

Ready for Real Life

Biblical wisdom for the decisions, responsibilities, and relationships ahead.

1. Ready for real life: My Priorities

Scripture: Haggai 1:2–11; Matthew 6:19–21, 33.

Examine the difference between building a comfortable life and building a life that honors God. In Haggai, the people had time for their own houses while saying it wasn't time to rebuild God's house. **Their priorities revealed what their excuses concealed.**

What better place to start? We will discuss finances, relationships, jobs, but what is the importance of those things without the source?

-Actions reveal priorities, priorities will reveal your heart.

You can say all day long that your priority is GOD but if we never saw you at Church, you never read your Bible, then we know that is not your priority. Jesus said if you say you love me but keep not my commandments you are a liar.

Book of Haggai is focused on this one word (Consider). Will you consider where you are today in terms of your priorities with God.

1. The Captivity

THE STORY OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

— Different Books. One Story. —

1 1. BEFORE BABYLON

God warned them.



ISAIAH
Foretold captivity and restoration.



NAHUM
Announced Assyria's fall.



ZEPHANIAH
Warned that judgment was near.



HABAKKUK
Wrestled with Babylon's role in judgment.



JEREMIAH
Called Judah to repent and later submit to Babylon.

2 2. FALL & EXILE

God preserved them.

THREE PERSPECTIVES, ONE CAPTIVITY



Jeremiah:
Jerusalem



Ezekiel:
among the exiles



Daniel:
Babylon's court



2 KINGS 24–25 / 2 CHRONICLES 36
Jerusalem falls; Judah is deported.



DANIEL
God's sovereignty in Babylon.



EZEKIEL
Prophecy to the exiles; hope of restoration.



LAMENTATIONS
Grief over Jerusalem's fall.



OBADIAH
Judgment on Edom for violence against Judah.

3 3. RETURN & RESTORATION

God brought them home.



EZRA 1–6 / ZERUBBABEL
The temple is rebuilt.



HAGGAI
Calls the people to finish God's house.



ZECHARIAH
Encourages rebuilding; points to future hope.



ESTHER
God preserves His people in Persia.



EZRA 7–10
Spiritual renewal through God's Law.



NEHEMIAH
Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt.



MALACHI
Calls the restored people back to faithfulness.

← SIN → WARNING → JUDGMENT → CAPTIVITY → PRESERVATION → RESTORATION →

— One unfolding story of a faithful God warning, chastening, preserving, and restoring His people. —

Because of sin God sent prophets to tell them that judgement and captivity was coming. That captivity was Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar. (Isaiah 39:6-7) (Jeremiah 25:11, 20:4) (Ezekiel 12:11) (Micah 4:10) He told them through multiple prophets.

THE CAPTIVITY

7 Details Worth Noticing

1

1. BABYLON TOOK JUDAH'S STRENGTH

10,000 captives in one deportation, including soldiers, leaders, and skilled workers.

2 Kings 24:14–16



2

2. THREE YEARS OF TRAINING

Daniel and other selected young men received a new education, language, and names.

Daniel 1:3–7



3

3. A CLAY TABLET RECORDS THE CAPTURE

The Babylonian Chronicle records Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem in 597 BC.

British Museum • 2 Kings 24



4

4. THREE PROPHETS, THREE PERSPECTIVES

Jeremiah — Jerusalem and Judah
Ezekiel — Among the captives
Daniel — Babylon's royal court



5

5. SEVENTY YEARS FORETOLD

God fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy; the land enjoyed its neglected sabbath rests.

Jeremiah 25:11–12 • 2 Chronicles 36:21



6

6. BABYLON'S POWER HAD AN END

The mighty city stood in modern-day Iraq. Cyrus of Persia conquered it in 539 BC.

Historical setting • Daniel 5



7

7. NEARLY 50,000 IN THE RETURNING COMPANY

42,360 in the congregation + 7,337 servants + 200 singers = 49,897 people.

Ezra 2:64–65



— God remained faithful through Judgment, captivity, and restoration. —

They went, and they escaped because another came and defeated (Daniel 5:30-31) God stirred Cyrus the king of Persia to allow those who wanted to return to return (Ezra 1:1-11) Ezra 2 then lists the return of the people. Jeremiah 29:10 said that he will allow them to return to this place after the 70 years. Imagine walking back home and seeing everything in ruin (2 Kings 25:9-10) and the temple in ruin/ Solomon's temple. They came home to a visible reminder of the consequences of ignoring God. You think that would be something that would stay in your mind. (Ezra 1-4) They laid the foundation and got excited and shouted but then they faced hardship.

