

A 5 WEEK SERIES IN HAGGAI

# CONSIDER *your* WAYS

CHOOSING GOD'S  
BUSINESS OVER OURS

Study Guide Week 2: Haggai 2:1-9

My Way

God's Way

## God's Perspective or Ours

We learn that ... God encourages His discouraged servants to persevere in His work.



The famous inventor, Thomas Edison, tried again and again to find the right filament for the incandescent electric light bulb. One day he had completed his 10,000th experiment only to discover another way that would not work. When he arrived home that night, he shared

this bit of news with his wife. "Aren't you pretty discouraged, Tom?" she asked. "Discouraged?" responded Edison. "Certainly not! I now know 10,000 ways that won't work!"

Perseverance seems to be an outdated concept in our day of instant everything. If it doesn't come easy, why pursue it? If it's hard or requires endurance, maybe it isn't your thing. It's easy to start a new diet. It's tough to stick to it when you crave that cinnamon roll. It's easy to start a new exercise program. It's tough to persevere when your aching muscles scream, "No more!" It's easy to get married. It's tough to hang in there and work through problems over a lifetime. It's easy to begin a new ministry in the local church. It's

tough to keep on when problems arise or when the results don't match your initial expectations.

That describes the people in Haggai's day just shy of a month after they had obeyed his first message and resumed work on rebuilding the temple. The foundation had been laid about 15 years before, but the project had been set on the shelf. But now, in

response to Haggai's word from the Lord, the leaders and people had begun to rebuild on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius (Sept. 21, 520 B.C.; 1:15). The seventh month in Israel began with the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, followed by

the Day of Atonement on the tenth day. Then the Feast of Tabernacles went from the 15th to the 21st. On the last day of that feast (Oct. 17th), Haggai delivered his second message to the people (2:1-9). It is a message of God's encouragement to discouraged workers.

- Steve Cole



**We learn that ... God encourages His discouraged servants to persevere in His work.**

# Open It!

Are you an optimist or pessimist? Is this perspective something you were born with or something you learned along the way?

## Read It | Haggai 2:1-9

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.



## Review It

In chapter one we see that the people of God had allowed other things to trump the priority of following God's commands. Haggai is sent to proclaim the first of four messages to the people. It is in response to this message that the people see the error of their ways and get to the business of God by building the temple. In response to this obedience God draws near to His people and, through the Spirit's power and the people's obedience, the temple is built. Sadly, to some observers, the recently built temple can't hold a candle to the former temple of Solomon. This would lead to the people altogether becoming discouraged. It is in our text that God encourages the people to see things with His perspective and not a human one.

## Explore It

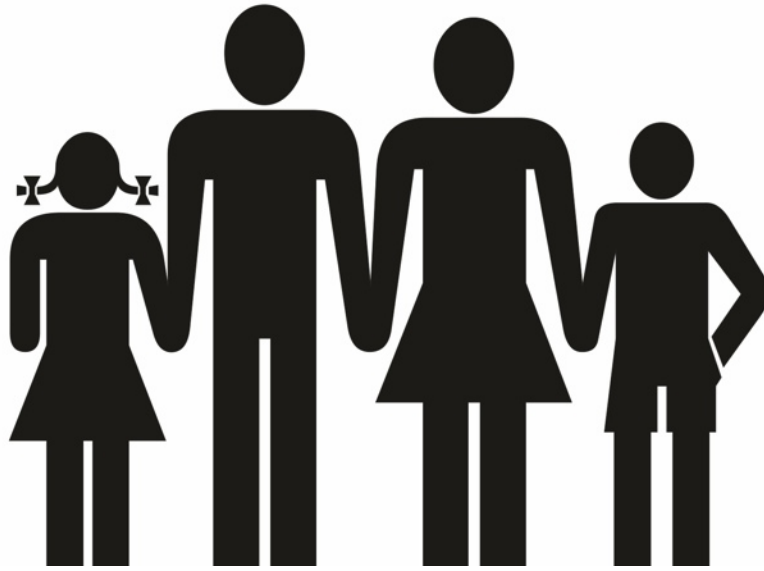
1. Who does God speak to in verse 3?
2. What word of encouragement does God share 3 times with His people?
3. What does God say is His in verse 8?
4. Which title of God is listed multiple times in our text?

## Get It

1. Just as in the 1st message, the word of the Lord is first directed to the leaders. Why is it so important for leaders to be on the front end of God's vision for His people?
2. In our text, comparing had become a problem for the Israelites. Do you find yourself comparing your things and life with others? Does this lead you to be encouraged or discouraged? Why?
3. What discourages you the most in your service for the Lord? How can you prevent it and overcome it?
4. The people in Haggai's day were commanded to be strong. In what ways can we show this spiritual strength in our days?
5. God affirms the people's work on the temple by telling them that "my Spirit remains in your midst" in verse 5. How can we know if God is pleased and affirming to our service and ministry?

6. God tells the people that one day He “will shake the Heavens and the Earth” as well as everything they contain. What should this reminder of God’s total control and power enable us as His children to do?
7. While the external view of the new temple couldn’t match the former, God says the glory of the new temple will be greater than the former. What does this tell us about how we should judge the results of our ministry and service?
8. What is the biblical definition of “success”?
9. The people were discouraged by the result of their perceived sub-par work. What makes this common in our culture today? Why are so many American Christians discouraged or burned out? Are we emotionally fragile, or are there other causes?
10. How can we know if we are too committed to the Lord’s work? Where is the balance between work, home, and church involvement?

# FAMILY ACTIVITY



## Discuss It

Over dinner, talk about the best day you have ever had and what it would take to have a day better than that one. Lead your family in talking about the greatest moments in their lives, and center the discussion around whether or not those moments can be relived or if they thought greater times would ever come.

## Devotional

Have each person open Haggai 2:1-9 and ask one person to read it aloud.

When we were younger the world seemed so big. Vacations were amazing, filled with all kinds of new experiences and memories. As we grow and return to those places that we once loved, we realize they weren't what we once thought they were. They seem smaller and a little less exciting.

In the Bible story this week the same is true. This type of thinking can strike at all of us today. It is not hard to be excited about something one day and then be discouraged about it the next. It is easy to compare our current place in life with past experiences and end up wanting more. In the end, we must remember that the work God is doing through us is a great; even if it seems as nothing or not as grand as what he is doing in others, God is doing a special work, unique in every single believer.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What activity was once fun and now no longer is?
2. Have you ever lost excitement about God or church?
3. What can we do when our perspectives change and we forget that God still moves today and not just in the past?
4. What things is God calling you to be more enthusiastic about?