

Ducks in a Row?

Scripture and Background Information for November 26-December 2.

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 2:10-23:

Now that the Temple rebuild was well underway, the Israelites were experiencing some unmet expectations. They expected that their obedience rebuilding the temple would make them holy and experience blessing in every aspect of their lives. But obedience in one area does not necessarily transfer to another. There may be some steps to take in other areas to see life change happen. Then Haggai addresses their past and calls the Israelites to reflect on how they used to live because they were still experiencing some of the consequences from that way of life. They thought they wouldn't have to experience any of these things because of their newfound obedience but Haggai is quick to remind that some of these consequences don't immediately go away because God's blessing today doesn't always wipe out consequences from yesterday. Sometime what we hope will happen immediately takes time to see come to fruition. But Haggai says that from this day on, months after they began obeying is when the Lord will begin to bless them. Lastly, Haggai calls them to look to the future. God says that he will establish justice and peace in all the nations on the earth. He says that Israel, and specifically Zerubbabel, will be the representation of His redemption for the entire world because through the line of Zerubbabel, we have Jesus. The one who died for the salvation of the world. Because of Jesus, we don't have to settle for temporary blessings in this world when God has something so much better for us in eternity.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. What does it mean for God to bless the Israelites in this context?
2. What unmet expectations do we have about God in our lives? How does this affect our relationship with Him?
3. God's plan for the world is to completely redeem it, remove sin, and establish His Kingdom forever. How does this truth impact/change the ways we live our lives today?

* 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.