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Keep Commitments

Hosea 1:1—2:1; 3

Commitment takes effort. We may dream of chasing the next horizon with no more hindrance than a backpack, but reality makes that vision short-term. Whether it's the implied commitment to attend classes (because your parents paid the bills) or the lifelong struggle to stay in a difficult marriage, commitment is work. A life of integrity means commitments—some of our choosing and some just the baggage of our circumstances.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What commitments are a part of your life? Each person should name one, making sure that it is different from any commitments mentioned by others in the group. On a scale of one to ten, rate yourself on how well you keep that commitment—making any explanations you wish.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Reflect on God's commitment to you—and yours to him. Consider several specific ways that God has expressed his commitment to you. Pray, thanking him for his faithfulness. Invite God to help you examine ways you can express your commitment to him in return.

God instructed the prophet Hosea to make what seemed like an absurd commitment. *Read Hosea 1:2—2:1.*

1. If you were a counselor, what chance of success would you give this marriage? Why?

2. What connections did God make between the task he assigned to Hosea and the condition of the nation Hosea represented (1:2-4)?

3. Notice the names that God gave to each of Hosea's children. What tragedy did each name symbolize? (Look for "because" and "for" in verses 4-9.)

4. In spite of the promised losses, God also offers relief. What hope do you find here (vv. 1:7, 10-12; 2:1)?

5. What do these verses suggest about God's commitment to his people?

6. What is an experience that has made you aware of God's commitment to you?

7. Hosea 2 is a litany of the sins of Gomer and Israel, and God's promise to bring them back to himself. *Read Hosea 3.* In what ways did God ask Hosea to express his marriage commitment to Gomer?

8. In view of the information in this passage, what would make Hosea's task difficult?

9. When have you made a commitment that was hard to keep?

10. What is God saying about himself in these early chapters of Hosea?

11. How might you begin to imitate God in one of your commitments?

Pray, thanking God for ways that he has shown his faithfulness to you.

Now or Later

Prayerfully reflect on your own commitments. Focus on a commitment that you have kept—and one that you did not. Pray about these, confessing sin if appropriate, asking help as needed. Ask God to begin to mold you into a person of integrity.

Meditate phrase by phrase on the psalm below. Talk to God about your thoughts.

Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him and he will do this:

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,

the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:5-6)