

Hag 1:1-15 (NIV)

In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest: {2} This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built.’” {3} Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: {4} “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” {5} Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: **“Give careful thought to your ways.** {6} You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” {7} This is what the LORD Almighty says: **“Give careful thought to your ways.** {8} Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the LORD. {9} “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. {10} Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. {11} I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands.” {12} Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. {13} Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: “I am with you,” declares the LORD. {14} So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, {15} on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

37-01-01-Kingdom Building Problems: Disinterest
 priorities, temple, incarnation, focus, God’s work
 Haggai 1:1-15

If we make God’s work top priority, all other priorities fall into place.

INTRODUCTION: (text read as Scripture reading)

–Haggai was prophesying to those returning from exile in Babylon, and his message had *one focus: the rebuilding of God’s house* (a theme that applies both to *God’s dwelling with us* and to *our devotion to God.*)

–Haggai was confronting *3 problematic attitudes* among God’s people: *disinterest, discouragement & dissatisfaction* (the 3 titles in this series,

Kingdom-Building Problems). These attitudes *crept in* because their neighbors resisted their obedience in rebuilding God’s temple. [this is **logical**: a world that *rejects* God’s will, will *resist* Christians who try to obey it!]

–Haggai’s 1st prophecy, about the problem of disinterest gives us a message about priorities (stated briefly, it’s this: **HOM.idea**.)

–[**NIV**= “give careful thought to your ways”; **NKJV**= “consider your ways”; **Heb**= “set your heart on your roads”] Haggai uses the word **consider** [set your heart] 5 times in his short book. Unlike the strong blast often coming from other prophets, this is a word of *appeal*....

I. Consider Your Work, v.1-6, 8-11 (recognizing our disinterest)

A. Where did we take a wrong turn in the road?– **v.2**, “The time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built.” [time to get out the map!]

1. God hears people’s excuses AND can *quote them!* [**William Carey** was rebuked in proposing his *foreign mission idea* to a group of ministers: “Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.” (an *immortal* quote AND an *immoral* one!)]
2. God doesn’t accept the rearrangement of His priorities! (If it isn’t “time...yet,” whose *time schedule* are we on, *God’s or our own?*)
3. God cares enough about us to rebuke us when we get *off track* (He can point out where we took a wrong turn).

B. Self-interests block a godly focus– **v.4**, “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

1. Our “paneled houses” show no expense spared in the priorities of our private life, personal preferences & comfortable living...
2. God’s concern is the real business of life (the Kingdom of God): “[My] house remains a ruin” [**William Carey**, was a cobbler before he left England. He used to go from village to village preaching. One day a friend

told him, “Bill, by going about preaching as you do, you’re neglecting your business.” “Neglect my business?” Carey answered. “My business is to extend the Kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses!”]

- C. When we neglect His kingdom, God says (v.6), “*Consider your ways*”:
1. our works: “*You have planted much, but have harvested little*” (Worldly gain brings only *temporary* satisfaction; our ultimate joy depends on who we really are: eternal souls created to love & serve God.)
 2. our food: “*You eat, but never have enough*” (We starve spiritually if we neglect the Lord’s Table [“You prepare a table before me...”] or His Word [“man shall not live by bread alone...”].)
 3. our thirst: “*You drink, but never have your fill*”—our soul has thirsts that only God can quench, and *He will*—Isa 55:1, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”
 4. our comfort: “*You put on clothes, but are not warm*” [Since Eden, we got focused on clothes, but Jesus says, Mat 6:28-29, “why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”]
 5. our wages: “*You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it*” [Alexander MacClaren called this purse with holes working for less wages than God’s “Well done.” It’s like him who puts his money in a bank, only to find one day that it goes bankrupt with his savings gone—a bag with holes. Or like one climbing to the top of his profession, living in the limelight, until a young competitor runs ahead of him, and all is lost—a bag with holes. Or like an invention that won a man fame and fortune, until a new inventor improved on it, rendering the original obsolete and forgotten—a bag with holes.]

TRANS: If we set *our own priorities* above *God’s*, His Fatherly hand of discipline will eventually fall, right where we misplaced our focus. Then, if we ask God “*why*”, He may answer with the same question, as He did in v.9, “*You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?*” declares the LORD Almighty. “*Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.*” God wants us to **reconsider our ways**, so that we can **re-focus on our real work**. **When God’s work becomes our top priority, all other priorities in life fall into place.**

II. Consider Your Ways, v.7,8 (evaluating our attitude of disinterest)

- A. v.7, “*Give careful thought to your ways.*”—*Evaluation is judgment*, and it isn’t just God’s work. It’s the task of all rational beings:

1. God’s standard is quality [the same as in successful businesses that emphasize “*quality assurance*” and “*quality improvement programs.*”]
 2. The goal is measuring worth [e-*value*-ation] (God wants us to make a “*careful,*” logical choice between temporal and eternal values.)
- B. v.8, *Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,*” says the LORD. (This is the key to understanding the work God assigns to humanity!)
1. Go “*into the mountains*” for spiritual building materials (on a higher plane [where Moses 1st met God, got the Decalogue and Tabernacle plan])
 2. Bring God’s spiritual supply into the physical need—“*bring down timber and build*” [God made Jesus a carpenter: He was to be a Builder]
 3. “*build the house!*”—Jesus is a *King* who is building a *Kingdom* on the relational and incarnational foundation of “*God with us.*”)

TRANS: Do we want to make God happy? He says, “*build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it.*” Do we want to honor Him? He says, “*build the house, so that I may...be honored.*” **Building the house** is focusing on “*God with us*”: *God dwelling with us* and *we being in fellowship with Him!* This was the prophet Haggai’s one theme and focus....

III. Consider God’s Will (ending disinterest with our full attention)

- A. By obeying His Word in the mouth of His messengers—v.12, *...the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him.*
- B. If we turn full attention to God’s will, He will immediately affirm His ultimate purpose—v.13, “*I am with you,*” is Haggai’s new word from God to the people when *they decide to obey Him.*)
- C. New attention to Kingdom building brought *renewed inspiration* (and *where did it hit?*)—v.14, “*the LORD stirred up the spirit of*” the **leadership!** (The pulpit is important, but the pew is crucial!)

CONCLUSION:

—*What is God after in calling us to build His Kingdom?* Is His focus on literal buildings or church gatherings? Those are *important*, but *only because something else is more important: people!...human beings involved in Kingdom living*. Jesus said in Mat 6:33, “*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” **When God’s work is top priority, all other priorities fall into place.**