

# The Invitation to Return

MAKE ROOM FOR GOD'S HEART • DEVOTIONAL WORKBOOK

*Return. Repent. Receive. Be Restored.*

Read today: Hosea 14:1–4 • Zechariah 1:3 • Isaiah 55:6–7 • Acts 3:19

## The God Who Calls Us Home

There is a difference between knowing we have wandered and believing we are welcome to return. Shame often tells us to hide until we have repaired ourselves. Yet the invitation running through today's Scriptures is strikingly personal: return to the Lord. Bring honest words. Seek Him. Turn away from what has drawn your heart elsewhere. God answers with promises of mercy, healing, pardon, and refreshing.

In Hosea, Israel is not asked to arrive with an impressive offering or a flawless record. The people are told to bring words of confession and to stop placing their confidence in military strength and handmade gods. The return begins with honesty: naming where they have looked for rescue and acknowledging who can truly save.

Zechariah gives the invitation a voice: the Lord Almighty calls His people to return to Him. The One speaking has all authority, yet His words open a door to restored relationship. Repentance is not a performance staged to make God care. It is a real turning toward the One who has already made His mercy known.

## Pause and notice

**What have I been asking to provide the security, comfort, identity, or control that belongs to God?**

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## Seeking More Than an Answer

Isaiah invites us to seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. The call is urgent, but it is also relational. Seeking God is more than searching for a solution to a problem. We can pursue His heart in ordinary days, in uncertainty, in correction, and in delight. We can come honestly, not because we understand everything, but because we desire to know Him.

Chaim Bentorah's study of *darash* (seek) encourages attentive searching for what God may be teaching through our circumstances. His reflection on *qarov* (near) pictures an approachable God and invites a deeper response to His presence. These are devotional applications; the ordinary meanings are "seek/inquire" and "near."

And then Isaiah speaks of leaving not only wicked ways but unrighteous thoughts. This reaches deeper than outward conduct. Sometimes we have abandoned a behavior but still cling to the belief that fueled it. Sometimes we have confessed a sin but continue rehearsing shame as though mercy were not enough.

In Acts, Peter calls his listeners to repent and turn to God, connecting that response with sins wiped away and times of refreshing from the Lord. Forgiveness does not erase the importance of making amends or repairing harm where possible. But it does mean we do not have to treat guilt as our permanent home.

## The Invitation to Make Room

Bentorah also offers an imaginative reading of Zechariah 1:3 through *yashav*, "to dwell" or "take up residence." The conventional Hebrew reading of this verse is "I will return to you," not "I will dwell within you." Still, his reflection prompts a worthwhile question: If I desire fellowship with God, am I making room for His presence to shape how I actually live?

*We do not return so we can earn His affection. We return because fellowship with Him is worth coming home to.*

## Follow the Invitation

### 1. RETURN Hosea 14:1–4

What false source of security or rescue am I ready to name honestly before God?

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### 2. SEEK Isaiah 55:6

Where might God be inviting me to seek His heart, not merely His help?

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### 3. FORSAKE Isaiah 55:7

What thought pattern needs to change along with my actions?

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### 4. RECEIVE Hosea 14:4; Acts 3:19

What would it look like to accept mercy and refreshing instead of rehearsing shame?

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## A Return I Can Practice

Choose one simple, concrete response for today. Repentance is not proved by dramatic promises; it becomes visible in a changed direction.

**Today I will turn away from...**

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**Today I will turn toward God by...**

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**A truth about God I want to carry with me...**

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### Prayer to Begin

Father, thank You for inviting us to return. Search the places where we have trusted what cannot save us. Give us courage to confess without hiding, wisdom to release what is harmful, and humility to receive Your mercy. Teach us to seek Your heart, not only Your answers. Where guilt has lingered, remind us of Your forgiveness; where we have wandered, lead us into renewed fellowship. Let our turning become a way of living, and let Your love shape what we choose next. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### Quiet reflection

**Sit with God for a few moments. What is one word, Scripture phrase, or invitation you want to remember?**

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Study notes: Scripture references are NIV. Word-study themes are adapted and summarized from Chaim Bentorah's studies on shuv/yashav, the Lord of Hosts, darash, qarov, azav, and conversion. Interpretive suggestions are distinguished from standard lexical meanings. See the companion Day 9 Word Study PDF for source links.