

# THE GOOD SOIL OF PURPOSE

(REAPING WHAT YOU SOW)

We have an identity in the Lord. We are His. We should reflect His Glory in our lives.

- Romans 12:9-13 says, *“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*

**Songs:** The “Identity” list might have songs that would be helpful to start this program so that the ladies begin to identify with what it means to belong to the Lord.

## **Background to Hosea 1-9**

Hosea is the first book in the sections of Minor Prophets. It’s an illustration of the spiritual adultery of Israel and God’s boundless love for His sinful people. Hosea describes how Israel has been unfaithful to God. They actively oppress the poor in slavery and become heavily involved in idol worship.

God gives Hosea instructions to marry, Gomer, an unfaithful woman, a prostitute, and he obeys. His unfaithful wife leaves him and finds another man. She has three children, two of which are likely from other men. Then, she is sold into slavery and Hosea has to buy her back. Hosea is faithful; he finds her, redeems her and brings her back home to him. God’s people are Gomer.

*\*In Hosea, Israel is often called Ephraim which is a synonym for Israel*

## **Hosea 10:1-9**

Israel had turned to idolatry and paganism in rebellion to the covenant they had made with the Lord. They loved the world around them more than they loved God. They made alliances with other Kings and enslaved people. They relied on their military strength, instead of the Lord, to keep them safe. The discipline is coming for their rebellion.

## Hosea 10:12

“Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
reap steadfast love;  
break up your fallow ground,  
for it is the time to seek the Lord,  
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”

“**Breaking Up The Fallow Ground**” – unused, hardened ground that needs to be broken for usefulness. Rocks removed, weeds dug out, clods broken up....it takes time to bring it back to usefulness.

“**Reap steadfast love**”(or kindness in some translations) – mercy or compassion

- Israel had become selfish, heart hearted, (plowed wickedness)
- A hard, fallow ground soaks up nothing. The rain and moisture just roll right off.... soaking up nothing.....no mercy.
- In the first few verses, it says they had plowed in the excess to make even more.....greed, indulgence

“**Sow for yourselves righteousness**”

- Sowing – putting the seeds in the ground that yield good things such as righteousness....fruits
- The Israelites have cultivated some really poor soil, right?
  - ***You have plowed iniquity;  
you have reaped injustice;  
you have eaten the fruit of lies.***
- Breaking up fallow ground is intentional...violent.... shakes things up...jars them...etc. (talk about a well-manicured lawn verses on that has been neglected) Israel/Ephraim had become fallow ground.

*Some questions you might ask...*

- **Are we like that as well?**
- **Are we content with our sin?**
- **Do we even notice it?**
- **Are our hearts fallow ground?**
- ***Is there stoniness in your heart?***
- ***Are there things you need to repent of?***
- ***What new good seed should you cultivate?***

## Workshop:

Break into small groups and answer the questions below using the Galatians 5 “fruit of the Spirit”. (*decorative printouts provided with these questions in this program idea*)

### How can we keep from having fallow ground?

#### Questions:

*Cultivate – prepare, develop, and use (land) for crops or gardening.*

- How do we see Christ bearing this fruit in the Gospels?
- What are some stones, weeds, or bugs that hinder our growth?
- How are we to cultivate this fruit in our lives?

Let’s look at Galatians 5:22-24. The Galatians were another group of people who lost their way and struggled to walk in good ways. Paul reminds them earlier in CH 5 to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

5:22-24 - “<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

\*\*Remind the ladies that the Israelites had gratified their own flesh and abandoned the covenant made to them by their God. He did not give up on them, however. Read Hosea 14 in conclusion. He loves His people through the discipline he sends. Though there is no mention of their repentance, our God is the God who says He will never leave us. His goal is always to restore us to Himself.

\*\*Close with Prayer for ladies to repent of their neglected and fallow ground. Cultivate His fruit and reflect His Glory!