



## W.O.W: Word Of the Week

**Allure**

**July 15, 2020**

Is this really a Bible word? Absolutely! Hosea 2:14: *"Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her."* Listen to the text, analyze the message. Six quick observations will help us understand and apply the text.

First, this is about relationship. God is talking through the prophet Hosea. God is talking about Israel, his beloved.

Second, this is about restoring relationship. God reveals his intent to allure Israel back to him – we will come back to this idea.

Third, this is about getting rid of the distractions. God will allure Israel by leading her into the wilderness – don't let the irony escape you!

The desert, fewer distractions, fewer competing loyalties, priorities. God still leads his people, individually and corporately, into the desert. The current pandemic can be compared to a wilderness experience for the church. Will it be a time of relationship, listening, reflection, preparation?

The wilderness is where you grow.

The wilderness is threatening to the status quo and the blessings previously enjoyed – some churches have been wanting to return to Egypt since the pandemic began.

The wilderness is not a pleasant experience for those who seek the comfortable.

The wilderness is an inevitable part of the journey.

Fourth, this is about spending time together. The wilderness is where Israel will learn to love God. The romance will blossom in the wilderness. Remember a recent "bits from bob...." – falling in love with God.

Fifth, this is about listening. God will speak tenderly.

Remember the tender words you shared with your beloved, falling in love, growing in love? Date nights, restaurants, special locations. God chooses the wilderness so his people can grow up, grow closer to him.

Sixth, this is about hope. Why the wilderness? God hopes that Israel will respond, v. 17. God's great hope for his people in the experience of the wilderness is that they will respond. They will quit wanting the past, quit setting their minds on Egypt, that they will quit thinking about themselves, manna and quail.

### Conclusion

To our western ears, the passage is unusual. We struggle to hear it. God says He is going to allure his people whom he loves in the wilderness.

We may be nearing the end of the wilderness phase of our pandemic journey. Now what? Have we heard God's tender words, God's will, God's hope for the church? Are we ready to respond, adapt, change, ask forgiveness for our past?

Can we strip away the baggage and distractions of church-centered (self-centered) Christianity? Will we be stronger because of the wilderness? Will we know God better? Listen better? Please him more? Seek him more often?

Will we come out of the wilderness unchanged? Just like we were before? Or, will we emerge with new hope, energy, boldness?

How will the church respond? How will you respond?