

# HAGGAI

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## *Inside Terry's Office:*

### *The Book of Haggai - First Things!*

Approximately 18 years after returning from exile to Jerusalem, Haggai reminds Israel of its purpose. He asked, "After God has delivered you from bondage, established you in your homes, and blessed your businesses, isn't it time to rebuild the Temple and fulfill our purpose? We are blessed to be a blessing! We are a nation created from no-bodies to point other nations to the one true God."

Let me make one point very clear; when Haggai speaks of building the temple he is not saying that they should give in order to get, but that they have already been blessed and now need to be about their purpose. God acted first by freeing and prospering them. When they got caught up in maintaining and furthering their prosperity they lost sight of their purpose and God quit prospering them. Haggai made it clear that God was not prospering them because they were chosen people / good people / his favorite people, but because they had a purpose that required they be prospered.

Your purpose and/or mine MAY NOT REQUIRE that we prosper financially as much as others.

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No, really! God no longer needs a nation to represent Him among the nations. He has made a priesthood of all believers. Each individual is gifted and called to complete their function in the kingdom; the body of Christ.

Your purpose and/or mine MAY NOT REQUIRE that we prosper financially as much as others.

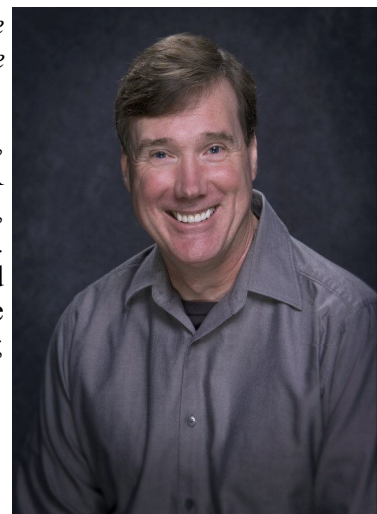
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This is GOOD NEWS because money has a power to make us love it; to be persuaded that we need more of it; to measure our value by our ability to gain it; to feel loved by God based upon how much of it we have; to prioritize making money over fulfilling our purpose. Yes, money is dangerous for us. Of course, we all tend to think of ourselves as the ones who would "do most good" with excess money we are "blessed" with. However, with few exceptions, our purposes are not dependent upon our finances.

Haggai is an exception among the prophets in that the people actually responded to what he had to say. *"Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: 'I am with you', declares the Lord. And the Lord stirred up ... the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius."*

This is such a remarkable event that Haggai gives the year, month, and day that it happened. The people were stirred TO THEIR PURPOSE, came together and STARTED! Again, don't get me wrong, our purpose is different from theirs, and we go about it differently. However, one thing remains true for us as it was for them; God provided first! We are not the initiators, we are the responders. We love because He first loved us. Our most difficult job is to let Him love us as we are; just like he did the Hebrew nation!

In His Grip, TWE



## *Haggai..... The Lord Almighty*

*No matter how discouraged you feel, no matter how little evidence you see of My power, no matter how off course My plan appears to be or how unlikely fulfillment of My promise seems to be, no matter how dark your night or empty your soul, build My temple. "I, the **Lord of hosts [The Lord Almighty], am speaking.**" (66 Love Letters, Larry Crabb on the 36<sup>th</sup> Love Letter)*

*'Be strong Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land.' declares the Lord, 'and work. **For I am with you,**' declares **the Lord Almighty.** This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And **my Spirit remains among you, Do not fear.'** Haggai 2:4, 5*

I heard it again this week, no different than most weeks in counseling--questions regarding God's presence or His activity -- what He is doing or not doing. As we approach the end of our journey through the Old Testament books, *Letters*, I am struck with how often the message of "I AM with you" is threaded throughout the historical narrative of God's messengers. Not only that, but there is the repetition of the reminder of the promise that times and circumstances will be hard. Repeatedly the people of God are called to re-focus their attentions off of their circumstances and back on to the purposes of God.

