

A 5 WEEK SERIES IN HAGGAI

CONSIDER *your* WAYS

CHOOSING GOD'S
BUSINESS OVER OURS

Study Guide Week 1: Haggai 1:1-15

My Way

God's Way

Putting First Things First

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Every day you exchange a day of your life for something. It's as if at the start of life each of us were issued a certain number of coins. They're hidden in a large machine so that we don't know

how many we were issued or how many we have left. Each day the machine issues us a new coin. It may be the last coin we get, or we may get many more.

All we know is that the average person in America gets between 70 and 80 years' worth, but some get far less; a few get way more. You take each day's coin and exchange it for something: a day at work or school, shopping, church, leisure, or whatever. Once spent, you can never get the coins back to spend them differently. The art of living wisely is largely a matter of spending your coins on the things that really matter in light of eternity and not frivolously wasting them.

Living wisely is difficult because often the choice is not between the bad and the good, but between the good and the best. The Book of Haggai, the second shortest in the Old Testament, has a potent message. It tells us

to put first things first in our lives. It was written to people, like us, who would have told you that God must be first. They believed that; we believe that. But, they had drifted into a way of life where their intellectual belief in the supremacy of God was not reflected in the way they were living. They gave lip service to the priority of God, but in fact they lived with other priorities. God sent this prophet to help His people get their priorities in line with what they knew they should be.



Steve Cole

**The command to
rebuild the temple.
Haggai 1:3-6 ESV**

*Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: **Consider your ways.** You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.*

Open It!

After having been away from home for a while, what are some of the first things you do when you return?



Read It | Haggai 1:1-15

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

Explore It

1. What three people received the Word of the Lord according to verse 1?
2. What roles did each of these men have?
3. What is the Lord calling his people to do in verses 5, 7?
4. According to verse 8, what did God want completed?
5. What condition was God's house in?
6. Who obeys God's message and begins to rebuild?
7. What promise does God give the people in verse 13?

Get It

1. Why was it so important for the message to be given to three men and not just one? What are the practical implications to the execution of God's plan?
2. While the people in Haggai seemed more focused on their homes than God's house what things keep you from obeying God's clear call?
3. It seems that God takes offense at the people's "paneled homes." Is it wrong for Christians to have and enjoy nice things? Where do we draw the line? Is luxury a sin?
4. How does one go about "considering our ways?" How does a Christian know how to discern what our priorities should be?
5. God promises the people that when other priorities trump Him, all their work and striving will gain nothing. In what ways have you seen those around you gain the whole world yet lose their soul?
6. How can a Christian succeed in his ways if he is always putting God's way first?

7. What steps can you take to discourage worldly things from taking priority over God?

8. According to verse 12, the entire remnant started on the project together. Describe a time when you have been a part of a project or ministry that would take more than one person to accomplish? How did it feel to obey God's call together?

9. God promised the people that He was with them as they obeyed his command. What does the presence of God's Spirit do for us?

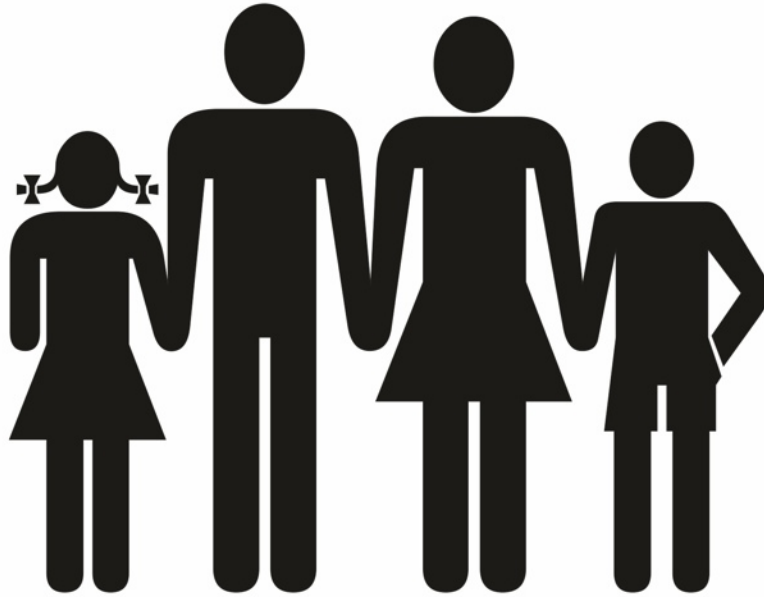
10. Take some time to "consider your ways." How did you spend your last week? Think back and make a calendar of the things that were done. What does your calendar say about what is most important? How about your checking account? What does your spending say about your priorities?

11. What projects or priorities is God calling you to be a part of today? What things need to change so you can accomplish this calling?

Reflection

This passage and the truths it contains is one of extreme importance. We must learn the proper placement of our priorities, removing the excuses and apathy that we have developed over the years of just listening but not applying

FAMILY ACTIVITY



what we learn from scriptures. We have God's assurance that He is with us and now we must take hold of this promise and proceed with full obedience.

Items Needed

A clear Mason jar, large rocks (that fit in the jar), smaller pebbles, sand.

Put as many large rocks in the jar as you can. Ask your kids if anything else will fit. If the kids respond “no,” take out the pebbles and place them in the jar, shaking it to allow them to settle to the bottom. Ask again if anything else will fit.

If they respond “no” again, take out the sand and work it into the remaining space, showing that there was still room. Point out that if you started out with the sand there would have been no room for the large rocks. Share with them that if we start with the smaller things we will never be able to fit the larger more imports things into our lives.

Explain to them that our priorities are the big rocks; things like God, church, and family need to go into the jar first. If we don't get them in first then they will never fit later on.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why should obeying God be our most important pursuit?
2. Have you ever found yourself losing focus on the things of God? How do we correct it?
3. What things should kids see as important?