 ESV

2. God Is Relentless in LOVING Us No Matter What!

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him." Hosea 14:4 NKJV

God's Relentless Love:

- God's PAST love is relentless. *Hosea 11:1-4*
- God's FUTURE love is relentless. *Hosea 11:10-11*
- God's PRESENT love is relentless. *Hosea 11:5-9; Luke 15:11-32*

Why Would God Love You This Much?

Because God is GOD, and He is relentless in His Love for you.

I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror. Hosea 11:9 NKJV

"God does not accept you just as you are; He loves you despite how you are. This love is much, much, much better than unconditional! Perhaps we could call it 'contra-conditional' love. Contrary to what you deserve, He loves you." ~David Powlison

Our Response to God's Relentless Love

RETURN to the Lord.

So you, by the help of your God, return. Hosea 12:6 NKJV

O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Hosea 14:1 NKJV