

What Does the Sin Spiral Look Like?

[Hosea 5:8-15](#)

Hosea, Day 13

Blow the horn in Gibeah,
the trumpet in Ramah.
Sound the alarm at Beth-aven;
we follow you, O Benjamin!
Ephraim shall become a desolation
in the day of punishment;
among the tribes of Israel
I make known what is sure.
The princes of Judah have become
like those who move the landmark;
upon them I will pour out
my wrath like water.
Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,
because he was determined to go after filth.
But I am like a moth to Ephraim,
and like dry rot to the house of Judah.

When Ephraim saw his sickness,
and Judah his wound,
then Ephraim went to Assyria,
and sent to the great king.
But he is not able to cure you
or heal your wound.
For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even I, will tear and go away;
I will carry off, and no one shall rescue.

I will return again to my place,
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
and in their distress earnestly seek me.

- Hosea 5:8-15, ESV

Have you ever seen someone you love trapped in a downward spiral of self-destruction? If you have, you know it's one of most frustrating and difficult things to watch. This is the situation the Lord is in here in Hosea. He is watching His beloved Israel spiral out of control. We need to pay close attention to the pattern of Israel's sin spiral, because the same pattern can begin to manifest itself in our lives, if we're not diligent.

So, what does a sin spiral like Israel's look like? Israel is "*determined to go after filth.*" That is, Israel is determined to believe the lying promises of their idols and do what they know is wrong and unfaithful because they think it will pay off in the end. We are "*determined to go after filth*" whenever we willfully choose sin, which is always unfaithfulness to God.

In His love, when God sees His people "*determined to go after filth,*" He responds with discipline. For Israel, God allowed them to be "*crushed in judgment,*" breaking them so that they might turn to Him.

Very often in our lives, God allows us to suffer the consequences of our sin, so we will see the emptiness of the promises of our idols. In a similar way, this is what God does to Israel. Their idols promised them prosperity and fertility, so God makes sure they suffer sickness and loss instead. They need to see how wrong they are to trust in idols.

Sadly, they don't see it. And so, the sin spiral deepens. Instead of seeking the Lord in humility, Israel seeks a worldly solution to their problems:

*Ephraim went to Assyria,
and sent to the great king.
But he is not able to cure you
or heal your wound.*

How often do we suffer consequences for our sin and turn to worldly solutions instead of to the Lord? It's exactly the wrong thing to do, and yet we do it again and again, don't we?

What does God say to Israel for seeking help from Assyria instead of from Him?

*I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even I, will tear and go away;
I will carry off, and no one shall rescue.*

Why is God so harsh? Is it because He is sick of Israel and doesn't love them anymore? No. He is doing what must be done to bring His people to repentance:

*I will return again to my place,
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
and in their distress earnestly seek me.*

When we are trapped in a sin spiral, we need to do the only thing that will break the downward cycle: Acknowledge our guilt and seek His face. God is always ready and waiting to forgive and restore.