

Reading Group Guide for
Love in a Broken Vessel: A Novel
by Mesu Andrews
(Contains spoilers!)

1. What emotions were stirred in Hosea when he experiences Yahweh's calling in the wind? How are those emotions complicated and/or changed by the command to marry a prostitute?
2. What people and circumstances does Yahweh use in Hosea's life to prepare him for his calling?
3. When does Hosea realize Gomer is the prostitute Yahweh intends for him to marry, and how does their childhood friendship change his attitude toward the call?
4. When Gomer is arrested in Samaria, Hosea's determination wanes, and he is ready to return to Tekoa without fulfilling Yahweh's call. What restores his confidence and gives him renewed courage to move forward in Yahweh's direction? How can we look for similar encouragement in our lives?
5. As Hosea, Gomer, Jonah, and Isaiah approach Jerusalem, they pass an Asherah pole, and Gomer asks why Yahweh threatens Israel's destruction and leaves Judah undisciplined. How does Hosea explain the balance of Yahweh's mercy and justice, His jealousy and forgiveness? How can we as followers of Christ show that God requires obedience and yet loves unconditionally?
6. Driven by fear after witnessing Yahweh's judgment on Uzziah, Gomer buys an idol in Jerusalem's marketplace, returning to a god she knows and trusts. In what ways—both positive and negative—does Uzziah react to his fear? In what ways—both positive and negative—do Hosea, Jonah, and Isaiah react to their fears?
7. There are many forms and expressions of love (giving and receiving) throughout the story—Yahweh's, Yuval's, Hosea's, Gomer's. How much is love derived from or molded by one's environment?
8. In what ways does King Uzziah mature in his relationship with Yahweh, and in what ways does he remain flawed?
9. When Hosea can't find anyone to talk to about Gomer's unfaithfulness, he is driven to pour out his heart to Yahweh. Why do you think God is sometimes our last resort in times of desperation?

10. Gomer's discontent in Tekoa drives her to give up everything and everyone who had saved and loved her. What do you think she expects to achieve by leaving? What do we expect to gain when we knowingly do something wrong?
11. After Hosea prophesies Yahweh's name for Gomer's daughter—Lo-Ruhamah ("Not Loved")—he asks the question, "If Yahweh no longer loves Israel and no longer forgives them, can I refuse to love and forgive?" Micah answers, "Can a man's heart be as pure as Yahweh's? Can you refuse to love without sinning? Can you refuse to forgive without becoming bitter?" What do you think? Can a human being be released from the responsibility to love and forgive another human being? Why or why not?
12. What makes Gomer willing to sacrifice herself for Hosea in Menahem's camp when her whole life had been about survival?
13. Hosea is confused when Yahweh's commands seem to contradict—first calling him to marry Gomer, then release her, and then buy her back. How does Hosea deal with that confusion? How can we see God's seemingly contradictory commands as shifts in direction rather than changes in ultimate destination?
14. Amoz describes how a broken vessel could be made valuable again: "The residual scarring of the cracks added a new dimension to its beauty." How does Amoz's comment describe the restored lives of God's people today?



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