

Transactional

Hosea and moving from a transaction to a true relationship with God

A transactional relationship values what someone can provide more than the person themselves.

MESSAGE OVERVIEW

It hurts when someone only reaches out because they need money, a ride, or a favor. Hosea shows that we can approach God the same way: wanting His help, protection, or blessings without truly wanting Him. This message asks us to examine our motives and move from treating faith like an exchange to building a relationship rooted in love and trust.

THE THREE QUESTIONS

- What does a transactional relationship with God look like?
- Why do we keep treating God that way?
- How do we move from transactional to relational?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Asking God for help is not the problem; only wanting God when we need help is.
- Obedience becomes transactional when we use it to make God owe us.
- Transactions give us formulas, but relationships require trust.
- Relational faith comes without an agenda, obeys without a bargain, and stays without a guarantee.
- God does not offer us a deal; He loves freely and invites us home.

CORE SCRIPTURES

Hosea 1:2-3 | Hosea 2:5, 8 | Hosea 6:4, 6 | Hosea 3:1-2 | Hosea 14:4

Hosea's Marriage Became the Message.

Hosea spoke to the northern kingdom of Israel during a season of outward success and deep spiritual unfaithfulness. Israel was prosperous, but the people credited idols for their provision and trusted foreign nations for protection. They claimed to belong to God while giving their loyalty to whatever seemed most useful.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL?

- Israel was wealthy, powerful, and successful.
- Success made the people feel secure without God.
- They pursued idols for prosperity and other nations for protection.
- Their loyalty followed whatever appeared most useful in the moment.

HOSEA 1:2-3

Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord... So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim.

THE LIVING PICTURE

HOSEA AND GOMER

Hosea remained committed while Gomer's unfaithfulness wounded their marriage. His experience made Israel's spiritual betrayal visible and personal.

GOD AND ISRAEL

God remained faithful while Israel pursued idols, nations, and anything else it believed could provide more.

GOMER PICTURED ISRAEL. HOSEA PICTURED GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE.

WHY THIS STORY MATTERS

Sin is not only breaking a rule; it is betraying a relationship. Hosea helps us feel the pain of wanting God's gifts while giving our love, trust, and credit to something else.

QUESTION 1

What Does a Transactional Relationship With God Look Like?

Transactional faith does not always look openly rebellious. It can hide inside normal prayers and religious behavior.

GOD THE CONVENIENT GENIE

- We pray intensely when a test, game, relationship, or crisis is approaching.
- We promise God that we will change if He gives us the outcome we want.
- When the crisis passes, our interest in God disappears with it.

ASKING GOD FOR HELP ISN'T THE PROBLEM. ONLY WANTING GOD WHEN WE NEED HELP IS.

HOSEA 2:5, 8

She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water...' She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil...

THE 'YOU OWE ME' MENTALITY

- 'God, I have been going to church.'
- 'I stopped doing what You told me to stop.'
- 'I have been praying and trying to be good.'
- 'So why haven't You given me what I asked for?'

HOSEA 6:4, 6

Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears... For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

WHEN OBEDIENCE BECOMES MORE ABOUT RECEIVING THAN SURRENDERING, WE'VE LOST THE POINT.

QUESTION 2

Why Do We Keep Treating God That Way?

We want a formula. A formula feels predictable: if I do the right thing, I should receive the result I expect.

WE WANT $A + B = C$

- 'If I pray enough, God will say yes.'
- 'If I behave, nothing bad should happen.'
- 'If I give something up, God should reward me.'
- 'If I follow God, my life should go according to plan.'

A TRANSACTION GIVES ME A FORMULA. A RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES TRUST.

THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL

A transaction tells us what to pay and what to expect in return. Relating to God is different. We may ask boldly and obey faithfully, but we cannot control God's timing or force a particular outcome. Faith trusts His character when the entire path is not visible.

THE INDIANA JONES PICTURE

In *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, Indy reaches a chasm and cannot see the bridge from where he stands. He takes the next step because he trusts the instructions he has been given. Biblical faith is not trust without evidence; it is moving forward because God's character and Word are trustworthy.

TRANSACTIONAL THINKING

'God, show me the entire plan, guarantee the outcome, and then I will follow.'

RELATIONAL TRUST

'God, I cannot see everything ahead, but I know who You are, so I will take the next faithful step.'

HEART CHECK

- Does disappointment with an answer make me withdraw from God?
- Do I view prayer or obedience as a way to control what happens next?
- Can I trust God's character when I cannot understand His plan?

TRANSACTIONS NEED GUARANTEES. TRUST TAKES THE NEXT STEP.

How Do We Move From Transactional to Relational?

HOSEA 3:1-2

Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress... So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.

Hosea pursued his wife because he loved her, not because she could benefit him. The passage does not explain the exact circumstances behind the payment, but the point is clear: faithful love moved toward someone who had walked away.

1. COME WITHOUT AN AGENDA

- Pray when nothing is going wrong.
- Thank God without adding another request.
- Spend time with God to know Him, not only to get an answer.

2. OBEY WITHOUT A BARGAIN

- Stop making promises designed to pressure God into saying yes.
- Obey because God's way is good, not because obedience puts Him in your debt.
- Trust says, 'God, I will follow.' Entitlement says, 'God, You owe me.'

3. STAY WITHOUT A GUARANTEE

- God may say yes, no, or wait.
- The outcome may not make sense, but God's character has not changed.
- Our love for God cannot depend on getting our way.

HOSEA 14:4

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.

GOD ISN'T OFFERING US A DEAL. HE'S INVITING US HOME.

Remember It. Talk About It. Live It.

FLASHCARDS

What is a transactional relationship?

A relationship centered on what someone can provide rather than genuinely valuing the person.

What are two signs of transactional faith?

Treating God like a convenient genie and believing our obedience makes Him owe us.

Why do we prefer a formula?

It gives us the illusion that we can control God, His timing, and the outcome.

What does a relationship require?

Trust in God's character, especially when we cannot see the entire path.

How do we become more relational?

Come without an agenda, obey without a bargain, and stay without a guarantee.

How does God love His people?

Freely. His love is not a deal we purchase through religious performance.

STUDENT / SMALL-GROUP QUESTIONS

- Which is more familiar to you: the convenient-genie mentality or the 'You owe me' mentality?
- How can you tell when obedience has become a bargain instead of surrender?
- What unanswered prayer or uncertain situation is currently asking you to trust God's character?
- Which step do you most need to practice: coming without an agenda, obeying without a bargain, or staying without a guarantee?

LEADER + PARENT FOLLOW-UP

- Ask: 'When are you most likely to pray or seek God?' Listen without shaming the student.
- Help the student build one small rhythm with God that is not attached to a crisis or desired result.
- Clarify that asking God for help is biblical; the goal is relationship, not silence about our needs.
- Remind them that prayer does not purchase salvation or favor. Jesus saves by grace, and prayer expresses faith and surrender.

COME WITHOUT AN AGENDA. OBEY WITHOUT A BARGAIN. STAY WITHOUT A GUARANTEE.

PRAYER

Jesus, forgive me for the ways I have treated You like a means to an end. Thank You for loving me freely, before I could earn or repay anything. Holy Spirit, teach me to seek God for who He is, obey without keeping score, and remain faithful when I cannot control the outcome. Help me move from transaction to relationship and trust Your character one step at a time. Amen.