

Make Right Priorities

TEXT: Haggai 1:1-15

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Know: Through Haggai, God reminded the Jewish people to make Him a priority in their lives.

Think: Loving God and loving others should be a priority in our lives.

Do: Put God and others first in order to experience real joy.

APPLICATION VERSE: Micah 6:8

THEME: Put God First

THE MORE YOU KNOW:

The Israelites were known for neglecting God and for their mixed-up priorities. Just as they neglected to do the things important to God, we get distracted and struggle with lack of focus as well. Scripture instructs us to set our priorities as loving God first and loving others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Loving God must be our first and most important priority, but it is not necessarily our easiest (Luke 13:24).

Jesus' love for God was often displayed in hardships and sorrow, and ultimately a horrible death on the cross. Christ's death on the cross traded our sinfulness for His righteousness. God made a way for us to live a righteous life as a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). The only way we can be successful at putting God first is by trusting fully in His promise of forgiveness (1 John 4:10).

Obedience, service, and prayer characterized Jesus' life, and we must try to live as He lived (1 John 2:6). The life of a Christian is a moment-by-moment service to God that is based first on our love for Him and then for His people. True joy comes from putting God first as we serve Him and live for Him with all of our heart, soul, and strength.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

LEARN

TE 2-18

TE 2-19

EXPLORE

TE 2-20

Crayons

APPLY

TE 2-21

TE 2-22

TE 2-23

RESPOND

TE 2-1

TE 2-1d

Field Notes ST-4

Crayons

Pencils

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Day 1—Haggai 1:3

Day 2—Haggai 1:4-6

Day 3—Haggai 1:7-11

Day 4—Haggai 1:12

Day 5—Haggai 1:13-15

Option 1

Have you ever had a day that you seemed to get everything backwards? That makes for a mixed up kind of day. Let's see what that would be like. Below is a list of options of things to do backwards. Pick and choose the ones feasible for your class setting. You can even repeat their favorite tasks as time permits.

Walk backwards to the water fountain.

Walk backgrounds around the room (or take five steps backwards).

Say this phrase backwards: Welcome to Sunday School class! (Class School Sunday to welcome!)

Clap with your hands backwards. (Use the back of your hands to clap.)

Thumb through your Bible backwards.

Count to ten backwards. (10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1)

We sometimes think if we do whatever we want, we will be happy. But that is backwards thinking. Someone who gets everything they want can be very spoiled. If you get to go first every time, you will think you *deserve* to be first. If your parents spend all their extra money on you, you will probably pitch a fit if you don't get everything you want. If you never think of what others want, you probably won't have many friends. The way to have joy is to put God first and others second. Then you will know the best way to live and get along with others. Today we are going to learn about putting our priorities in the right order. Do any of you know what a priority is? Encourage response. A priority is what you think is most important. If your priority is *you*, then you need to make changes. In our lesson, we are going to learn how God's people made changes in their lives once they realized they had their priorities in the wrong order.

Option 2

Review some of the ways we've discussed this month on how to have good relationships with others and how to care about others. Line up all the students on one side of the room and clear a pathway for students to move from one side of the room to the other. (If you can go to a large open space, even outside, that would be great.) Read the following list and ask the students to decide if this is a good or bad way to treat others. If it is a good way, invite the students to take a step forward. If it is not, they must take a step backward.

List of good and bad ways to treat others:

- You made a card for your grandma and visited the nursing home.
- You listened as your friend told you about his soccer game.
- You joined in and made fun of someone.
- You paid attention when your teacher was talking.

Notes

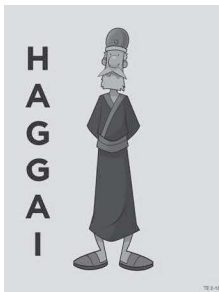
- You lied to your friend.
- You cheated because you didn't want to lose.
- You spent your allowance money to buy school supplies for kids who need them.
- You forgave your friend.
- You invited a new kid to join your team at recess.
- You prayed for the kids in the orphanage who don't have a mom or dad.
- You ignored a friend who dropped his papers.
- You volunteered to pick up trash around the neighborhood.
- You shared your lunch when a classmate forgot hers.
- You yelled at and called your friend a mean name.
- You smiled and treated younger kids nicely.

