

Keeping Your Spiritual Perspective

Quiet Time Study Outline 7: God owns it – be careful how you use it (The Book of Haggai)

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In previous passages in this section we have looked at God's provision in spite of us, his total commitment to us, his fatherly concern for us, and the benefits that come from his provision. In this passage we see what happens when people lose sight of who the provider is and misuse the provision.

The people of Haggai's time had spent a lot of time and money building their own houses – obviously to a very high standard. But in the process they had neglected the Lord's house, which lay in ruins (1:4). God had prompted them to reconsider their priorities by affecting the prosperity of their business and agriculture. They “planted much, but harvested little” and earned wages “only to put them in a purse with holes in it” – and we thought inflation was a modern phenomenon!

But the people still paid no attention. So God eventually intervened directly through Haggai and gave instructions about the rebuilding of his house. By then it had been so long since any attention had been paid to the temple that Haggai had to ask, “Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory?” (2:3)

However, as soon as the people turned their minds back to God's priorities, God began to restore their earlier prosperity (2:15-19).

It is good to build a habit pattern of gratefulness for all God provides and to be careful to ensure that we recognise the importance of the **provider** rather than the provision.

ACTION POINT Make a list of all the things you own which you would find difficult to give away. As an act of trust and commitment, ask God to accept the ownership of these items (after all, he already owns them) and allow him to use them to the best advantage of his Kingdom.