

LifeWay Bible Studies for Life Series for February 27: God loves to welcome us home

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Do you know what it means to be satisfied? Webster says to be satisfied is to supply fully with what is desired, expected or needed. To please; gratify. To free from doubt or anxiety; convince. To give what is due.

The Hebrew word for “satisfy” means the same thing. Take a moment to see what God says about his people in Hosea 13:6. He fed them, they were satisfied and then they became proud.

How satisfied are you with your walk with Christ? Being satisfied is a dangerous place to be; it leads to apathy and pride. It also makes you lazy and dulls you to what’s going on around you because you become only concerned with you being satisfied and no one else.

And what about the two way street our faith is supposed to be. We always are ready to receive all we think we are due—that we are entitled to—from God, but isn’t he due something as well? Being satisfied can cause us to live within a bubble. Christianity should give us great comfort, and yet it should also stir within you a certain level of discomfort. How—or will—you go about finding the healthy tension that exists between these two?

The people of Hosea’s time were experiencing the exact same thing we as Christians, experience today, and in that time, God encourages them to return to him. Hosea tells the people to approach God and say “receive us graciously.” This is to let God know they know who he is—the God of grace. He loves it when his people acknowledge him for who he is.

Throughout Scripture we see an ongoing theme of God asking—even begging—his children to return to him. The writer of Hebrews encourages readers to approach the throne of grace with confidence, so we can receive mercy and find grace in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

If you want to find mercy and grace, you have to go to God for it, because it all comes from him. Sure, you and I can try and find it in other people and things, but they will never satisfy what you're looking for. And although you may feel like you've found mercy and grace somewhere besides God, you haven't. You're being lied to and lying to yourself. Return to God.

But Hosea isn't done. He also tells the people to offer God the fruit of your lips. What does he mean? Essentially that they would go to God with praise and admiration that is so powerful and deep inside them that it pours out of their mouths as adoration, telling God how great he is.

When was the last time you went to God for the sole purpose of telling him how wonderful he is? I wonder at times why we don't have worship services set aside for the sole purpose of worship. I mean, they're called "worship services" right?

But Hosea still isn't done. When God's people return to him with the hope of finding grace, telling God how great he is, they (we) need to acknowledge nothing in the world can save us, only God. Oh sure, they tried it with a big nation like Assyria and war horses and power and it just didn't work. I'm sure it seemed like a good idea to them at the time but what they didn't realize was that God was not in those things.

What do we look for salvation in our own times? Our country? Our ability and technology as a world power? It's easy to see how we are very much like our forefathers in the faith isn't it? And yet, God continues to say the same thing to us as he did to them back then. "Return to me. Only in me will you find what you're looking for and be loved."

Hear God's response to their pleas. Look at God's "I will" statements in verses 4 and 5: "I will heal you and love you; I will refresh you and give you strength."

Understand that God is waiting for us to do our part; and when we do, he will do his part. However, he won't do his part unless we do ours.

So there we go, we know what it takes to make it happen. But will we do it? Think of it like this, we have seen and read the very simple fact that for the most part losing weight is about simple math—addition and subtraction. When you consume more calories than you burn throughout the day, your body will store the leftovers. If you want to lose weight, you burn more calories than you consume.

We know this, it's a common fact. However, just knowing it doesn't cause fat to fall off our bodies. If only it were that simple! We have to move and change our minds and habits on some things.

Looking to be fruitful in your life? It comes from God and he says so in verse 8. I have to remember that if I want to be more productive, effective and fruitful in my life, it starts with God.