GOD HEARS AND RESTORES
Lesson 2:
The Power of Love

This includes:
1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW
In this lesson, your students will learn that God’s love for us is so strong that nothing we do could make him angry with us forever. In the midst of our sin toward God, his desire is not to hold our sin against us but for us to turn to him so that he can forgive us and heal us.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
1. WHAT: God does not stay angry forever, and his love for us has no limits despite our sin toward him.
2. WHY: Sometimes teenagers believe that they have sinned too much to be forgiven and restored by God. It’s important for them to learn that while their sin grieves God, his nature is to love them not condemn them when they turn to him.
3. HOW: Students will consider how they can feel less reluctance to face God and be more apt to ask his forgiveness after discussing how God’s heart is to restore them, not condemn them.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
Hosea 14:1-9

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE
Psalm 103:8-18

TEACHING PREP
The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you’ll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.


Hosea was a prophet of God who was sent to the Israelites to deliver bad news. The people of Israel had become complacent in their position before God. Even though they
had disregarded every commandment that God had given to them when he rescued them from captivity, they had no fear of being corrected or punished for their sinful behavior. They had become depraved in their sin against God and had no shame or sorrow. They continued the ceremony of worshipping God while also erecting so many altars to their idols that they could be seen on every major road throughout their land.

God gave the Israelites a living picture of their adultery through the marriage of Hosea. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute who continuously ran away from him for other lovers. Hosea retrieved his wife and took her back numerous times, but she refused to accept his love. In the same way, even though Israel had been faithless and had betrayed God over and over again, God still loved Israel.

Hosea’s message to the Israelites was about God’s anger because of their willful unfaithfulness toward him. They mocked God for not punishing them in their sin, and now God would be sending judgment. But throughout the book of Hosea, God agonizes over having to punish the Israelites for their sin. God recounts how he chose them and set them apart as his people. God tells them of his love for them and begs them to ask forgiveness and turn back to him. God lets them know that if they ask for forgiveness, he will not stay angry forever. God wants them to know his limitless love.

In the same way that Hosea loved his unfaithful wife, God loved Israel and loves us. God does not want anything to prevent us from accepting the forgiveness he has to offer. Through Hosea, God assures us that even though our sin has made him angry, he will not stay angry forever because he loves us. God’s overwhelming desire is for us to come back to him and ask for forgiveness so that he can heal us. The depth of God’s love for us is boundless, and he wants nothing else than to show us his love.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We’ve provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What’s the limit of God’s love? Come to small group to find out!

- Can you make God so angry that he won’t forgive you? Discover the truth this week when the group meets.
Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

This week in small group, we explored the simple truth from Scripture that God hears us and restores us. We learned from Hosea 14:1-4 that even though God gets angry when we sin, his anger does not last forever. God sees how our sins have brought us down, and he wants us to come to him and be restored. It’s important to reinforce with your teenager that God’s love is not limited by our sin. God is always ready to forgive us and bring us back into relationship with him no matter what we have done.

Here are some discussion starters that might help you to open a dialogue with your teenager about this topic:

- In your opinion, what would be an unforgiveable sin?
- What do you think is the purpose of a conscience?
- If God can heal and forgive the most horrible of sins, what makes people so reluctant to turn to him?
- How do you know if God loves you?

Use these questions in the normal course of conversation when you have quiet moments with your teenager. Ask their opinion and listen to their response. If you disagree with their opinion, avoid criticism but instead guide them by giving your own opinions so that they can begin to work through their faith for themselves. Your gentle guidance will point them toward the truth.

