



### *First Things First*

Haggai: Putting God First Series - Week 1

Haggai 1:1-15

**Introduction:** Here's why the book of Haggai is important even if it takes a GPS to find it in the Bible! The book of Haggai is important because God chose to include this book in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). Because God chose to include this book in the Bible means there are life lessons He wants us to learn from the book of Haggai. For all of its lack of popularity, it has one of the most popular messages in all of the Bible: "Put God first." Haggai is not a book about fitting God into our lives ... it's a book about making God first in our lives and the benefits that come when we do.

### **The backstory of Haggai**

Abraham - Isaac - Jacob - 12 sons - 12 tribes of Israel - Egyptian captivity - Tabernacle - Kings Saul, David, and Solomon - Temple - Babylonian captivity - return to Jerusalem.

### **Section #1 - Misplaced priorities.** (Haggai 1:1-2)

→ **Note this:** As the Jews returned to Jerusalem from captivity, homes were built, stores were opened, fields were planted, crops were harvested and there was a normal pattern of life again. There was only one problem: The temple was still in ruins. Every time the Israelites passed by it, it stood as a reminder that although God was a part of their lives, He was not first in their lives.

→ **Note this:** It's always easy to make excuses when we don't want to obey God.

### **Section #2 - God's probing question.** (Haggai 1:3-4)

→ **Note this:** There's nothing wrong with living in a nice house. This isn't an attack on anyone blessed enough to have a nice house. What is wrong is to have a house or anything else we adore so much that we neglect God. In Israel's situation, their rebuilt houses were remarkable ... while God's house continued to lay in ruins.

### **Section #3 - Carefully consider your ways.** (Haggai 1:5-7)

→ **Note this:** When God isn't first in our lives, all the happiness we think we find in other things will always leak out like a bag with a hole in it.

### **Today's Take-Away Truths from God's Word**

**Truth #1** - God will honor those who honor Him and will bless them. (Haggai 1:8)

**Truth #2** - The key to a happy and fulfilling life is to put first things first, and that always starts with God. (Haggai 1:9)

**Truth #3** - God can always help us start again. (Haggai 1:13-15)



### *Dealing with Disappointment*

Haggai: Putting God First Series - Week 2

Haggai 2:1-9

**One definition of discouragement:** When our expectations (what we think should happen) and our reality (what actually happens) don't match, the result can be disappointment.

### The causes of disappointment

#### **Cause #1 - Unmet expectations.** (Haggai 2:1-3)

→ **Note this:** The Jews had stopped working on the temple as they remembered the splendor of Solomon's Temple in comparison to the smallness of the temple they were working on. Because of unmet expectations, they allowed the seeds of disappointment and discouragement to be planted in their hearts.

#### **Cause #2 - Comparing.** (Haggai 2:3)

→ **Note this:** We lose every time we play the comparison game. When we look at someone else who has what we don't, it robs us of joy and contentment. The result is ENVY. When we look at someone else who doesn't have what we do, it can make us feel better or superior. The result is PRIDE.

#### **Cause #3 - Forgetting God's goodness.** (Haggai 2:4-5)

→ **Note this:** Here's how God was going to help the people in Haggai's day to defeat disappointment and discouragement. He was going to remind

them of this wonderful truth: the same God, who was with Israel when delivered from Egypt and was with them at the crossing of the Red Sea, is the same God who is with them today. And that same faithful God who was with Israel then - is the same God who is with us today!

#### **Cause #4 - Doubting God's promises.** (Haggai 2:6-9)

→ **Note this:** Did you notice how many times God said in these four verses the words "I will"? Each "I will" represents what God promises to do. Anytime a believer doubts the faithfulness of God, it's because we are lacking trust in the promises of God.

### The Cure for Dealing with Disappointment

#### **Step #1 - Let go.** (Haggai 2:4a)

→ **Note this:** There are different things in life we sometimes hold on to that we need to let go of. It can be a hurt, a painful memory, or just always wishing things could be the way they used to be... like Israel did with Solomon's Temple. No matter what it is - if something is holding us back, with God's help, we need to let go of it.

#### **Step #2 - Look up.** (Haggai 2:4b)

→ **Note this:** To "look up" means to get the right view of God. Did you notice that Haggai used one particular name for God six times in these nine verses? He refers to God as "*The LORD Almighty...*" This title speaks of God's ultimate power over everything.

#### **Step #3 - Look ahead.** (Haggai 2:6-9)

→ **Note this:** God wanted the Jews to know the story of the temple didn't end there. Disappointment and discouragement want to make us believe a story ends here, and we will always stay stuck here. But we can "look ahead" because we know that God ultimately writes the stories, not our circumstances. "God, remind me that because of Your goodness and greatness, a story in life doesn't end here. Help me to trust in You to keep writing the rest of the stories."



