

CONSIDER *your* WAYS

CHOOSING GOD'S BUSINESS OVER OURS

Study Guide Week 3: Haggai 2:10-19

My Way

God's Way

God's Purity or Our Pollution

When asked what he needed for his birthday, a six-year-old said firmly, "I don't want to need, I want to want."

What do you want in life? That question requires careful thought! The story of King Midas, who was granted his ultimate wish that everything he touched would turn to gold, shows us how easy it is to want the wrong things. Midas quickly discovered that you can't eat gold and you can't relate to gold people! He made the wrong choice!

What I want more than anything—I covet it—is God's blessing. When you've got God's blessing, you've got it all. You may be rich or poor, healthy or ill, living in a mansion or hiding out in a cave. But if you know that God is blessing your life, you've got something that the world can't give or take away. You are truly satisfied! On the other hand, if you lack God's blessing, you may get what you think will satisfy, but you will have leanness in your soul (Ps. 106:15, KJV).

The prophet Haggai's third message (2:10-19) to the remnant that had returned from the Babylonian captivity tells us how we can experience God's true blessing. As we saw in his first message, the people to whom he was preaching were, for the most part, believers. They had made the difficult commitment to leave their familiar circumstances in Persia and return to the Promised Land. We see their commitment to the Lord in that one of the first things they did when they got

back was to rebuild the altar and to begin to rebuild the temple. But they encountered strong opposition from the Samaritans and other peoples of the land, and the project came to a halt.

Meanwhile, they got busy with their own work and their own houses, and the temple got set aside. About 15-16 years later, God raised up Haggai with the message, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" (1:4). The people responded and the work on the temple started again.

In Haggai, the first and the third messages are similar, as are the second and fourth. The first and third are messages of rebuke or exhortation. The second and fourth are messages of encouragement. The first message told us to seek first God's kingdom, not our own priorities. This third message shows that not only should we seek first God's kingdom, but that we must do so from pure hearts. Thus it develops the second half of

Matthew 6:33, "and His righteousness." The first message was God will grant true blessing when we put His house first. The third message is: **God will grant true blessing when we put His house first from righteous lives.**



- Steve Cole

Open It!

Take some time to list things that are highly contagious. Is your list filled with things that are desirable or undesirable?



Read It | Haggai 2:10-19

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

Explore It

1. To whom does God direct this next message?
2. What does God call His people to do in verses 15 and 18?
3. According to verse 16, what happened to the things that the people had?
4. What will God do for His people according to the last phrase of verse 19?

Get It

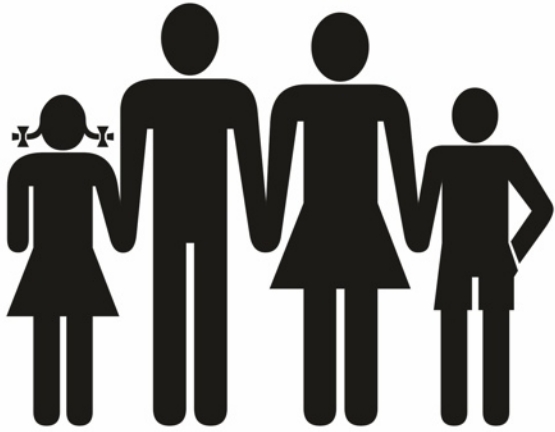
1. In your own words, rewrite the two questions God calls Haggai to ask in verses 12 & 13.
2. Do you agree that it is easier to spread sin rather than holiness? Additionally, how would you try to bring another person into a life of holiness?

3. The underlying idea behind the word “holy” is being “set apart” from the world. Many Christians believe this involves physical and social separation and have entered into a life separate from unbelievers. Do you agree that this approach to life is biblical? Why or why not?
4. If holiness cannot be transferred as sin is, how are we to impact the world? How far should we go in our pursuit of saturating the unbelieving world with holy living?
5. Some equate God’s blessing with physical health and wealth; why is this not biblical?
6. God did not wait to bless the people until they had completed the task He had set before them; why do you think this is so? Have you ever received a blessing from God just for starting down the road of obedience? Give an example.
7. What concrete steps can you take this week to lead others to pursue holiness instead of sin in the following areas of life:
- | | |
|---------|------------|
| Family- | Neighbors- |
| Work- | Strangers- |

Reflection

The point of this message, which was delivered in December, 520 B.C., is that holiness will not rub off on others, but contamination of sin will. As people began to obey God, He promised to encourage and prosper them. They needed to understand that their activities in the Temple would not clean up their sin; only repentance and obedience could do that. If we insist on having wrong attitudes and sins or on maintaining sinful relationships with sinful people, we will become defiled. Holy living will come only when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

FAMILY ACTIVITY



Items Needed

White foam shaving cream, two bowls, and very dirty hands.

Instructions

- Place shaving cream in one bowl and set it aside.
- Pass the shaving cream around and have each child squirt in their hands as much as they like and mash it between their fingers.
- After a few moments, have them scrape all of the shaving cream into an empty bowl.
- Point out how dirty it became from their dirty hands.
- Have the children wash their hands and then have them play with the dirty shaving cream. This time challenge the kids to take out all of the dirt that is in the shaving cream.
- Compare the dirty shaving cream with the clean, remarking how easy it is for things to become dirty and how difficult it is for things to become clean.

Devotional:

As a family, spend time reading the passage and discussing what you may already know about purity and striving to live “clean” before God.

The Bible talks about our call to be holy because God is holy. This command is a lot easier said than done, nevertheless, it is one of God’s commands. Walking in purity requires that we yield our bodies and minds to the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit so that He can direct our paths toward wise choices. There are times in our lives when we will stumble, and when we do we must not lose heart or believe that God will abandon us.

Discussion Questions:

1. What challenges you most about staying pure?
2. How can we challenge our family members to walk in purity before God?