

RETURN TO LOVE AND JUSTICE

Measure Up !

Introduction

Does prosperity equal righteousness ? Does God use prosperity as a standard for judging people and society ? The people in the northern kingdom of Israel bragged about their "self attained" riches and wealth. But they were measuring their success using the wrong standards.

During this lesson, you will:

- **Compare** prosperity as a worldly goal with the godly virtues of love and justice
- **Regret** the occasions where we have made material prosperity a greedy, covetous goal
- **Practice** love and justice as key virtues

Scripture

Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14 (KJV)

Devotional Reading:
Deuteronomy 8:11-20 (KJV)

About Today's Lesson...

A love story depicted through promiscuity and through a metaphor of a rebellious child - such is the case within the book of Hosea. The people in the northern kingdom of Israel had strayed away from God and felt that their prosperity was a product of their own successes. They believed that God's help was not needed. But, like so many times before, God used one of His prophets to try and steer the people back to a right relationship with Him.

The people of the northern kingdom used many deceitful practices to attain their prosperous life styles. They had been unfaithful to God through their worship practices, by oppressing the poor, and through their unapproved relationships with Assyria and Egypt. But God's deep compassion and love for His people would not allow Him to destroy them. God was instead insistent that His people return to love and justice.

Love AND justice - we need both. For without justice, people are left in their sins. And without love, people are driven away from God due to lack of heart. At the end of the day, we need to measure up to God's virtuous standards and avoid prosperity gained through unrighteous means.

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