

Intro:

- Ask each person in your group to share at what point in their Christian faith were they most passionate to serve the Lord? What were the defining characteristics of that season in their life?
- What part of this week's message was the most challenging or interesting?

Background:

I prepared an Old Testament Background to connect the dots up to the book of Haggai. I didn't have time to share it in the message so I am including in the small group materials to help guide small groups. Please discuss the bullet points as a way to fill in history and prepare to dig into this book and our lives. – Pastor Scott

- "In the beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1) – There was a time when only God existed and we were only thoughts. There were no humans, angels, heavens or earth. Sometimes we walk around like everything revolves around us but just think about the fact that we used to not even exist and God is the same yesterday, today and forever!
- God creates people and tells them to multiply on the earth.
- The people begin to disobey God.
- God floods the earth and destroys everyone & everything except Noah & his family.
- The earth begins to repopulate and again people disobey God.
- So, God frustrates them, scatters them, and gives them all different languages.
- The people STILL disobey God.
- They get into little people groups and begin worshipping different gods; whatever makes them happy. (**Idolatry is worshipping who you want god to be and not the God of the Bible!**)
- God chooses Abram, renames him Abraham and tells him that he will be the Father of many nations. (The only problem is Abraham tells God he is 100 years old and maybe Sarah wasn't looking so hot anymore. God tells him that He will make a nation from him that He will place His hand upon him so that all the world will know that He is the one true God!)
- Abraham & Sarah have a kid; Isaac has a kid Jacob, who gets the name Israel. He has 12 kids and that's where we get the 12 tribes of Israel.
- The Egyptians enslave Jacob's people.
- God decides to send a deliverer named Moses and promises them a land where they will dwell together and everything will be awesome!
- The Israelites send spies to look at the land and decide there are some really big men over there and the majority says they shouldn't go.
- God can't believe that they still don't trust Him and believe He is the one true God by now! So, he makes them wander around and kills off an entire generation while still pursuing His people.
- Moses dies and they get Joshua, who leads them into the land and everything is great! Then, God's people ask God for a king.
- God tries to tell them that He is their King and they respond by wanting a man.
- God gives them Saul, a nice, big, handsome, powerful man. He ends up being an evil king.
- God gives them David, who ends up being a murderer and adulterer, but God calls him a good man (which is good news if you've killed anyone this week!)
- David's son Solomon becomes king and they build God a temple. God gets really excited, tells them to move the arc of the covenant there. His glory will dwell there and everyone will know that He is the true God and you don't mess with His people. Everyone will know you don't mess with the people of God.
- Then comes division in the kingdom and a huge fight ensues. The kingdom is divided into northern and southern.
- Among all of this, God's people start back into their sinful ways.
- God sends the Assyrians to wipe out the Northern Kingdom because all they had were evil kings.
- About 100 years later, Babylonia takes over the southern kingdom.
- Now, the Jews are completely out of Israel.
- Under Persian rule, King Cyrus says he will let the Israelites go back to their land.
- King Darius comes on to the scene.
- Among all of this division and fighting, Solomon's temple has been destroyed.

Read Haggai 1:1-11

Group Questions:

1. Pastor Scott shared two quotes, "It's not about fitting God into my life or schedule, it's about me fitting into God's." And "It's not about fitting God into my life, it's about making God a priority over me." When you hear these and read these how does your life measure up in comparison to these truths.
2. What kind of excuses have you found yourself making in your life when you feel prompted by God to put Him 1st in your life?
3. Should every Christian put God and His house (our spiritual lives and our spiritual communities) first, or is this just for "full-time" Christian workers? Defend biblically.
4. Do you currently have any priorities out of order that you feel you could share with the group, pray about these?
5. Is it okay for a Christian to have and enjoy nice things? Where do we draw the line? Is "luxury" sin?
6. Think about this saying and talk about it as a group: "Once I get _____ I will be happy."

We are always pursuing something or someone. Do you ever wonder why you don't have everything you think you deserve? God potentially blew it all away. To be a follower, you can't just have it your own way.
7. How has God blessed your life?
8. What are some times you were thankful God didn't give you what you were asking for or what you deserved?

Pray as a Group