

Focus Your Faith

Chapter 13

Audio Lesson: Old Testament number 86



Objective: To learn through Haggai how we can overcome our fears and do the Lord's work with courage and zeal.



This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD Almighty. "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty. "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant peace," declares the LORD Almighty.

—Haggai 2:6-9

Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you.

—1 Peter 5:7

The prophet Haggai shows us how to set our priorities for life. To those who are going through a spiritual drought or who find that their work is not being blessed by God, Haggai says to "Consider your ways" and to "Consider God's ways." God wants us to focus on the work He is doing today and that He plans to do in the future. We are to let our faith focus our priorities, our perspective, our motives, and our fears.



1. True or false? According to Haggai, faith does not have much effect on our lives.
2. True or false? One of our tendencies as human beings is to let the past negatively affect us now.
3. True or false? God wants us to learn His will by comparing ourselves to other people and wishing we were like them.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. How does Satan try to keep us from receiving God's best for our lives? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. He tempts us to do evil things.
 - b. He tempts us to do good things instead of the best things.
 - c. He tries to discourage us.
 - d. He tries to distract us.
 - e. He tries to focus our attention on past regrets.
5. What was the most important aspect of the temple God's people were building?
 - a. Its gold and silver
 - b. The stones in its foundation
 - c. Its size
 - d. Its spiritual value as a place filled with God's glory
6. Why did God not bless the rebuilding of the temple at first?
 - a. The people were not using enough gold.
 - b. The motives of the people were mixed with sinful attitudes.
 - c. He wanted them to wait longer.
 - d. He did not think He needed a temple.
7. How did Haggai encourage the people to keep building?
 - a. He assured them that God would bless their work because of their repentance.
 - b. He warned them that God would punish them severely if they stopped to rest.
 - c. He bribed them with gold and silver.
 - d. He told them God would grant His favor if they sacrificed 1,000 animals.
8. How can we become holy?
 - a. By being close to holy people and holy places
 - b. By wearing a holy amulet
 - c. By going to a temple or church every day
 - d. By God's grace as we set ourselves apart for Him
9. How does faith affect our fears?
 - a. It causes us to focus on God and on His plan.
 - b. It causes us to fear God's wrath and obey Him like slaves.
 - c. It magnifies our fears of wars and social crises.
 - d. It makes us so godly that we never fear anything.

10. Who did Haggai usually focus on in his preaching?

- a. His closest friends
- b. The oppressors of God's people
- c. The leaders of the country
- d. The temple construction workers



Is God blessing your work? What are your motives for serving God? Do you serve Him because it is right and because you love Him? When you find selfish motives within you, what can you do to get free from them?

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God... God is love. This is how God showed His love among us; He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.

—1 John 4:7-10, 18



Thank God that He is more powerful than any problem or threat we can ever experience. Ask Him to replace your fear with faith and to help you love and serve Him with a pure heart.



Going Deeper

1. How can you apply the preaching of Haggai that challenged the people to overcome their fear with their faith? _____

2. How do you apply the message Haggai gave the people, to overcome their discouragement because the foundation of the second Temple was as nothing compared to the glory of the first Temple? _____

3. What is your personal application of the sermon in which Haggai gave his prophecy about God shaking everything in this world until only the unshakable will be left? (Haggai 2:6-7)

4. If you think of your priorities as a target with a bull's-eye and a dozen circles surrounding the bull's-eye, what would your priority target look like, based on the first message of this great prophet? _____

5. How do you personally apply the message of Haggai that tells us how easily sin or infection is transmitted, compared to the way holiness, or spirituality can be transmitted? _____

6. What evidence is there in these two short chapters that Haggai must have been a very powerful and persuasive preacher? _____

7. How does Haggai serve as a model of the role of a prophet to address the obstacle that is blocking the work of God, so that the work of God will be on track again as a result of his preaching? _____
