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## **Redeeming Love Introduction**

The movie Redeeming Love brings the story from Francine Rivers' book to life. You may not have realized it, but Francine Rivers' book is based on the book of Hosea in the bible. A movie based on a book, based on the bible; sounds funny, but there is a lot of biblical truth to the book and the movie. I read Redeeming Love a few years ago and absolutely loved it. As is the case with most books that become movies, I do think the book is better than the movie, but the movie does not disappoint! I recommend reading the book, but I will not be covering the difference between the book and the movie. This mini study is designed to pull out the biblical truth between Hosea and the movie.

This is a mini-study so you can complete all right after watching the movie or you could break it up into a 4-day study and focus on the marriage, fall and redemption of the story between Michael and Angel. This can also be good to complete in a small group format or individually. The questions are meant to have you reflect on your faith, marriage and life while pointing out the biblical truth found in the movie.

I just love the story between Michael and Angel. Michael, a Christian farmer seeks a wife, only to find that God tells him to marry a prostitute named Angel. Angel comes from a difficult background and repeatedly leaves and cheats on Michael. Michael however, is forgiving and rescues Angel time and time again. Through this story you can see snippets of how the expectations of Michael are similar to God's, he just wants our love and acceptance. You probably were yelling at the screen for Angel to stay with Michael, but her actions and his forgiveness gives us a glimpse into the story in Hosea and God's love for us.

I hope that after watching the movie, it sparked your interest in knowing more about the book of Hosea and got you into your bible. Hosea is probably a book in the bible that you skipped over as it is pretty much right smack in the middle. It sits between all of the other prophets and can be hard to understand or may seem outdated/ uninteresting. Hopefully, after watching the movie, you know that is not the case. There is a lot of valuable lessons we can learn from the book of Hosea; and that is what this study is designed to do.

Francine took the bible, created the book and Hollywood put it's touch on it. Let's dive in to see what is biblically based truth and what creative liberties were taken.

## **Hosea Background**

The first verse in the first chapter of Hosea gives us an idea of the setting of the book of Hosea.

*Hosea 1:1 (ESV) The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.*

**Time period** – Around 752 B.C. This occurred during the period of the divided kingdom in Israel. There was the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel.

Kings of Judah (Southern kingdom)

- Uzziah
- Jotham
- Ahaz
- Hezekiah

King of Israel (Northern kingdom)

- Jeroboam, son of Joash

**Author of Hosea** – Hosea wrote this book and was a prophet who was appointed to speak on God’s behalf. He lived in Israel and spoke to other Israelites. Hosea means “help” or “helper”. He is considered to be one of the minor prophets as the book of Hosea is shorter compared to the other prophets’ books.

**Main Themes:** The book of Hosea is not really about marriage, it is about God and his people. Theologians have a couple theories about the book of Hosea. The first is that it is an allegory and not actually based on Hosea’s family situation. The other is that Hosea was married to Gomer, and it is a story of forgiveness in the event of adultery. No matter which case it is, the story was used by Francine Rivers and then the creators of the movie to show the power of forgiveness and love.

Although the entire book of Hosea is about God and the people of Israel, the first three chapters of Hosea also talk about Hosea and his family life. Chapters 4-14 are solely focused on God and his relationship with the people of Israel.

### **Action:**

Before we get started, I recommend reading through Hosea 1-3 to get more familiar with the story. The chapters follow the same format of the movie with marriage, fall and redemption.

Below is a summarization of the 14 chapters of Hosea. We will only be focusing on the first three chapters as it relates to The Redeeming Love movie.

Hosea 1 – Hosea’s Wife and Children

Hosea 2 – Israel’s Unfaithfulness Punished

Hosea 3 – Hosea Redeems His Wife

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Hosea 4 – The Lord Accuses Israel

Hosea 5 – Punishment Coming for Israel and Judah

Hosea 6 & 7 – Israel and Judah are Unrepentant

Hosea 8 – Israel will Reap the Whirlwind

Hosea 9 & 10 - The Lord will punish Israel

Hosea 11 – The Lord’s Love for Israel

Hosea 12 – The Lord’s indictment of Israel and Judah

Hosea 13 – The Lord’s Relentless Judgment on Israel

Hosea 14 – A Plea to Return to the Lord

## **Redeeming Love Background**

Now that you have the biblical background, let's go through the background of the movie too!

### **Characters:**

*Michael Hosea* – He is a godly man who is looking for a wife. He asks God for a wife and ends up meeting and marrying Angel. He is a forgiving and patient man who is also a successful farmer.

