

Dgroup Discussion Guide for July 22, 2018
First Things First

Scripture: Haggai 1-2

The first of the Ten Commandments is this: ***You shall have no other gods before me*** (Exodus 20:3). Above all else, God wants to be first in our lives, and He takes offense when He is not our priority. We see this in Haggai 1:2-4: ***The Lord who rules over all says this: “These people have said, ‘The time for rebuilding the Lord’s temple has not yet come.’” So the Lord spoke through the prophet Haggai as follows: “Is it right for you to live in richly paneled houses while my temple is in ruins?”*** Here, the Lord reveals ill feelings toward the Israelites not because they are enjoying blessings of wealth, but because they have their priorities skewed; the fact that they live in well-decorated homes while the Lord’s temple is left to ruins shows that they did not put Him first. If God really is important in our lives, we must show it by placing Him at the center.

What happens when we neglect God? Haggai 1:9:10 says, ***“You expected a large harvest, but instead there was little, and when you brought it home it disappeared right away. Why?” asks the Lord who rules over all. “Because my temple remains in ruins, thanks to each of you favoring his own house! This is why the sky has held back its dew and the earth its produce.”*** Even though the Lord is the provider of all things good, He is also not above withholding things from His people, if need be. On the other hand, when we obey God and align ourselves with His will, He is faithful to see us through.

Even in ministry—and regardless of how well-meaning we are—we are prone to discouragement. One reason for this is comparison. In Haggai 2, we see the Israelites obeying God by beginning the rebuilding of His temple. However, in the course of their reconstruction, they begin to feel discouraged when comparing their building to its former glory. In the time of Solomon, the temple was built with gold, while they could only use timber to construct their temple. This reminds us of the toxicity of comparison; not only does it breed discouragement, but it also gives us a false sense of identity. Another reason for comparison is expectation. We overestimate what we can do in one day, but we often underestimate what we can do over a lifetime. Unreasonable expectations can kill our passion when we want instant gratification; we must remember that results take time. 2 Corinthians 15:7 says, ***But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.*** Haggai 2:4 also says, ***‘Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty.***

Involvement in ministry is important to God, but what really matters to Him is how we live our lives. Ministry contribution and involvement does not justify unholy living. Haggai 2:10-19 touches on the difficulty of living holy lives; while being in contact with something that is holy does not automatically make us holy, getting

involved with anything unholy makes us unholy as well. We must be intentional in living holy, or set-apart, lives, because unholy living renders our worship unacceptable to God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Happy Anniversary CCFLA. As we celebrate 8 years, let us:

1. Evaluate.
 - a. Where we are today in our personal walk?
 - b. Where are we today in fulfilling God's mission for us?
 - c. In what areas of our life are we still procrastinating?
 - d. In what areas of our life are we still disobeying?
2. New Vision.

After careful and honest evaluation

 - a. How can we improve our personal walk?
 - b. What are some things we can do in order to fulfill God's mission for us?
 - c. What are some steps that we can do in order to stop procrastinating?
 - d. What are some things we can commit to in order to better obey God?
3. Decision.

From the new visions you have now formed, make a commitment that you will intentionally work on. Share this with your dgroup so that you can be held accountable for these commitments.