



TALK IT OVER

Where Does God Fit? (Haggai 1:1-11)

How to use Talk It Over:

Talking through the message during the week helps you and your group turn what God is saying to you into action steps. Begin with the key questions, add any optional scriptures and questions if needed, and then wrap up by deciding on your next steps.

The Main Idea:

What you have time and money for reveals your life-priorities.

Key Questions:

- What are your current life-priorities or passions? What are you spending your time and money on? What are you investing your energy in?
- How would you summarize Haggai's message in Chapter 1? If the prophet Haggai were evaluating your life, what do you think he would say?
- What is the connection between honoring God with our time and money and experiencing God's blessing in our lives? Read Matthew 6:19-34. How does Jesus' teaching reflect Haggai's words?
- What change, if any, does Haggai Chapter 1 prompt you to make in your life?

Optional Questions: If needed, include one or more of these questions to extend your conversation.

- Why was it difficult for the returning Israelites to prioritize the building of God's temple? What other things were competing for their time and attention?
- Why does it require a "step of faith" to put God first in all areas of our lives? What about God do you have to believe or trust in order to invest in him instead of other things?
- It is interesting to note that the Israelites were investing in their own homes (1:4) instead of God's house. How does this assessment of Israelite culture in 520 B.C. reflect trends in our own culture?
- Is there always a correlation between negative circumstances in our lives and the neglect of our relationship with God? When might this not be the case? Why do we need the Bible to help us draw the right conclusions about the circumstances we are experiencing? In what ways could it be dangerous to draw these conclusions on our own (without the Bible informing us)?

Next Steps:

- Reflect carefully on what your life-priorities. Prayerfully ask the following questions:
 - How do I spend my time?
 - How do I spend my money?
 - What would Haggai say about my choices?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Get an overview of Haggai's message by reading the entire book this week. It is only two chapters long. Let God speak to you as you read Haggai's words to the Israelites.

Day 1 Haggai 1:1-11 (NLT Life Application Study Bible p. 1498)

Day 2 Haggai 1:12-5

Day 3 Haggai 2:1-9

Day 4 Haggai 2:10-18

Day 5 Haggai 2:20-23

(The next two readings jump ahead to the New Testament and Jesus' teaching about priorities. Jesus lived about 500 years after Haggai spoke. How does Jesus' teaching compare with Haggai's?)

Day 6 Matthew 6:19-24 (NLT Life Application Study Bible p. 1551)

Day 7 Matthew 6:25-34

Bible Reading Background

Haggai was a prophet or a "spokesman for God." His message would have originally been spoken, then later written down into book form by either himself or someone who heard his prophecies. Haggai speaks his prophecies over a four month period during the year 520 B.C. Note how the author of the book gives Haggai's words authority: "The Lord gave a message through the prophet Haggai" (1:1); "The Lord sent another message through the prophet Haggai" (2:1); "The Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai" (2:10); etc. These formulas were a common way for the writers of the Bible to let their readers know that the prophet's words were actually God's words.