2. The Ceiled Houses (Ch 1:2-4) although they came back to see things in ruin and why they were in ruin and knew the desire of the Lord they decorated their houses. They said it is not time. Not that they would never do things for God, but just not now. They had gotten comfortable. **They are building their lives but not prioritizing God, but they come to find out that none of the work seemed to be enough, and it never will be when we do things in place of God or without God. They were making a living, but they could never seem to get ahead. Money wasn't enough, harvest wasn't enough, and there was a drought (vs 9-10) God said everything you did you looked for much, but I withheld it because you have not prioritized me. Why live your life for yourself and in pride? God resists the proud! Owning houses, making money, doing any of these things are not a sin, but have you trusted in or focused on that more than God?** Do you talk about that more than God? They are preparing for the future, and the old people are looking at the past (2:3) but God said NOW (Ch 1:5)

Speed quote, Jim Carrey quote

SOLOMON HAD IT ALL

His achievements, possessions, and final conclusion

 WISDOM & INFLUENCE	 BUILDING & ENTERPRISE	 WEALTH & POSSESSIONS	 PLEASURE & PRESTIGE
• God-given wisdom and discernment • 3,000 proverbs; 1,005 songs • Knowledge of plants and animals • Kings sought his wisdom • Reigned over Israel for 40 years 1 Kings 3-4; 10:23-24; 11:42	• Built the temple in 7 years • Built his palace in 13 years • Built and fortified cities • Developed ships and trade • Houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, and pools 1 Kings 6-7; 9 • Ecclesiastes 2:4-6	• 666 talents of gold received in one year • Gold drinking vessels; silver abundant • 1,400 chariots; 12,000 horsemen • Servants, herds, and flocks • Net worth: Billionaire by modern comparison (estimate) 1 Kings 10:14-29 • Ecclesiastes 2:7-8	• Singers and royal luxuries • Pursued pleasure and great works • Withheld nothing his eyes desired • 700 wives; 300 concubines • His wives turned his heart from God Ecclesiastes 2:1-10 • 1 Kings 11:3-4

Yet he called his works “vanity and vexation of spirit.” — Ecclesiastes 2:11

HIS CONCLUSION

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14 • KJV

3. Consider (4x)

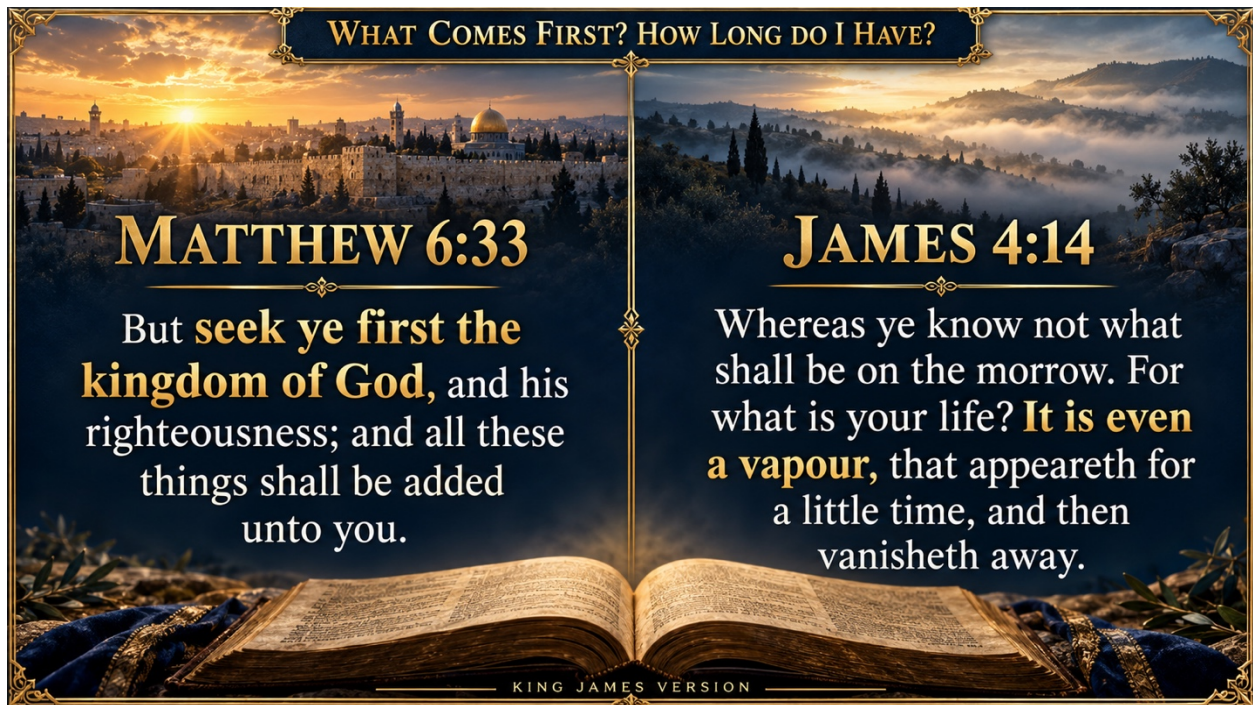
Consider, think about your ways! Am I building a future that makes room for God, or building a future that keeps postponing him?