Did you go forward or backward more? Encourage response. **Hopefully, we are learning how to get along with others. God says we should love others like He has loved us. When we love others, we will treat them with kindness and respect. But just as we moved forward in the game some times, so it is with our relationships. Sometimes we are kind and treat others the way we want to be treated. Other times, we get it wrong and treat others in a mean way. Today we'll learn more about the best way to move forward with kindness and love.**

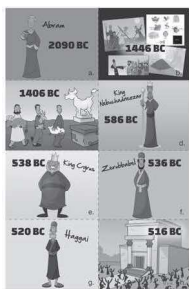
LEARN



God worked through the nation of Israel to bring the Messiah because **God offers salvation and forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ.**



TE 2-18



TE 2-19

Items Needed: TE 2-18—TE 2-19

Cut apart the cards from TE 2-19. Display TE 2-18. **Today we are going to learn about the message God gave to the Jews through the prophet, *Haggai*. The Jews had returned to their homeland to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, but they were discouraged.** Read the dates from TE 2-19 aloud as you display each card. Display TE 2-19a. **God chose Abram to be the father of a great nation, while he had no children. God told him to leave his home in Ur and changed his name to Abraham. God saw Abraham was a faithful man, so He made a covenant, or promise, to give him and his descendants a special land.**

Display TE 2-19b. **Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt. God heard their cries for help and sent ten plagues until the Pharaoh finally freed them. Moses led God's people to the Promised Land where they could love and serve God.**

Do any of you remember if the Israelites loved and served God? Encourage response. Display TE 2-19c. No, they chose to go against God's commands and worshiped idols, breaking the very first commandment God had given them. For hundreds of years, God sent prophets to warn the people to stop sinning and follow His way, but God's people refused to listen and follow His will. They wanted their own way!

Display TE 2-19d. **God loved His people, so He had to get their attention. This time their punishment would come when He allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to conquer them and take them away from their homes in Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar's army burned the city and**

destroyed their beloved Temple. It was horrible. Words cannot even describe the sadness the people felt. God had told them that they would live in captivity, but He promised to bring them back to their homeland.

Display TE 2-19e. A new king, King Cyrus of Persia, took over the country and announced that all Jews could return to their homes in Jerusalem. Not only did he give his permission, he suggested for others to give them silver, gold, and supplies for the journey, as well as animals and other offerings for the Temple. King Cyrus even gave them valuable gold and silver and thousands of items King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple.

Display TE 2-19f. Zerubbabel was the main leader of this group of God’s people. There were 42,360 people, in addition to 7,337 servants and 200 singers. They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys and traveled back to Jerusalem. In early autumn, the Jews who had returned gathered in Jerusalem. Zerubbabel, Joshua and his brothers, and the priests began working on the altar so they could offer sacrifices to God. These people were so happy to be back in their homeland that they brought offerings to God. The Jews knew God brought them back to their country, and they were thankful. They wanted to see the Temple rebuilt. In the second month of the second year that they were back, Zerubbabel and Joshua led the people to lay the foundation for the Temple. All the Levites who were 20 years or older were put in charge. For two years they worked on the Temple, but the enemies of the Jews wanted to stop the work. And they did stop it and for sixteen long years, God’s Temple lay in ruins.

Display TE 2-19g. God sent a message through His prophet, Haggai. The people had returned to rebuild the Temple, but they became distracted by other things. The people went about their own business—building their houses and doing things that mattered to them. Haggai called the people back to what should be first in their lives: God. Some of the trouble they were having—not enough food, clothing, or shelters—was because they neglected to put God first. They had fancy houses when God’s own house—the Temple—was a pile of rubble. Haggai reminded the people God must come first before anything else. The good news is God’s people listened to Haggai’s message. Zerubbabel and Joshua gathered the people again and started work on the Temple.

Display TE 2-19h. Finally, after four years of hard work, the Temple in Jerusalem was finished. The people, the priests, and the Levites, dedicated the Temple to God with a grand celebration (Ezra 6:16). They offered sacrifices to God and praised Him for His help.

EXPLORE

Item Needed: TE 2-20
Crayons

Before class, copy TE 2-20 so each student will have one. **God sent Haggai as His messenger to remind the people to make Him a priority in their lives. That message is for us too. Remember, priorities are**



TE 2-20

things that are important to us. The way we can tell if something is a priority is the time we spend doing things. Some things that are priorities to us may be similar to everyone your age, while others will be different. As we grow older some of our priorities will change. However, one thing that should always be a priority in our lives no matter our age is our relationship with God. Distribute TE 2-20 and crayons to the students. Allow time for them to color the letter *H* and the picture of Haggai.

