"Beyond Today" Beyond, Week #1

Introduction

As the year 2017 draws to a close, many of us will use the New Year as a time to make changes in our lives. Perhaps you have made resolutions in the past years that lasted briefly before you lapsed into former habits. If we truly want to grow spiritually in 2018 we need to intentionally press into the direction, dream or vision to which God has called us. The book of Haggai offers us a picture of how to get back on track toward our God given purposes.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What resolutions are you planning for 2018?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Israel Disconnected

Q1. Read Ezra 1:1-3, Haggai 1:1-6; Matthew 6:31-33

God had long ago prophesied His plans for the Israelites when He moved Cyrus to decree freedom for them to return to Israel and begin reconstruction of the temple (Ezra 1:1-3). But 20 years after the decree, what were the people saying according to Haggai 1:2? Despite confirmation of prophesy and a royal decree, the people still had failed to build more than a foundation before they disconnected from their purpose and set aside God's plan for them. What had they been doing instead of rebuilding the temple (Haggai 1:3-6)? What do you think was motivating their actions?

It is easy for us to become distracted by seemingly important pursuits and abandon what God really has for us. How did Jesus address a similar issue in Matthew 6:33? What are some things we can forfeit spiritually when we pursue material gain rather than look to God's provision?

Be Part of Something Bigger

Q2. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31; Haggai 1:9-11; Exodus 34:14

The Israelites were working hard to provide for themselves but were not bringing glory to God as He had planned. What attitude did Paul encourage the Corinthians to have (1 Corinthians 10:31) that appears to be missing at this time in Jerusalem? What did God do to get their focus off of themselves and back on Him (Haggai 1:9-11)? God wasn't willing to let His people settle for less than what he had planned for them. Have you ever experienced something that at first seemed like a great loss, only to

find God had something even better in store for you? Exodus 34:14 shows us that God is jealous of anything that would come between Him and us. How is God's determination to displace the "idols" in our lives actually a gift of love rather than an act of retribution?

Steps to return

Q3. Read Haggai 1:7-8, 12-15

God clearly defined the steps for Israel to get back on track. What was the first thing they needed to do (Haggai 1:7)? After recognizing that God was intervening in their lives, what steps of obedience did they need to take? (Haggai 1:8)? How did the people's actions and attitude change in verse 12? As the people displayed obedience to God, what was God's response to them (v. 13)? We may also need to follow these steps if we have veered off track and left the path God has planned for us. Take time for an earnest assessment of what's happening in your life. Is God possibly trying to get your attention? Now if there is a step of obedience you know God is stirring in you, share that with your group and support one another as you focus your life on bringing glory to God in all you do.

Wrap-Up

God intends for us to be part of His plan, but sometimes we set His plan aside to focus on our own plans. God will do whatever it takes to get us refocused on Him, because His plan is ultimately the best plan for us. When we recognize God intervening to draw us back on course, we need to obey His calling. If we make ourselves available He will stir up His spirit in us and do abundantly more than we ever imagined.

Memory Verse

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray regarding one area w	here you can apply this
study in your life and other needs (see space to	write on back).

Challenge:

Ask God to reveal to you where He wants you to grow. See if you can identify one area of your life that needs changing this year to move you closer to who God created you to be.

Q1.

Ezra 1:1-3 ESV - 1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel--he is the God who is in Jerusalem.

Haggai 1:1-6 ESV - 1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD." 3 Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? 5 Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. 6 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

Matthew 6:31-33 ESV - 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Q2

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV - 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Haggai 1:9-11 ESV - 9 You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. 10 Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. 11 And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills,

on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

Exodus 34:14 ESV - 14 (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

Q3

Danassan Makas anna

Haggai 1:7-8, 12-15 ESV - 7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD ...12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. 13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, declares the LORD." 14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

Prayer Notes cont.					
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