

"Keeping God First"
Haggai 1:1-15
Sunday August 18, 2019

Stewardship – "Is one that manages or has oversight over the affairs of another; he does not own that which he has been entrusted with but manages it as if it is his own."

There are at least **2,350 passages** in the Bible dealing with money and material possessions. That's more than on any other subject. **38 Parables of Jesus:** 12 have to do with money, **God-given resources; Our use of material goods.** In the 4 gospels, 1 out of every 8 verses speaks of money.

Oswald Chambers said, "Spiritual maturity is not reached by the passing of the years, but by obedience to the will of God."

Biblical Fundamentals On Giving: Tithing – is the giving of 10% to the Lord. It was commanded of Israel. Israel's giving consisted of Tithing 10%, the Temple tax, the Land Sabbath Tax, and the Special Profit-Sharing Tax (leaving the corners unharvest, for the poor); 25% of earnings per year. In addition, there was voluntary giving in the Old Testament which included first-fruit giving and freewill offerings; About 38% yearly.

Israel's Tithe was placed in the "**store-house,**" **Malachi 3:8-10.**

"Why The Tithe?" This was God's way of providing for the service of the temple. It reminded Israel that worship was central to life, and they belonged to the Lord.

The New Testament Teaches Grace Giving; That we are not bound or limited to 10% but the Tithe is a starting point for the Christian.

We are stewards of God; all belongs to Him: We are managers.

1 Corinthians 16:2:

1. Give on first day of the week – "**On the first day of every week**"
2. Give each one of you – "**let each one**"
3. Give systematically – "**put aside and save,**" – Should plan.
4. Give proportionally – "**as he may prosper.**" – How has God blessed me?

2 Corinthians 9:7

Haggai 1:1-15 – The Prophet Haggai is confronting the Wrong Priorities Of Israel! In 536 BC, Ezra returned to Jerusalem with exiles from Babylon. Israel started to rebuild the temple, then stopped for 16 years. It was then that **Haggai** and **Zechariah** began to preach.

The purpose of Haggai's ministry was to awaken the complacent people and encourage them in finishing God's temple.

1. Verses 1-4 – Stop Making Excuses

2. Verses 5-11 – Consider Your Ways

3. Verses 12-15 – Begin To Serve The Lord

1. Verses 1-4 – Stop Making Excuses:

Haggai 1:1 – "In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month," – September 1, 520, that Haggai delivered this message. Sixteen years had passed since the laying of the foundation, and the temple lay unfinished.

"word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai" – There is no recorded info about Haggai's family background, call, or personal life.

Prophets Haggai and Zechariah were probably among the nearly 50,000 Jewish exiles who left Babylon for Judah in 537, encouraged by the edict of King Cyrus, Ezra 1:1-4; 5:1-2; 6:14. Haggai 2:3 suggests that Haggai had seen Solomon's temple before it was destroyed and therefore was a senior saint.

When the work on the temple had been stopped for sixteen years (536–520), Haggai and Zechariah suddenly began to preach, Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1.

This message was delivered to the two leaders of the nation, Zerubbabel – governor of Judah the civil ruler, and Joshua – the high priest, the spiritual leader.

Haggai 1:2 – "The people are making excuses and neglecting God's house. But it is time to get to work and finish the house of God."

Haggai 1:3-4

"Is it time for you yourselves" – Notice it was time for self, but no time for God!

“yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses” – In other words, they were putting self ahead of the Lord.

Roy L. Laurin said, “The grace of giving completes the graces of Christian character. This is so because giving is the outflow of the inflow of grace. It is faith in action. It is utterance made real. It is knowledge made practical. It is diligence applied. It is love in its finest form. In these ways, giving completes the graces of the Christian life and makes faith the most practical thing in the world.”

Proverbs 3:9-10

Matthew 6:33

God’s Grace motivates a Christian’s Giving. Christians Are The Givers!

2. Verses 5-11 – Consider Your Ways:

Haggai 1:5 – “Consider your ways!”

“Consider” – “give careful thought to;” Look at your life! Look at the direction that you are going and look at the lack of fruitfulness! “your ways!” – Verse 7 – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Consider your ways!’”

Verse 6 – You’re Spinning Your Wheels: Haggai 1:6.

Unfruitful: “You have sown much, but harvest little;” – That’s amazing because God says, “sow much, reap much,” 2 Corinthians 9:6.

Luke 6:38

God Permits Unfruitfulness: He was trying to get Israel’s attention – Are we lacking in fruit? Deuteronomy 28 – Consequences of disobedience.

“If we live to give, God will see to it that we receive; but if we live only to get, God will see to it that we lose.”

Meals That Don’t Satisfy: “you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk;”

Wardrobe That Flops: “you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough;”

Earnings That Disappear: “and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.” – Income does not cover expenses!

Verses 7-8 – Live To Please The Lord: Haggai 1:7-8.

“that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,’ says the LORD.”

Verses 9-11 – Barrenness Should Lead Us To God: Haggai 1:9-11.

Barrenness need not be a mystery as to why we are not fruitful; It can be because God is not our priority.

3. Verses 12-15 – Begin To Serve The Lord:

Haggai 1:12-13

Through obedience, the child of God has God’s presence with them!

Haggai 1:14-15 – 3 Week Delay; It was harvest time; the temple site was filled with debris after 16 years of neglect. Israel needed to confess their sins and get right.

Application:

1. Tithing Was An Old Testament Teaching For Israel. The New Testament Teaches Grace Giving, Which Goes Beyond Tithing, Liberating Us Through Grace In Our Giving.
2. Giving Is A Lifestyle. It Is Not An Occasional Giving To A Cause, But It Is Planning And Giving Proportionately.
3. If Instruction On Christian Stewardship Is Presented Biblically, A Christian Should Be Grateful, Not Irritated And Angry.
4. As God’s Steward, Am I Managing God’s Resources God’s Way? If Not, What Changes Do I need To Make?