

Seek Him First
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Haggai 1:1-11; 2:5-9

Opening question: Did you ever get sent to your room for doing something wrong? Time out? Detention hall? **Anyone willing to share how you disobeyed to get in that kind of trouble?**

Big Idea: When it comes to how we use our time, talents, and treasures, sometimes our priorities get out of whack. If we refuse to fix that, God may have to put us in "time out" to THINK ABOUT IT.

Haggai 1:1–11 (ESV)

1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: 2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord." 3 Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? 5 Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. 6 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. 7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. 9 You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. 10 Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. 11 And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

- Who are the key players in verses one and two?
 - This message came through Haggai the prophet...we know little more than his name.
 - This message was delivered to the two leaders of the nation, Zerubbabel (Governor of Judah) and Joshua (the high priest), the civil ruler and the religious leader.
 - The other key players in verse two are "these people."
 - **What are "these people" not doing?**
 - **What reason did "these people" give for their inactivity? What do we call that?**

Background: "When the first wave of Jewish exiles (about 50,000) returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 b.c., they began to rebuild the temple but soon gave up. (ESV)" They rebuilt the altar and started the sacrifices again, and in 535 the foundation was laid for the temple. But there was considerable opposition and the work stopped. Sixteen years passed. It was not until 520 that the people took up the work again; and in 515 the temple was finally completed. It was the work of four godly men that finally brought the task to completion: Zerubbabel, the governor; Joshua, the high priest; and Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets. (Wiersbe)"

- Verse four: **Instead of rebuilding God's temple, what had "these people" been doing?**

- **What was the significance of “paneled houses?” What is the real sin he's describing?**

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“Haggai does not waste any time; he gets right to the point of his message: ‘The people are making excuses and neglecting God’s house. But it is time to get to work and finish the house of God.’”

- **What important command from God do you see in verse five?** (repeated in verse seven)?
- Look at verse six (also nine, ten and eleven: **What was their situation?**)
- They were living in a big fine house, but they couldn’t pay the bills! *“The wells run dry; the crops have failed; and my wallet seems to have a hole in it!”*
- **Why does verse nine say God was allowing these circumstances?**
- **What was God teaching them about how they were to use the resources (time, talents, treasures) He had given them?**
- **How do we as God's people today get our priorities out of whack with God’s will?**
- Verse seven (repeats verse five) is a KEY VERSE in this book. Short, but powerful. What does it say? The Message paraphrase renders it: *“Take a good, hard look at your life. Think it over.”*
- **When a parent puts their child in “time out” what do we often tell that child to do?**
- The parent gave them specific instructions or guidelines, but **what did that child do?**
- It’s easy to run so fast in this life we get our priorities out of order. *“Lord, I know you want me to do some things for you, but I have a lot of pressure to do a lot of things!” “What about my business? What about all the activities I want my kids to do? What about paying for this new house? Times are tough and there’s only so much of my time and treasures to go around, Lord. What about what I want to do?”*
- God says: *“What about ME?”*
- Sometimes God has to STOP US and put US in “time out” to think it over.

In Matthew 6:31 (ESV) Jesus said...

31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

God never promised to give us everything we WANT. He did commit to everything we NEED... IF we are obedient to His will and do what He tells us to do.

- How can I measure if I’m obeying God? Verse eight gives us two results to obedience to God. **What are they?** Underline these...they should be our goals as children of God.
- We should challenge every decision we make with two questions: “Is God pleased? Is God glorified?” **How can we know if what we’re doing pleases and glorifies Him?**
- Verse eight: Now that God had their attention, **what does He want them to do?** The lesson here was about more than re-building the temple. **What was God really teaching them?**

Our lesson writer puts it this way:

“As important as building God’s temple was, what God really wanted was a change of heart for His people (compare Rom. 12:1).”

Even though the people obeyed God and finished re-building the temple, they were discouraged. You know, obedience to God may not immediately change the circumstances.

Haggai 2:5–9 (ESV) God tells them:

5 according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. 6 For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.’ ”

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Haggai’s best advice for you and me: *“Don’t make God put you in ‘time out’ to think it over!”*
- When it comes to using our time, talents, and treasures, it’s better to “think it over” BEFORE God has to remind us about what He’s called us to do.
- We should challenge every decision we make with two questions: “Will God be pleased? Will God be glorified?”
- We answer those questions with time in His word and time in His presence in prayer.
- Remember: *“Don’t make God put you in ‘time out’ to think it over!”*