

## It's All About Priorities

### Word

### Scripture Reference

Haggai 1:1-15

### Discussion Questions

1. Think about your daily or weekly routine. What roadblocks to your plans disturb you the most?
2. Most of the time, we are more disturbed by the non-spiritual things going wrong in our lives than we are about the spiritual activities we fail to accomplish. Our priorities have been turned upside down, and as followers of Jesus Christ, it is time for us to get our priorities in order. Read Haggai 1:1-15. Because of their disobedience, God allowed the Babylonians to conquer Israel and destroy the temple. But because God's promise to His people, God brought them back. However, the Israelites were too busy rebuilding their lives that rebuilding God's temple became less important. It was at this time that God spoke to His people through the prophet Haggai to get the people's priorities back on track. From this biblical account, we can draw out six principles concerning priorities that God wants us to remember:
  - a. **God is omniscient; we cannot fool Him when it comes to our true priorities (v. 2).** God knows the hearts of people and what they are thinking. He knew that building the temple was not the people's priority. They were justifying that it was not the time yet to rebuild it. What are the "to do list" in your spiritual life? How are you prioritizing the things you do for God? Share the things that hinder you from making God the priority in your life.

- b. **Priorities are an indicator of one's heart, we do what we love, we don't do what we don't love (v. 3-4).** God asked the Israelites why they had time to fix their own houses but not His. This showed that the people did not really love the things of God. It was not about the building, but on what they prioritized which showed what was really in their hearts. Share and discuss the things you love to do. How do these things hinder you from giving God priority in what you do? Should your time, money, and ability limit what you can do for God? Why or why not?
- c. **Reassessment and realigning of priorities is a command of God (v. 5-11).** To reconsider your priorities is not a suggestion, but a command from God. To be a Christian means to be a follower of Christ, and so it's ironic that many Christians are not following Him. Discuss the things Christians do that are not fitting for followers of Christ. How could this be avoided if you give priority to the Name of God?
- d. **There is a cost for not prioritizing God, but a benefit for doing so (v. 6, 9-11).** Because the people did not give priority to the work of God, economic hardship fell upon them. On the other hand, making God one's priority bears fruitful results. Discuss what could happen if you don't give God importance in what you do. Why would pulling away from God make matters worse? What is the promise given in Matthew 6:33? Discuss how the time you spend with or for God can save you from a lot of trouble.
- e. **Priorities are implemented only in tangible actions (v. 7-8).** God wanted to see people's priorities in action. It should not be just a lip service. Share how giving God priority is seen in your life.
- f. **A healthy fear of God causes us to prioritize Him (v. 12-15).** The people's response was to obey God. If you don't respect God, then you take His Word lightly and don't do what He tells you to do. Are you able to stand up for God because of your fear and respect for Him? How do your priorities speak of your healthy fear of God?

- g. **God is with us when we prioritize Him (v. 13-15).** Because of the people's response of obedience, there was revival. They came and began to work on the house of God, and God told them, "I am with you!" How would having the right priorities about God and His work give you assurance that God is with you?

### Walk

Discuss how the poem below gives a picture of how you act with God.

*I got up early one morning  
and rushed right into the day!  
I had so much to accomplish  
that I didn't take time to pray.  
Problems just tumbled about me,  
and heavier came each task.  
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.  
He answered, "You didn't ask!"*

*I tried to come into God's presence;  
I used all my keys at the lock.  
God gently and lovingly chided,  
"Why, child, you didn't knock!"  
I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
but the day toiled on, gray and bleak.  
I wondered why God didn't show me.  
He answered me, "But you didn't seek."*

*I woke up early this morning,  
and paused before entering the day.  
I had so much to accomplish,  
that I had to take time to pray.*

*(Author Unknown)*

### Worship & Prayer

*Heavenly Father, You have all the right in the world to claim the highest priority in my life. You didn't only create me, but you have claimed me when you send your Son Jesus Christ to die for me. How could I not give you the first place in my heart? And yet, I must admit that many times, other things or people claim the most part of my being. Thank you for bringing this to my attention. Help me to seek your kingdom first. Thank you for your promise that if I do, other things will be given to me as well. In Jesus' name. Amen.*