### *The Blessing of Saying Yes to God*

Haggai: Putting God First Series - Week 3

Haggai 2:10-19

**Key Truth:** For all of its lack of popularity, the book of Haggai has one of the most popular messages in all of the Bible: "Put God first." Haggai is not a book about FITTING God into our lives - it's a book about making God FIRST in our lives.

**Introduction:** Making God first in our lives means we do our best to say "yes" to God and "no" to sin. Every time we say "yes" to God we are obeying God. When we obey God, three good things happen. When we obey God, it pleases Him, it blesses us, and it benefits those in our lives. Whereas saying "yes" to sin brings consequences - obedience brings blessings.

### Two Assumptions

**Assumption #1** - If you are a Christian, you will sincerely want to obey God. You know that when you obey God, you please God. And your heart's desire is to please God (Psalm 40:8).

**Assumption #2** - We know that no one on earth obeys God all the time. Therefore, we must always be doing a spiritual inventory for any presence of sin in our lives (1 John 1:8).

### Section #1 - Two curious questions. (Haggai 2:10-13)

→ **Note this:** When we choose to sin, our clean heart becomes an unclean heart. When the heart gets contaminated by sin, it needs cleaning that comes from the repenting and confessing of our sins (1 John 1:9).

### Section #2 - Our hearts are either clean or contaminated. (Haggai 2:14)

→ **Note this:** We can write it down and count on it to be true: "You can't fool God." He isn't impressed by religious routines unless it is accompanied by a clean heart.

### Section #3 - Look back and learn. (Haggai 2:15-17)

→ **Note this:** God disciplines us in order to RESTORE us, not to PUNISH us. It's true that God had initiated their hard times, but He wasn't doing it just to punish them. There was a purpose behind the punishment. God wanted to get their attention in order to turn their hearts back to the One who loved them more than they could imagine.

### Section #4 - Look ahead with hope. (Haggai 2:18-19)

→ **Note this:** "From this day on." It's as if God were saying, "The past is the past and that can't be changed. But things are going to be different from now on." No matter how often we stray from God, He is always looking to have "from this day on" new beginnings (Lamentations 3:22-23).

### Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

**Truth #1** - We need to love God more than we love our sins. (Haggai 2:14)

**Truth #2** - Our choices always have consequences. (Haggai 2:16-17)

**Truth #3** - Blessings can begin the moment we obey. (Haggai 2:15)

**Truth #4** - When we practice obedience, a harvest of blessings will come. (Haggai 2:19)



### *Keeping the Big Picture in Mind*

Haggai: Putting God First Series - Week 4  
Haggai 2:20-23

**Today's Key Truth:** What we need when things seem out of control is the important reminder of who is ultimately in control - the Lord Almighty!

**Series Key Truth:** Haggai is not a book about FITTING God into our lives ... it's a book about making God FIRST in our lives.

**For us to keep the big picture in mind we need to remember that ...**

**Reminder #1 - The Lord Almighty has supreme power.**  
(Haggai 2:20-22)

→ **Note this:** Time and time again, the Bible shows us that the God who holds the galaxies in space is the same God who is concerned with the details of what concerns us.

**The Lord's Supreme Power.** Verses 21 and 22 tell us (1) God has power over all NATURE. He can "shake the heavens and earth." (2) God has power over all RULERS. He can "overturn royal thrones." And (3) God has power over all ENEMIES - He can overthrow "the power of the foreign kingdoms."

**Reminder #2 - The Lord Almighty has a sovereign plan.**  
(Haggai 2:23a)

→ **Note this:** God's sovereign plan for the world doesn't end like a Hollywood "end-of-the-world" movie. God's plan after the return of Jesus is to destroy everything scarred by sin and to give us a new perfect world we will live in forever with Him and other believers (Revelation 21:1-5).

**Reminder #3 - The Lord Almighty delivers on His sure promises.**  
(Haggai 2:23b)

→ **Note this:** God had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning the Messiah that would be born from their lineage. This promise was also made to David which would partially happen through Zerubbabel (Matthew 1:1; 12). And one night, a baby boy was born in Bethlehem, who was a descendant of Zerubbabel, named Jesus. God delivered on His sure promise!

**Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word**

**Truth #1 -** We need to be listening to what God wants to say to us.

**Truth #2 -** God can deliver us from our dysfunctions.

**Truth #3 -** From the Old Testament to the New Testament the message is always about Jesus.

**Truth #4 -** God wins and so does everyone on His team.