

# Ducks in a Row?

*Scripture and Background Information for November 12-18.*

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

For most of us, we live our lives trying to get things organized, to-do lists accomplished, goals set and met, tasks and schedule completed so that you are ready for the next step, the next thing on the list. If we were honest, when it comes to walking with God, it often feels like we never can get it right, never have the right perspective, the right practices, the right priorities. Haggai is about a segment of God's people who had done just that, and the message God gives to them about where to start, what to prioritize, and His promise to always be with them. Those same reminders are helpful for God's people today who are wanting our Ducks in a Row.

## **Background for Haggai 1:**

In Haggai 1, the Israelites are back in their land after having been exiled for many years. In many ways, it seems like they are doing well and getting back to normalcy, but they are forgetting about the temple. Their homes and their lives have been rebuilt but the temple of God, where He met with His people and they worshipped him, was in shambles. So, Haggai brings a word of the Lord to them to point out that their priorities are not in order.

Haggai calls out the people of Israel for their neglect of the temple. He even claims that many of the struggles in their lives are directly related to the disregard they have for the temple and, therefore, the Lord Himself. God isn't concerned here with the building of a structure but what the building represents as a place to worship and connect with God. With the temple in disarray their worship and connection to God was lacking. Luckily, the Jewish leaders and their people respond well to these exhortations. After hearing this prophecy and that the Lord was with them, they obey the calling of the Lord, and begin rebuilding the temple. By responding in reverence to the Lord's call, warning, and discipline, the Israelites set God as the main priority in their lives and can experience all that comes with restoring a close-knit relationship with Him.

## Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. Why would God be so concerned with His people rebuilding the Temple? What is the significance of God telling the Israelites that He is with them in verse 13?
2. Think about the times in your life when you have struggled to prioritize your walk with the Lord. What caused you to struggle or distracted you from focusing on God?
3. What helps you maintain focus on God and prioritize worshipping Him in your life? How can we continually encourage each other to stay focused on God in our daily lives?

\* Check back in with your groups about the rhythm of feasting. Ask how their feast times have been and what God has been showing them in those moments.