Remember, you are the most important influence on your teenager’s life. Please let us know if there is any way we can support you in your ministry to your teenager this week!
Lesson 2: The Power of Love

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED (OPTIONAL)
For an activity later in the lesson, you will need paper, a glass of water with food coloring in it, pens or pencils, and straws.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then ASK:

- Have you ever done something that you knew would get you into trouble with your parents, but you did it anyway? What was it, and how did your parents react? [NOTE: Be prepared to share a personal story with your group—particularly if students are reluctant to share at first.]
- When your parents discipline you, how long does it usually take for them to not be angry with you anymore?
- What are some similarities and some differences between the way loving parents discipline their kids and the way God lovingly disciplines us?

TEACHING GUIDE

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) God does not stay angry forever, (2) God wants to heal us of our sin, and (3) God’s love has no limits.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

LEADER TIP
Read Hosea 14:1-9 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

LEADER TIP
SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Hosea was a man who was given a message by God to tell the Israelites the harsh truth about their behavior. Their sin against God had become so brazen and shameless that he was furiously angry with them. But despite the anger that God felt toward their behavior, he also wanted Hosea to communicate a message to his people.
1. God does not stay angry forever

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The people living in the time of Hosea didn’t care what God thought about their behavior. They knew that they were his chosen people, set apart to be holy, but they continued to sin and do the very things that God told them not to do over and over again.

**ASK:**
- When somebody does you wrong, how easy is it for you to forgive that person? How long does it usually take for you to get over it?
- Look at verse 4. What is the message God wanted his people to know?
- If someone kept doing the same wrong thing to you over and over again, at what point would you walk away from the relationship?
- Do you think that God has a right to be angry when people sin? Why or why not?
- In the verses we read, what does God say about his anger?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Make no mistake; God does get very angry when we sin, but he does not stay angry with us forever. God’s ultimate desire is for us to come back to him. God sees that our sins have brought us down, and he wants to heal us and forgive us.

2. God wants to heal us of our sin

**ASK:**
- What are some things that God cannot heal—or is there anything he can’t heal?
- Look at verse 1. What does God see about sin’s affect on us that we may not be able to see in ourselves?
- Look at verses 2 and 4. Name something that you think is too heinous for God to forgive. What does the Bible say about God’s capacity to forgive?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Sin can be fun. A lot of people would rather “laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints,” as Billy Joel wrote in a song many years ago. But God sees what sin does to us and to our future—sin has consequences. God is motivated by a desire to not see the creation he loves—you—get destroyed by sin.
Because God loves you, he wants to forgive you no matter what you have done so that your life will not be decimated by sin.

3. God’s love has no limits

**EXPERIENCE:** You will need paper, a glass of water with food coloring in it, pens or pencils, and straws. You can do this activity as a group or have each student do his or her own.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Take a piece of paper and draw a circle in the middle of it. Around the edges of the circle, write words or draw pictures of some things that would be really hard for someone to forgive. Now take a straw and fill it with colored water. Try to completely wet the inside of the circle without any colored water crossing over the boundaries of the circle.

**ASK:**
- What makes it impossible to contain the water within the circle?
- How is this activity like God’s love for us?
- What is the most difficult part of apologizing to someone?
- How would your actions change if you knew that your apology would always be accepted?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** God’s love for us cannot be limited by our sinfulness. No matter what we have done, he wants us to bring it to him so that he can forgive us. God knows how much our sin has brought us down and everything he does is motivated by love. When God forgives us, his anger is gone forever. God never holds a grudge.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]**
Ask a student volunteer to read Psalm 103:8-18. Take some time to list the “nature of God’s anger” with the group—God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, full of love, and so on.

**ASK:**
- How does what the Bible says about God’s anger match with what people in our culture believe about God’s anger?
• How do these verses make you feel about God’s personality when talking about anger, sin, and forgiveness?

• What do you think is God’s primary goal when he becomes angry at our sin?

APPLICATION
Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

ASK:
• If you asked your friends to describe God’s anger, what would they say? Why?

• If you were designing a meme or a piece of art that represented God’s anger, what would it look like?

• Where in your life do you most need a demonstration of God’s love? How can I pray with you about this?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

SUMMARY
End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]
Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).