

# Devotional Calendar

## MAY 2020

### Unit III. Called to God's Work of Justice

**3rd**

**Meditate:** Psalm 47

**Listen:** "Mighty God" by Deitrick Haddon

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OneDIq65eNg)

[watch?v=OneDIq65eNg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OneDIq65eNg)

**Pray:** Tell the Lord that He Is an Awesome King and that You Praise His Holy Name



**17th**

**Meditate:** Psalm 86:1-13

**Listen:** "Forgive Me, Lord (It's Me Again)" by J. Moss

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDwXg7nVlyk)

[watch?v=YDwXg7nVlyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDwXg7nVlyk)

**Pray:** Ask the Father to Search You and to Forgive You



**10th**

**Meditate:** Zephaniah 8:18-23

**Listen:** "Change Me" by Tamela Mann

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlgLJEHF30k)

[watch?v=dlgLJEHF30k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlgLJEHF30k)

**Pray:** Let the Lord Know that You Give Him Your Hands to Use to Do His Holy Will



**24th**

**Meditate:** Psalm 72:1-17

**Listen:** "Take Away" by Yolanda Adams

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afJ8u0kCFLs)

[watch?v=afJ8u0kCFLs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afJ8u0kCFLs)

**Pray:** Plead with the Lord to Give You a Heart of Compassion for Others



## How to Do a Devotional

Daily devotionals are important to help you grow in your relationship with God. Pray, meditate, and read the Word of God, and you will grow spiritually. Devote ten minutes at the beginning of your day to clear your mind and heart and prepare to receive God. Daily devotions will prepare you for any obstacles that may come your way. Take time each morning to hear from God. Even Jesus used time in the morning to be with God. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35, NIV).

**31st**

**Meditate:** Deuteronomy 8:11-20

**Listen:** "We Offer Praise" by Rodnie Bryant and the Christian Community Mass Choir

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7inK80mS64)

[watch?v=j7inK80mS64](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7inK80mS64)

**Pray:** Tell the Lord that You Will Never Forget His Goodness and Mercy



Background Scripture: Hosea 11–12 • Print Passage: Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14  
KEY VERSE: You must return to your God. (Hosea 12:6a)



Tia's parents both accepted faculty appointments at a university in New Mexico. It has been months since Tia and her family have been to church. When they lived in Tennessee, Tia's family always went to church. During their first month in New Mexico, they visited a few churches and did not feel welcomed. Since then, Tia's family has spent most of their weekends visiting tourist attractions across the state.

Living in New Mexico is much different from living in Tennessee. There are very few African Americans in their neighborhood. The kids in the neighborhood are not very friendly

to Tia or her brother, and Tia's classmates tease her because of her southern accent. Also, Tia's mom and dad experienced difficulty adjusting to the culture of campus life. The adjustment to their new life was harder than they ever dreamed it would be.

During dinner last week, Tia's father said that the move to New Mexico had been harder than any of them expected. He gave each family member a few moments to discuss their feelings about life in New Mexico. Tia said she missed their church in Tennessee. Tia's mom said she felt that they had made the adjustment harder by putting everything else ahead of worshipping God. Tia's father agreed, and told everyone that

come Sunday, they were going to find a church. Together, the family took turns praying that God would lead them to a church where they could worship and serve Him.

On Saturday, the whole family rode around town with a short list of church names and addresses. They decided to visit the small Baptist church near the university. The next day, when they entered the sanctuary, it immediately felt like home. The people were warm and friendly, the choir was great, and the preaching was powerful.

What do you think could have happened if the family had continued putting their weekend getaway trips ahead of worshipping God?



## WORD UP

### Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. 2 But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images."

7 "My people are determined to turn from me. Even though they call me God Most High, I will by no means exalt them. 8 How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. 9 I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man—the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities. 10 They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west."

1 Ephraim feeds on the wind; he pursues the east wind all day and multiplies lies and violence. He makes a treaty with Assyria and sends olive oil to Egypt. 2 The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds.

6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always. 7 The merchant uses dishonest scales and loves to defraud. 8 Ephraim boasts, "I am very rich; I have become wealthy. With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or sin." 9 "I have been the LORD your God ever since you came out of Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of your appointed festivals. 10 I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them." 11 Is Gilead wicked? Its people are worthless! Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal? Their altars will be like piles of stones on a plowed field. 12 Jacob fled to the country of Aram; Israel served to get a wife, and to pay for her he tended sheep. 13 The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him. 14 But Ephraim has aroused his bitter anger; his Lord will leave on him the guilt of his bloodshed and will repay him for his contempt.



The story of Hosea reminds us of God's love for those who refuse to obey Him. God loved Israel, even though the nation chose to be stubborn and rebel against His commandments. God never stops loving His people.

The prophet Hosea called Israel to live by two principles—love and justice. These principles are the foundation of God's character; and God expects His people to live by both. Some people are so loving that they make excuses for those who do wrong. And, some are so committed to justice and what is fair that they forget love and compassion. God wants us to be balanced—living with love and justice.