APPPLY

Items Needed: TE 2-21—TE 2-23



TE 2-21

Before class, cut apart the strips from TE 2-23. Read the story from TE 2-21 aloud to the students and encourage them to listen carefully to C.J.'s priorities. **What are your thoughts about C.J.'s priorities?** Encourage response. Read Matthew 6:33 and 22:37-39 aloud. **What does God say about making right priorities?** Encourage response. **Setting good priorities can help us decide what is best each day. Putting God and others (in that order) before you is God's plan.**



TE 2-22

Display TE 2-22 and review the application verse with the students by saying it together. **This month in our application verse we have learned three things God wants us to do. Do any of you remember what they are?** Encourage response. **We have learned He wants us to do justly or justice and love mercy and kindness. Today let's focus on the last part—walk humbly with God. What do you think it means to walk with God?** Encourage response. Ask for two volunteers to come to the front of the class. Separately and so the other one cannot hear you, ask the students to walk around the class however he or she would like. **Were both students going the same direction?** Encourage response. **To walk with God, we need to follow His way. Did the two students walk close to one another?** Encourage response. **To walk with someone, you need to be close enough to listen and talk with each other. To walk with God, we need to listen to Him and talk with Him. What do you do when you walk with a friend? Do you share your feelings or help each other out?** Encourage response. **The Bible compares walking with God to being close to Him. When we are close to someone, we listen and talk to him or her. We share our feelings and help each other. We should have that same relationship with God. What do you think it means to walk humbly?** Encourage response. **It means you recognize your need for God. You don't know the best way to live and you need Someone wise—God—to guide you. A humble person reads the Bible so he or she can get to know God better. God made us and knows the best way for each of us to go. We want to walk closely so we can listen and obey Him.** Place the pieces from TE 2-23 in the correct order of the verse so the students can see them. Say the verse together. Choose a student to turn over one of the strips, and repeat the verse. Choose another student to turn over another strip and say the verse. Continue until all of the strips are facedown.



TE 2-23

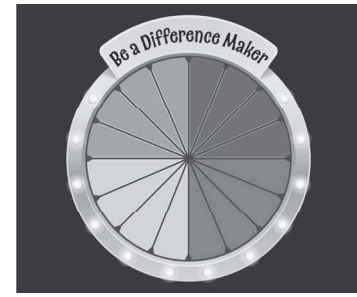
RESPOND

Items Needed: TE 2-1
 TE 2-1d
 Field Notes ST-4
 Crayons

Before class, copy *Field Notes* ST-4 so each student will have one. Display TE 2-1 and add TE 2-1d. **Today we learned we are to *make right priorities*. What are your top priorities? Is it to do everything you want?** Encourage response. **What did we learn the Bible says should be our top priorities?** Encourage response and refer to Matthew 22:37-39 again. **Love God first and love your neighbor as you love yourself. What do you think it means to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind?** Encourage response. **Putting Jesus first and following God’s words will bring you the most joy. God made you and knows what will make you the joyful. Get as close to Him as you can. Love Him with all your heart. Spend time with Him and do what He asks.**

Second, love others. Thinking about others will actually make you happier. What are some ways to love others this week? Encourage response. **Balancing time with God, helping others, schoolwork, sports, chores, church activities, and other activities can be hard to figure out some weeks. But we must do the most important things first. Then we can figure out how to do other important things. Do you think you can make loving God and love others your top priorities?** Encourage response. Distribute *Field Notes* ST-4 and crayons to the students. Allow time for the students to color the words and the hearts. Encourage the students to display their *Field Notes* somewhere they will see it often as a reminder to keep their priorities in the right order.

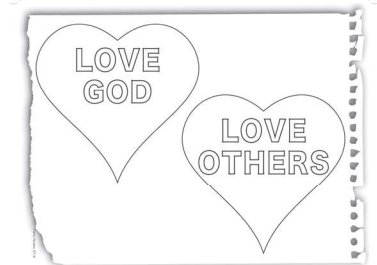
Just as the people changed their priorities when Haggai gave them God’s message, there is always a choice when we hear God’s message. They had been completely focused on themselves and neglected God and His house. It is easy for us to neglect God and others when we spend all our time and money on ourselves. Have the students refer to the *Next Step* section on the *Field Notes*. **Your Next Step is to put God and others first in order to experience real joy.**



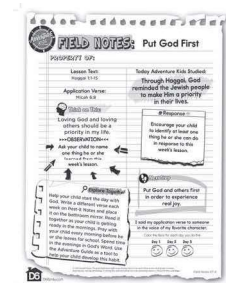
TE 2-1



TE 2-1d



Field Notes ST-4



Field Notes ST-4



Are you on Facebook? Join the D6 Curriculum Teachers group, a place of community for you to share stories, ask questions, get advice, and engage in conversations with other D6 curriculum teachers.