*Angel* – She is a prostitute in the town of Pair-a-dice. She marries Michael and lives on the farm with him but returns to prostitution as she does not feel worthy of being Michael's wife.

*Paul* – He is Michael's brother-in-law. Paul is a widower who owns land near Michael but unsuccessfully tried to strike it rich with gold mining. He ends up marrying Miriam.

*Miriam* – She comes to the farm with her family and is a good Christian girl. She is friends with Angel and Michael and ultimately marries Paul.

*Duke* – He is the owner of a casino and sells the girls for prostitution. He took Angel when she was a little girl. Eventually she escaped but Duke has been looking for her ever since.

**Setting:** The movie takes place in California in a town called Pair-a-dice. Part of the movie takes place in the town at a brothel where Angel is a prostitute. The other half of the movie takes place on Michael's farm outside of Pair-a-dice.

**Time Period:** The movie takes place during the gold rush in the mid-1800's. This was a time when people moved west in hopes of finding gold and striking it rich. The town in the movie, Pair-a-dice, is a gold mining town with most of the population being men trying to mine gold.

**Synopsis of Movie:** The movie starts out with Angel being in prostitution at a brothel in Pair-a-dice. We find out she has had a hard up-bringing which has led to her current lifestyle. She meets Michael who believes God wants him to marry her. After spending time with Angel, Michael finally convinces her to marry him. They live on his farm and have many struggles in their marriage. Angel does not feel worthy of Michael's love and returns to prostitution two more times. She defeats her old prostitution master exposing his wicked ways. She then sets up a girl's school for women so they can leave prostitution. After finding out Michael never remarried, she goes back to him and they have two children and live happily ever after.

## **Marriage**

Before we get started, Read Hosea 1:1-11.

In the beginning of the movie, Angel is introduced as a prostitute who had a hard life. Her mother was a mistress turned prostitute who gets sick and dies. Angel was never loved by her father and barely knew him. She was sold into prostitution and that was the way she made her living. Almost in opposite contrast to Angel is Michael who is a Christian farmer in a neighboring town. He prays to God for a wife as he is seeking a woman that God wants him to marry. When he sees Angel, he knows she is the one!

In Hosea 1:1-3 God called Hosea to marry a prostitute.

*Hosea 1:2-3 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.” <sup>3</sup> So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Dibliah, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

Marriage is a covenant designed by God to take place between two people. God has had covenants with people as well. Look up the following examples and note who the covenant was with and what the promise was:

Genesis 9:8-11 –

Genesis 12:1-3 –

Genesis 35:9-15 -

We know that the covenants that God made with them he kept. God is not going to go back on his word. Do you view your marriage covenant the same way? Have you ever related it to the covenants God has with his people?

Does the fact that God keeps his promise in the covenants that he has made, spark a desire in you to keep your promises? What would happen if God didn't keep his covenants, what happens if you don't keep your covenants/promises?

Michael spends his money buying time with Angel. However, Michael does not wish to spend time with Angel the way other men do, he wants to get to know her. This surprises Angel and she gives him a hard time; calls him a "dirt farmer". Michael visits Angel three times and each time he asks her to marry him and wants to talk to her, they do not become intimate.

I assume Hosea was surprised that God would tell him to marry a prostitute. When you were looking for a spouse (or if you currently are) what attributes, characteristics were/are you looking for?

On the scale below put how important finding a fellow believer was/is to you. Be honest!  
(1 being the least and 10 being the most important)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Hosea chose to be obedient to God over finding a Godly woman to be his wife. This caused him a lot of heartache but obeying and pleasing God was more important.

On Michaels' last visit he sees that Angel was beaten by the Dutchess' side-kick. By this time Angel has had enough and realizes she is never going to get out of prostitution on her own. That is until Michael asks Angel to marry him one last time and she finally says "yes"!

## **Fall (Part 1)**

Read Hosea 2 and complete the questions below:

This chapter is about the Lord and Israel. The idea of marriage, faithfulness and adultery are introduced in the context of Israel and disobedience to the Lord. The Israelites are unfaithful as they worship Baal, which angers and disappoints the Lord.

We don't worship a god called Baal, but we do have idols in our life. An idol is anything that we put ahead of God, things that take our focus off of God. What are the idols that you have in your life?

Are you willing to remove or reduce those idols and focus on the one that should take number one priority in your life, Jesus? What can you do to move away from those idols and focus on God?

