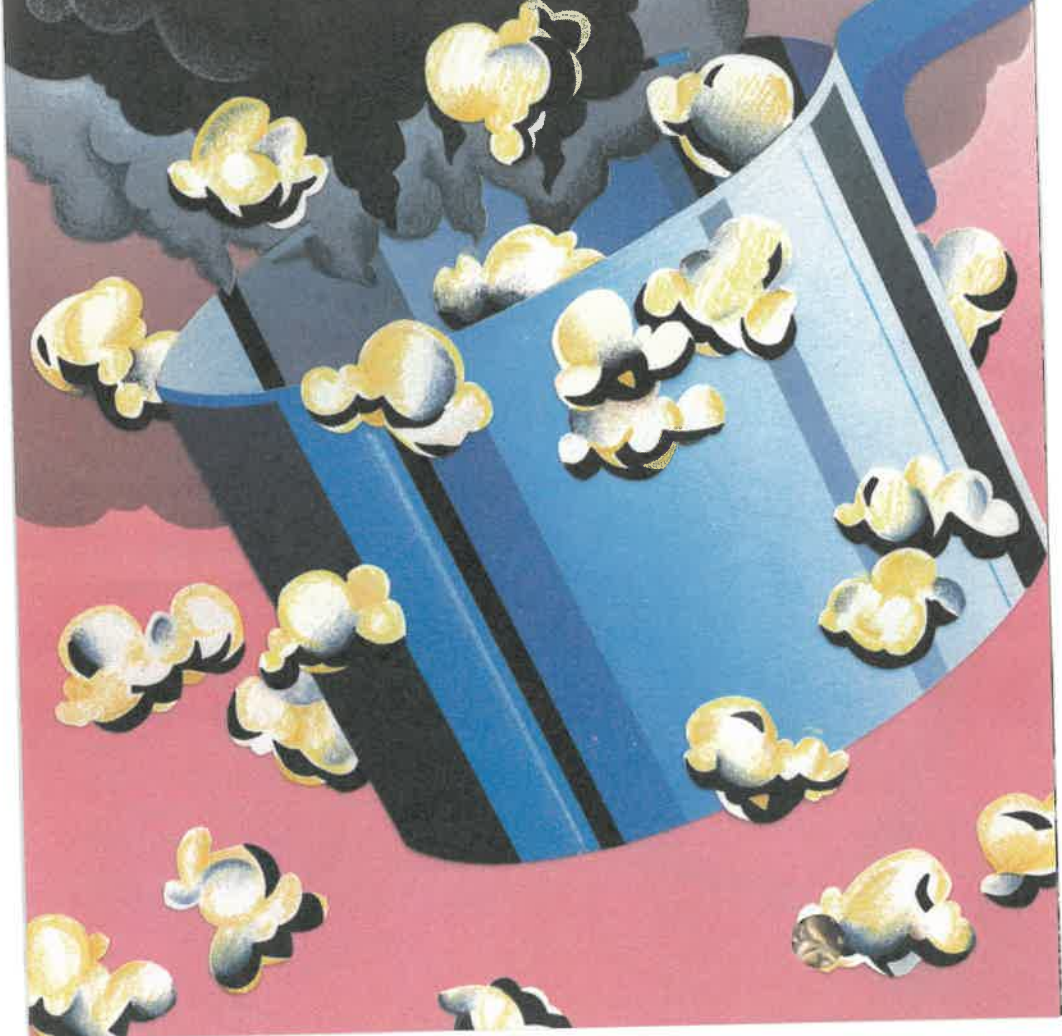


the **rock**

The true story of a girl who needed forgiveness for **the POPCORN DISASTER**



Word Pictures

**Hosea
14:1-7**

A picture is worth a thousand words. But suppose you were writing at a time when there were no cameras and no way to reproduce paintings. How would you help people really see the things you wanted to say?

You might use word pictures.

That's exactly what the writer of today's passage did. Hosea had some powerful pictures to show the people of Israel—so he put them into words.

See how many word pictures you can find in today's text. Jot them down on a piece of paper. (Remember, a word picture is anything that makes a picture come to mind.)

Now it's time for you to create your own pictures, based on Scripture. Answer each question by drawing a simple picture or pictures. You can also use a word or two if you need to.

- 1** ● What the people did wrong.

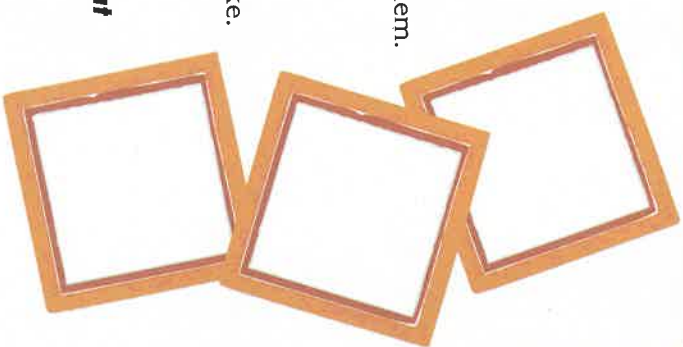


- 2** ● What Hosea says they should do.

