

10 A HOPEFUL MESSAGE

KEY TEXT: HOSEA 14:1-9

CENTRAL truth

God's insight, wisdom, and motives are always perfect, and He is able to work all things for the good of those who love Him (see Rom. 8:28). We may not always like what He has to do to get our attention, but we always benefit when we cooperate. God is love, and His interaction with us is characterized by His love even when we can't see or appreciate it. **God forgives everyone who repents.**

key question

Why do you think God lets us choose whether or not we will love and obey Him? Why doesn't He just use His power to make us obey?

God wants to receive the praise and recognition He deserves for being who He is and for doing what He has done, and He gets this partially through us. When we choose to put our faith in Jesus, we tell the world that God is love, that He rescued the world from sin, and that He can be trusted. When we continue to love Him through our obedience, we tell the world that He deserves absolute devotion in return for His generous gift of Jesus. If God simply made people obey, He would rob Himself of the glory our choosing Him affords.

keep in mind

Many teens have trouble receiving discipline, either because they either don't see the need or because the process is painful for them. As a result, they may struggle to see God's punishment of Israel as an act of love, especially since faithful Israelites would have to go through exile along with the unfaithful and people would die without seeing Israel restored.

Remind students that God can be trusted even when His ways don't make sense to us. We don't understand Him because we don't share His eternal purposes or perspective, so we often misinterpret events. Remind students that when God disciplines us, it is always for our good and so we can share in His holiness. Discipline is often painful, but it yields peace and righteousness for us in the end (see Heb. 12:11).

application

How can we make sure we are walking in the ways of the Lord?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Students should understand that God is always love and His ways are always best (see 1 John. 4:8), even when it doesn't feel like it. They should know that suffering is caused by sin, but discipline is evidence that God loves them and wants good things for them (see Heb. 12:11).

FOR THE LEADER: Help students view discipline as good and necessary and evidence that God loves them even at their worst. Encourage students who might be struggling with the consequences of their sin to see God move and work things out for their good.

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