

GENEROSITY

Based On: Haggai 1:4-9, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

July 6, 2014

Overview

We all set priorities in our lives. These priorities determine what we give our time, attention, and resources to. Between our daily responsibilities, family, and friends it seems like everyone is competing for limited time and resources. In the midst of all this chaos called life, we have a Creator God setting back saying, “Do you remember Me?” In every aspect of our lives it is far too easy to take care of ourselves first and give God whatever is left. This is the situation that was occurring in the book of Haggai. The book was written after Israel was allowed to return to their land from the Babylonian exile. They came back to Jerusalem and instead of repairing God’s temple they spent their time building their own houses.

Haggai points out their selfishness: they had built their own houses, but they said it was not time to build God’s house. In other words, they were putting themselves ahead of the Lord. Some of the Jews even had “ceiled houses,” which would be luxuries in that day. This sin is the same with us today. We put our own desires ahead of the will of the Lord. How easy it is to make excuses for not doing God’s work! The weather is too bad to go visiting or to attend church, but not too bad for a hunting trip or a shopping spree. People will sit through a double-header baseball game and never complain, yet they start to fidget if a church service runs five minutes overtime.¹

Haggai was telling all the Jews in Jerusalem that their priorities were messed up. They were too focused on self and not God. Messed up priorities is not just something that plagued ancient Israel. By examining where you spend your time, attention, and resources you can determine where God fits on priority list.

Bible Study: Haggai 1:4-9, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1. Read Haggai 1:4 & Philippians 2:21. Why is it so easy for people to look out after their own interests first and put God second?
2. Why do you believe God established the tithe when He could do anything He wanted without our money?
3. Read 1 Timothy 6:7. We brought nothing in and we can take nothing out. How can having an eternal perspective help you establish your priorities and become more generous?
4. Read John 1:1. Everything in all creation started with God. All the resources this world has to offer belong to the Creator. In what ways can reflecting on the world’s ownership help you determine your priorities?
5. Read 1 Timothy 6:6. How can learning to be content lead to being generous?
6. Read 1 Timothy 6:10. What do you think Paul meant when he said the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil?
7. What is the difference between being a good steward and having a love of money?
8. In what ways can you show that God has priority in your life?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Hag 1:1–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.