

Small Group Guide



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together asking God to reveal areas where He desires to be prioritized in each person's life.

Icebreaker Question

What's one project or goal you've been putting off with the excuse "I'll get to it when I have more time/money/energy"?

Key Scripture

Haggai 1:5-7 - "Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much but 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."

Key Takeaways

1. God doesn't want to be on your list; He wants to design the list. God desires to be above all priorities, not simply first among many.
2. The "as soon as" trap is deadly. Waiting until we have "enough" before obeying God creates a cycle where we never have enough.
3. Misplaced priorities lead to perpetual dissatisfaction. When God isn't in His rightful place, we experience constant anxiety, discontentment, and hunger for more.

4. God's command to prioritize Him comes from love. He knows what truly brings life, joy, and peace.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. What was the historical context of Haggai's message? Why had the Israelites not rebuilt the temple after 15 years?
2. What does it mean that the people were living in "paneled houses" while God's house remained in ruins? What does this reveal about their priorities?
3. How did the Israelites' misplaced priorities affect their daily lives according to verses 6 and 9-11?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon states: "Saying that God is first is really a bad way to say it. Saying he's first sounds like he's something on your list when God doesn't want to be on your list." What's the difference between making God "first" versus letting Him "design the list"?
5. Haggai repeatedly says, "Give careful thought to your ways" (verses 5 and 7). When was the last time you paused to genuinely examine your priorities? What did you discover?
6. Where in your life are you experiencing the symptoms described in verse 6:
 - Never having enough?
 - Always hungry for more?
 - Perpetual anxiety or discontentment?
 - Feeling like your wages go into "a purse with holes"?

Application

7. Complete this sentence honestly: "I'm going to trust God with _____ just as soon as _____."
 - What's keeping you from trusting Him in that area right now?
8. The Israelites didn't outright reject God; they just said "yes, someday" instead of "yes, today." How is this strategy at work in your life currently?

9. In what specific area is God calling you to prioritize Him right now, even though it doesn't feel like you have "enough" (time, money, energy, etc.)?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE area where you've been putting God off and take one concrete step of obedience this week:

Examples:

- Finances: If you've been waiting to tithe or be generous, give this week even if it feels uncomfortable
- Time: Wake up 15 minutes earlier to spend time with God, even if you feel you don't have enough sleep
- Relationships: Have that difficult conversation you've been avoiding, trusting God with the outcome
- Health: Make one change to honor God with your body (sleep schedule, eating habits, exercise)
- Career: Make a decision based on God's calling rather than financial security

Accountability

- Share your specific commitment with the group
- Exchange contact information with one other person to check in mid-week
- Report back next week on what happened when you prioritized God in this area

Daily Reflection

Each day this week, pause and ask yourself:

1. "Where is God on my list today?"
2. "What am I running after that's leaving me unsatisfied?"
3. "What does it look like to let God design my list today?"

Group Prayer Focus

Pray for each person to:

- Have eyes to see where they've been putting God off
- Find courage to say "yes" to God today, not "someday"
- Experience freedom from the cycle of never having enough
- Trust that God's design for their life is better than their own
- Break free from specific "as soon as" excuses holding them back

Closing Thought

"The central message of Scripture is that there's no way to be in a right relationship with God where He is not first. And where God is not in His proper place, life is always going to be off kilter."