In Hosea's time, many people got rich by being dishonest. Some thought that having money meant that they did not need God. Others thought that their wealth was a sign of God's blessings and that it did not matter how they had gotten it. But God

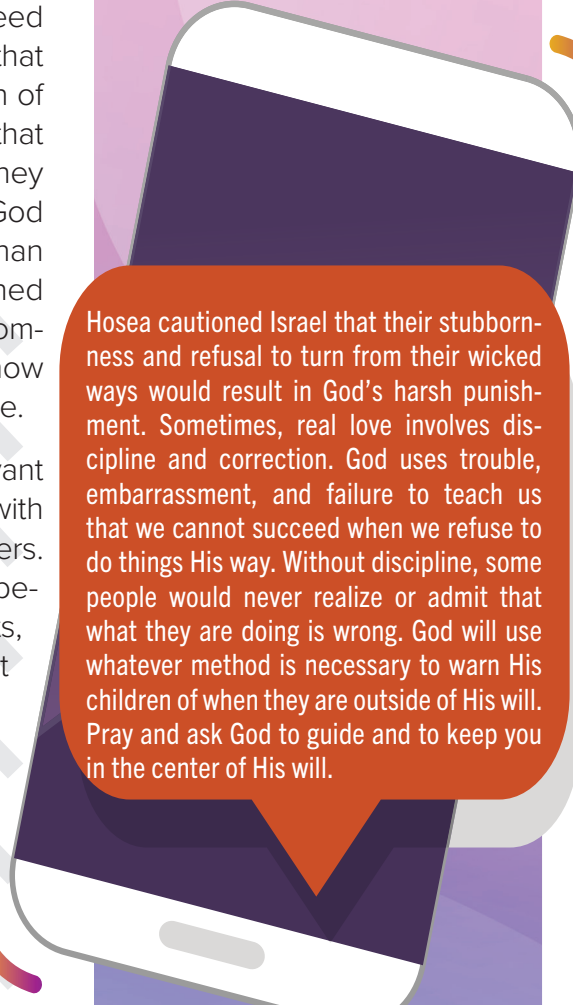
sees success differently than we do. God is more concerned about our character and our commitment to doing right than how much money and stuff we have.

Hosea's message is still relevant today. God expects us to live with love and justice toward others. He still wants willing, loving obedience to His commandments, and He is still concerned about the attitude of our hearts toward others. There may be times when you fall short of what God expects, but never forget that God is willing to restore you if you repent and return to Him.

## INSIDE OUT

Hosea called Israel to return to God. Some people think that returning to God simply means going to church—but returning to God means so much more than that. Returning to God means that you are willing to let go of your own thoughts and desires and do things God's way. When you agree to allow God to control your life, then you have truly returned to Him. Have you totally surrendered your heart to God? What can you do to show God you are serious about your decision to follow Him?

## There's an App for That!



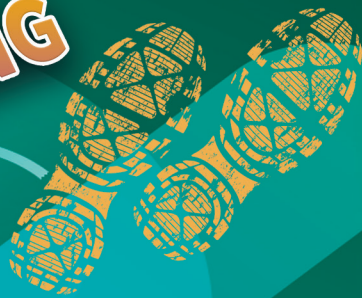
Hosea cautioned Israel that their stubbornness and refusal to turn from their wicked ways would result in God's harsh punishment. Sometimes, real love involves discipline and correction. God uses trouble, embarrassment, and failure to teach us that we cannot succeed when we refuse to do things His way. Without discipline, some people would never realize or admit that what they are doing is wrong. God will use whatever method is necessary to warn His children of when they are outside of His will. Pray and ask God to guide and to keep you in the center of His will.



## Walk Out

There is no way to please God and grow spiritually without obeying God's commandments. Is your life Christ-centered? Are you serious about your relationship with God? You can grow stronger by praying, studying the Bible, worshipping God, and spending time with other committed Christians who encourage you to stay Christ-centered.

# STEPPING OUT!



Are you close to anyone who is unsaved or unchurched? Make a list of people that you can invite to church during the month of June. Set a goal to invite at least three people—but if you can invite more than that, great! Include your friends in the challenge for a healthy competition to see who can invite the most people. Christians should want others to know about God too. Be an ambassador for God. Get busy!

## It's Game Time!

Believers should be thankful for their church. Here's your chance to highlight what you like about your church. On the lines below, and as fast as you can, list the reasons why you love your church. Go!

**Reasons Why I Love My Church:**

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## Media Mission

Use a Bible app or search different Bible resources on the Internet to read different versions of today's Scripture passage, which examines God's love for Israel. Find Scripture interpretations that help you to understand what is being said in the Scripture. God provides many different resources to help believers interpret His Word. Use these resources to increase your biblical knowledge.