In the movie after Michael and Angel get married, it is clear they do not have a good start to their marriage. First, Angel tries to leave and walk back to the brothel. Michael finds her walking toward the town ill-prepared to make the whole 20-mile trek. He gives her water and a sweater and tells her that she can decide what she wants. She can be his wife and come home, or she can go back to her old life. God gives us this choice too. We can choose to be with him for eternity, or we can choose to reject him and pick ourselves. God doesn't force us to choose him but instead gives us the opportunity to be his child and have a relationship with him. What choice have you made? How has this choice impacted your life?

When Angel comes back, she has cut up and swollen feet. Michael doesn't make her feel bad for coming home, there is no "I told you so", he instead washes her feet. A very humble servant-like act. Who else washes feet in the New Testament? Read John 13:1-5. Can you imagine washing the feet of someone who is about to become your biggest enemy? Who is going to betray you? Reflect on both of these feet washing situations and put yourself in their shoes.

Now that Angel is back home with Michael, she feels like she owes something to him since he saved her from the Dutchess. She tries to sleep with him, to "pay him back" but Michael does not want payment. After a few failed attempts, Angel then decides that she will help him on the farm so she can pay him back and leave. Michael teaches her how to work on a farm. Michael's love is not something that Angel can earn. Michael has given his love to her freely and asks nothing in return. Does this remind you again of someone?

*Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> For grace you have been saved through faith. And this not your own doing; it is a gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one can boast.*

God does not want anything from us. We cannot earn his love and acceptance through works or good deeds. He only wants our heart. This is the love that Michael was seeking too.

Finally, in a beautiful scene at the top of the hill, Angel watches the sunrise with Michael and she finally accepts him. She has turned her life around and decided she wants to be married to Michael and will stop thinking of marriage as a temporary solution.

## **Fall (Part 2)**

Just when things are looking up for Michael and Angel, Paul enters the picture. Paul instantly knows who Angel was in her past and starts to make her feel bad about it. She feels unworthy and can't move past who she used to be.

Is there anything that you are holding on to from your past that is making you feel unworthy of God's love?

The sad reality is all of us are unworthy. We are sinful humans and are not worthy of God's love and forgiveness. But that is not the end, God has given us mercy and grace. He forgives our sins and makes us a new creation. *2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* You don't have to dwell on the sin of your past, it has been forgiven and God loves you. Write a prayer of thankfulness to God for his mercy and grace.

Unfortunately, Angel cannot get past who she used to be. She leaves with Paul and heads back to Pair-a-dice to her old life. Angel finds out that the whore house was burnt down and her friends died in the fire. She then works at the bar across the street as a prostitute again. Michael comes to get Angel and take her home. Michael is sad and Angel is viciously scrubbing her skin as she feels dirty for what she has done.

Michael forgives Angel and comforts her as she feels dirty for who she was, who she is and what she has done. Michael not only forgives Angel, but when Paul comes back, he forgives him as well. What is the hardest part of forgiveness for you? How do you overcome this and forgive those who hurt you?

Things start to look up for Angel and Michael in their marriage, but one thing continues to eat away at Angel. She knows that Michael would like a family, but she doesn't think she can have kids. Once they find the family on the side of the road, babies are something that does not leave Angel's mind. Many couples struggle with infertility. It can tear marriages apart or bring them together and the same can be said about faith through those difficult times. The idea of having a family and children is something that every couple contemplates. What has been your journey, what have you learned through your experience with fertility and growing a family?

The family is off to the west but decides to stay on the farm since the mom is going to have a baby. She has the child and names him Michael. Miriam is one of the sisters in the family and she becomes friends with Angel and Michael. Angel becomes jealous of Miriam and thinks that Michael would be better off with her since she could give him children. Because of this insecurity she leaves Michael again. Just like before, Michael tells her it is her choice of what she does, stay or go.

This time Angel gets a job as a cook and is able to live a better life outside of prostitution. Michael cries out to God to ask if he should go after her. He has to wait. Have you ever been in a period of waiting? Are you currently in a period of waiting? What are you learning in this period and do you think it will help you for when your prayers are answered?

Michael also asks Miriam's family to pray. He prays to God as he waits for Angel, but he also seeks prayer from others. Do you have people who will pray for you? How quickly do you ask for prayer? If prayer is effective, why do we often not ask others to pray for us?

## **Redemption**

Read Hosea 3

*Hosea 3:1-5 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> And the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” <sup>2</sup> So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and lethech of barley. <sup>3</sup> And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” <sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.*

God told Hosea to take her back even though she was with another man. Hosea acted in obedience to God. I think he probably also acted out of love and forgiveness as we see between Michael and Angel in the movie.