CHECK YOUR PRIORITIES

Consider your ways. • Haggai 1:5

1 What am I making time for while saying I have no time for God? 2 What have I called “not the right time” that is really delayed obedience? 3 If my habits continue for five years, what kind of Christian will I become? 4 When I picture my future, where does serving God appear?	5 Am I remembering yesterday’s faithfulness while avoiding today’s responsibility? 6 What do my calendar and spending reveal about what matters to me? 7 What am I asking God to bless that I have never asked Him to direct?
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Be honest. Be specific. Take your next step.



2. **Are You Praying About Your Future?**

Scripture: James 1:5; 4:13–16; Philippians 4:6–7.

Learn to bring plans, decisions, desires, and uncertainties before God. James challenges planning that assumes control over tomorrow. **Prayer should shape our plans before we ask God to bless them.**

3. **Handling Money Before It Handles You**

Scripture: Proverbs 21:5; 22:7; 1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19.

Cover budgeting, saving, debt, generosity, and contentment. Explore how money becomes tied to security, status, and happiness—and why earning more does not automatically produce contentment.

4. **Managing Your Time and Keeping Your Commitments**

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15–17; Proverbs 24:27; Ecclesiastes 5:4–5.

Teach planning, preparation, priorities, and following through. Proverbs 24:27 emphasizes getting necessary work in order before building the house. **Wise preparation often means doing things in the right sequence.**

5. **People Skills That Will Serve You for Life**

Scripture: James 1:19–20; Proverbs 18:13; 11:13; 25:11; Ephesians 4:29.

Develop dependability, discretion, encouragement, punctuality, trustworthiness, and listening. Explain that “that which is good to the use of edifying” means considering what will actually help the person hearing us.

This topic could take two weeks: one on character people can trust, and another on listening and speaking wisely.

6. **What Does the Bible Say About My Job?**

Scripture: Colossians 3:22–24; Proverbs 22:29; Genesis 39:1–6, 20–23; Daniel 6:1–5. Address ordinary work, initiative, honesty, correction, and promotion. Joseph served faithfully in both a house and a prison; Daniel’s opponents could find no fault in his work. **Faithfulness matters before recognition comes—and when recognition never comes.** Their stories show God’s providence, without promising every faithful worker a promotion.

7. **How to Handle Conflict When Someone Frustrates Me**

Scripture: Matthew 7:3–5; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:31–32. Practice examining yourself, addressing issues calmly, apologizing specifically, and forgiving. Notice the wording in Romans 12:18: **“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.”** You are responsible for pursuing peace, but you cannot control another person’s response.

8. **Choosing Your Relationships Wisely**

Scripture: Proverbs 13:20; 22:24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:33. Consider friendships, dating, counsel, and influence. Proverbs 22 warns about an angry companion **“lest thou learn his ways.”** Relationships can train our reactions, habits, and attitudes gradually.

9. **Preparing for Marriage**

Scripture: Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:21–33; Philippians 2:3–4. Cover character, commitment, communication, expectations, finances, and responsibilities in the home. Help them ask both, “What qualities should I look for?” and **“What qualities am I developing?”** Include applications for those whose future marriage plans are uncertain.

10. **Overcoming People Pleasing**

Scripture: Proverbs 29:25; Galatians 1:10; Daniel 1:8; Ephesians 4:15. Learn to distinguish loving people from needing their approval. Practice saying no graciously, accepting disagreement, and holding biblical convictions with humility. **The goal is to serve people faithfully while letting God’s approval govern your decisions.**

A strong opening question for the whole series would be: **“If your present habits continued for five years, what kind of life would they build?”**

Then give each lesson one practical assignment: write down priorities, begin a prayer list, make a budget, plan a week, practice listening, or prepare for a difficult conversation. That will help the class turn what they learn into habits.