# WHAT'S ON YOUR TREE?

by Toy Lisa Mitchell

**IN ONE OF HIS MOST FAMOUS SERMONS, JESUS MARKED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS AND DISCIPLES.** He began by comparing prophets to fruit trees, telling His listeners that they could determine whether a prophet was sincere or false by observing whether his fruit was good or bad. “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit” (Matthew 7:16-18). The “fruit” Jesus spoke of was the persons’ character—the sincerity of their spiritual works, and the connection (or disconnection) between their outward appearance (who they appear to be), and what is in their hearts (who they truly are).

Many people believe that God expects little or nothing from those who say they are Christians, when nothing could be further from the truth. God is a fruit inspector. People may be fooled by a person's outward appearance—nice clothes, good reputation, pretty smile, or church attendance—but, God looks deeper to determine a person's true spiritual character. We can never see what the Lord sees, so His advice to us, in discerning or judging a person's character, is to pay attention to the fruit of his or her life. If you do not give your name, you are constantly introducing yourself to others.

However, people learn who you are through your private conversations, conduct, obedience to God's Word, and treatment of others (especially those who have very little to offer you). And, although there are many types of fruit trees, the Lord only recognizes two types of people, based on their fruit—good or bad. Simply put, your life is either pleasing to God, or it is not. In God's eyes, there is no gray area or in-between levels of character. If you love God and want to please Him, then it is not complicated—your life must bring forth good fruit.

God's expectations on this matter are nothing new. From the days of Adam and Eve to the years of ancient Israel, to the days of the early church, to modern times, God has always expected good fruit from the lives of His people. The problem is that in today's world, producing bad fruit is easy, so that is what most people do. Many produce bad fruit without hesitation or guilt because they do not realize or believe that bad fruit brings bad, far-reaching consequences. It requires no serious self-sacrifice, effort, or spiritual discipline, but the final cost is high, because God rejects bad fruit and punishes sin.

Those who are spiritual carefully consider the importance and consequences of their words and actions. Those who are unspiritual get lost in their feelings or caught up in the moment and fail to think about the impact that their actions may have on other people. God knows your thoughts; He sees who you are and what you say when nobody

else is looking. Take a moment to check your life—what is on your tree? What does God really see when He looks at you?

Do you try to live a fruitful life of honesty, purity, and peace? Are you one to always hurt people with your words? Do you bully others? Do you talk badly about others, betray their trust, spread lies, or go along with those who do? What kind of fruit is on your tree?

By the days of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry to Judah, their northern neighbors in Israel

had already been conquered. In Jeremiah 21:14, the prophet warned

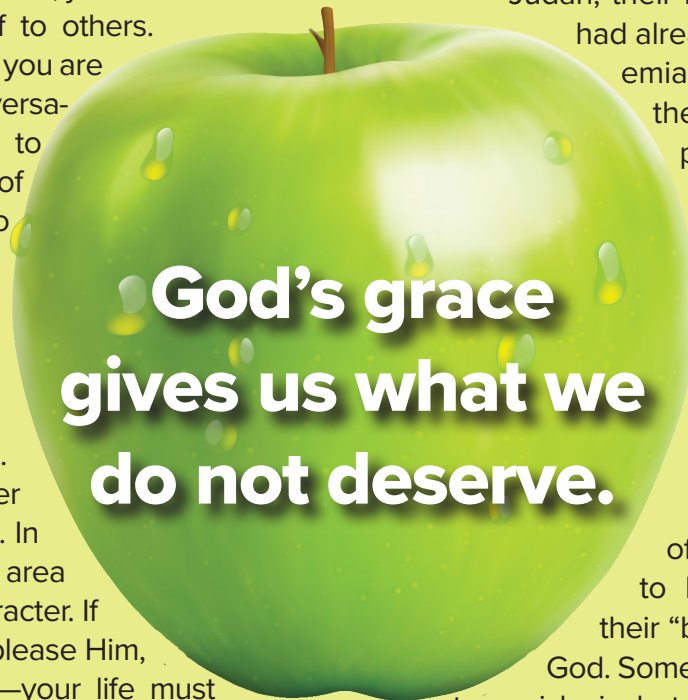
the people of Judah with a simple but powerful message from God: "I will punish you as your deeds deserve," declares the LORD."

God had given Judah chance after chance to do the right thing, but they would not listen or obey. Eventually, the patience of God gave way to the justice of God; and God's people had to bear the consequences of their "bad fruit," or disobedience to

God. Some think that God is too "good" to punish sin, but if God allowed us to sin with-

out accountability or consequence, then His goodness would be compromised, and many people would never turn their hearts back to Him. God is too wise, too loving, too just, and too holy to allow His people to continue operating unchecked in sin and disobedience. God's grace gives us what we do not deserve. God's mercy holds back judgment that we deserve and gives us another chance. But eventually, as with any loving father, God's justice steps in to discipline His children and to train them to do what is right (see Hebrews 12:6-7).

What type of person do you want to be? Are you satisfied to live a life that constantly falls short of God's righteous standards? Do you want a fruitful life that helps others and glorifies God? You are never too young to make a serious commitment to God—that is what God wants. The choice is yours and God is listening for your answer. So, what will it be—good fruit or bad?



**God's grace  
gives us what we  
do not deserve.**