We start to see a turning point in Angel after Duke finds her. He burns down the restaurant where Angel works so she has to go to his casino. Duke is a horrible man who keeps little girls and prostitutes. But Angel calls out to God for help for the girls. She has finally acknowledged that God can help her. She is then able to get on the stage at the casino and tell the audience about Duke and the little girls. He is then hung, and all of the girls and prostitutes are freed. Angel turned to God, and he answered her prayers. How have you seen God answer your prayers?

Three years pass and Angel is in San Francisco and has a shelter/school for girls who were prostitutes. Meanwhile, Miriam marries Paul and they are having a child. Sadly, Michael is still waiting on Angel. One day Paul sees Angel at the school and apologizes to her. He realizes that Angel left so Miriam could be with Michael, but that was not what happened. Paul was with Miriam and he asks Angel to go back to Michael.

People let us down, they disappoint us, hurt us and sin against us. I'm sure you have felt this before. I hope it is not as severe as adultery, but no matter the sin, we are called to forgive. Read the below verses about forgiveness and consider committing one to memory.

- *Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
- *1 John 1:9 (ESV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- *Matthew 6:14 (ESV) For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

God has forgiven us of all our sins. As it is said in Matthew 6:14, if you forgive, God will forgive you. Do you think there is anything that God would not forgive you for? Do you feel like you should apply this same concept of forgiveness to others?

In the end Angel goes back to Michael, and tells him her real name, Sarah.

The ending scene in the movie shows Michael and Angel and their family. They have a son and Angel is pregnant. This is such a heartfelt way for the movie to end. Angel thought that she could not have children and God blessed her with children. What a lovely miracle in the end. Read Hosea 1:4-11 below:

*Hosea 1: 4-11 (ESV) <sup>4</sup>And the Lord said to him, "Call his name Jezereel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezerel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup>And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." <sup>6</sup>She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, "call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. <sup>7</sup>But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen." <sup>8</sup>When she has weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. <sup>9</sup>And the Lord said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God." <sup>10</sup>Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God." <sup>11</sup>And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be*

*gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.*

It was part of God's plan all along to give Hosea children. Hosea was obedient to God even when it didn't make sense to marry a prostitute. Unfortunately, obedience is not a theme that we see of the people of Israel in the book of Hosea. God is very angry that the Israelites are worshipping Baal and not being obedient to his commandments. Yet God gives them hope in Hosea 1:10-11. What stood out to you from these verses and brings you comfort?

We know that 400 years passed between the book of Micah and the start of Matthew. 400 years before Jesus comes in the New Testament. Jesus, the savior that the world had been waiting for. The prophets predicted a savior would come. They predicted unity of Israel where they would be under one king, and that king is Jesus Christ!

The song at the end of the movie is by Lauren Daigle called “Rescue”. Listen to the song and read through the lyrics as you reflect on the words.

You are not hidden  
There’s never been a moment you were forgotten  
You are not hopeless  
Though you have been broken, your innocence stolen

I hear you whisper underneath your breath  
I hear your SOS, your SOS

I will send out an army to find you  
In the middle of the darkest night  
It’s true, I will rescue you

There is no distance  
That cannot be covered over and over  
You’re not defenseless  
I’ll be your shelter, I’ll be your armor

I hear you whisper underneath your breath  
I hear your SOS, your SOS

I will send out an army to find you  
In the middle of the darkest night  
It’s true, I will rescue you  
I will never stop marching to reach you  
In the middle of the hardest fight  
It’s true, I will rescue you

I hear you whisper underneath your breath  
I hear you whisper you have nothing left

I will send out an army to find you  
In the middle of the darkest night  
It’s true, I will rescue you  
I will never stop marching to reach you  
In the middle of the hardest fight  
It’s true, I will rescue you

Oh, I will rescue you

## **References**

This mini study guide is based on the movie Redeeming Love. Quotes and material from the movie are included in this study.

Redeeming Love. Directed by D.J. Caruso, Pinnacle Peak Pictures, Mission Pictures International, Nthibah Pictures, Advantage Entertainment, 2022.

Bible verses are referenced from the (ESV) English Standard Version of the bible.

The ESV Bible. (2001). English Standard Version [Online Version]. Crossway.

The song at the end of the movie and included at the end of this study is referenced below:

Daigle, Lauren. "Rescue." Look Up Child, Centricity Music and Warner Records, 2018.