- 3** ● What God will be like to them.

- 4** ● What the people will be like.

In one sentence, summarize what the four pictures are saying.



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Hosea 14:1-7

¹Return, Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall! ²Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to him:

"Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. ³Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."

⁴"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. ⁵I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; ⁶his young shoots will grow.

His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. ⁷People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain, they will blossom like the vine—Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon."

If my mother, my very human mother, could forgive me so easily for something that was pretty major, how much more can God forgive me?

person who really stuck with you through thick and thin and knew you tripped going across the stage in front of the *whole* school (and not just tripped but fell flat on your face) when you were picking up your end-of-the-year attendance award.

Or the time you bought your lunch at school and dropped your tray in the always-packed cafeteria.

Or the time you ran down the basketball court at full speed with no one near you and the net wide open and sunk a beautiful lay-up with the fans screaming—screaming because it was the other team's basket. Yet your best friend was still there to be your best friend and even offered to cheer you up. That best friend accepts you for who you are, warts and all.

Now, let's see if we can follow some logical thinking here. (Don't worry, it's not geometry-like logic!) If our friends can forgive us when we do stupid things (and I mean *true* friends here), and if God is our friend—as He said He was when He came to earth in Jesus (John

15:12-15)—then God can forgive us when we do stupid things. All the little, stupid things. Make sense? I think so. God made a deal a long time ago, and He *never* goes back on His word. His forgiveness is for real.

When I begin to think that I've messed up pretty badly and that God couldn't possibly forgive me, I have to remind myself of all the dumb things that my friends and family accept and forgive me for, like falling on my face in front of the whole school or burning the counter with a very hot popcorn pan. If my mother, my very human mother, could forgive me so easily for something that really was pretty major, how much more can God forgive me? His love and forgiveness are limitless. That's pretty amazing.

All I have to do is ask. And it's forgotten. My sin is removed—not just covered up with a nifty decorative trivet, but completely gone.

God's love and forgiveness are there for you, too. Just ask.

STORMS

Erratic and deadly, tornadoes are the hit-and-run drivers of the air. They can roar along at speeds over 60 miles an hour, then suddenly vanish, leaving a trail of death and destruction costing hundreds of millions of dollars.



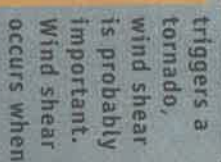
About 770 tornadoes touch down in the United States each year, but scientists know very little about how and why they occur. These spiraling killers pop out of some 50,000 to 100,000 thunderstorms, and their size and time of appearance is extremely difficult to predict. Most of them occur

in "Tornado Alley," which begins in the Texas Panhandle

and angles northeast through Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and southern Illinois. The cool, dry air from the Rockies

smashes into the warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico and produces the storms that spawn tornadoes.

Tornadoes tend to form near the updraft of air that rushes from the ground into the void at the heart of a storm. Sometimes these winds can rush upward at 100 miles an hour to form a storm monster 60,000 feet high. Although no one knows what finally



triggers a tornado, wind shear is probably important. Wind shear occurs when

there are differences of wind speed and direction at various heights. These wind differences start the air in the center of the storm spiraling upward. David, the author of Psalm 29, was deeply impressed by the power of thunderstorms.

Thunder, lightning, and wind helped him imagine God's power working *against* David's enemies and *for* David's people. David pictured God riding on the wind and reaching down to save him from trouble. Storms are still

awesome and frightening. But when we experience storms, either physical or spiritual, we, like David, can be reminded of God's omnipotence and of His power to rescue us from harm.

every
day
devos

Create in me a pure heart,
O God, and renew a steadfast
spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10

THE
PAUSE THAT

REFRESHES

Many years ago, a soft-drink company claimed that its soda was the “pause that refreshes.” If you were tired, pausing to drink this ice-cold soft drink was the ideal way to end the day.

King David’s idea of refreshment was quite a bit different. The refreshment David wanted came from forgiveness for sin and a heart cleansed by God.

MONDAY Do you need to confess anything to God? Write your own prayer of confession or make David’s prayer, Psalm 51:10, your own. Meditate on the verse all week.

TUESDAY Read about other people in the Bible who needed forgiveness (Isaiah—Isaiah 6:5-7; Peter—John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19). How did they feel? What did God do for them?

WEDNESDAY Draw a “before” and “after” picture to describe what it means to you to have a clean heart.

THURSDAY Read Psalm 51:10 in a different version of the Bible than your own. Make a list of any new ideas it gives you.

FRIDAY Take a walk with God today. Think about what He would say if He were walking alongside you. What desires or thoughts would you communicate to Him?

SATURDAY End the week with prayer. How did meditating on Psalm 51:10 help?