In this thirty-seventh letter God has called Haggai and Zech-

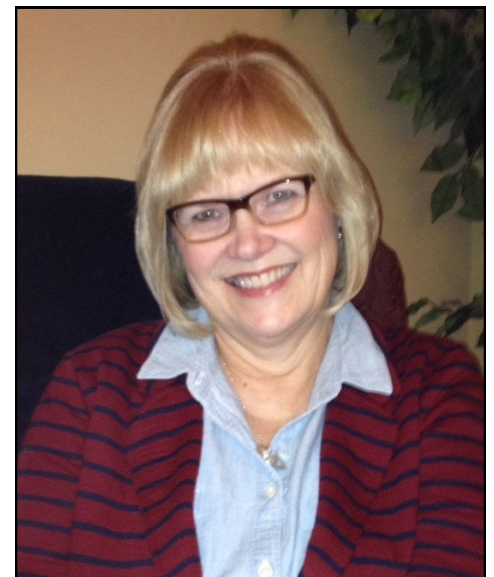
ariah to encourage the exiles and Jerusalem citizens to come together and focus on rebuilding the Lord's temple. In the letter Crabb points out that "the Lord Almighty" (also translated the Lord of Hosts) appears fourteen times. This name of God appears nearly 300 times in the first thirty-nine letters but never in the first eight. It appears the first time in 1 Samuel 1:11 when Hannah prayed to God in deep distress. This name is used in the presence of godless spiritual leaders and those in human misery, like Hannah. Crabb suggests that God reveals himself through this name as a God with "**the power needed to win the war against sin and sorrow no matter how vile the sin or deep the sorrow.**" This is the message of Haggai. When you grasp this knowledge of God, you will live not to build your house but to build His temple.

One of my clients felt sure there must be some lies that were causing her to repeat some old patterns of thinking and behaving that she did not like. She asked if we might explore that and so we prayed and were led back to a vow that through people pleasing she would always be happy and she would never bring anyone discomfort. We asked God what He had to say about that and she sensed Him saying that she was fully acceptable to Him and she was not responsible for others' happiness. I asked her what keeps you from believing what God says is true? Her answer was "the turmoil." Isn't that the truth? The turmoil in our lives causes us to run back to our "destructive familiar" and we attempt to "build our own

house" with temporary fixes. We even sometimes spiritualize the process. My client wanted to see if maybe there was something she could fix and God would be happy and her house would be without turmoil. God's temple represents to us where we find true significance and value by being focused on Him and his purposes. Where He is the Lord Almighty! It is also where we always know He is with us!

~

*Carol Anne*



*Haggai-First Things First*

My take on Haggai is the Lord confronting His kids about misplaced priorities.

Listen to what He says in chapter 1:2-13(NLT):“This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: “The people are saying,“The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.”Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: “Why are you living in luxurious houses while My house lies in ruins?“ This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: “Look at what’s happening to you! You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes! This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: “Look at what’s happening to you! Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild My house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored’,says the Lord. “You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because My house lies in ruins,“ says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, ‘while all of you are busy building your own fine houses. It’s because of you that the heavens withhold the dew and the earth produces no crops. I have called for a drought on your fields and hills—a drought to wither the grain and grapes and olive trees and all your other crops, a drought to starve you and your livestock and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get.”Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of God’s people began to obey the message from the Lord their God. When they heard the words of the prophet Haggai, whom the Lord their God had sent, the people feared the Lord. Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave the people this message from the Lord: ‘I am with you, says the lord!’

We use a tool from Larry Crabb’s Soul Care called, “The Hidden Story (Joy & Pain; Life & Death: Maneuvering)”

The idea is we’ve all experienced moments of pain and pleasure, and we’ve been shaped by these events. He defines soul death as the experience we must, above all else and at any cost, avoid. Soul life is the treasure we must, above all else, and at any cost, gain.

We maneuver through life to experience the life and avoid the death. He says, “What happens is that our ‘life’ and the avoidance of death becomes a ‘second things pursuit.’ If we’re not honest with ourselves, most of the time we really do want something more than God. Second things desires feel more compelling than first thing desires. The minute second things become first, they become idols.”

I’m thinking of Matthew 6:33(NLT),“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need,” and John 12:24-25 MSG,“Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.

C.S. Lewis puts it this way, ”Put first things first and second things are thrown in. Put second things first and you lose both first and second things.”

I wonder...how many of us have put second things first? For some of us, myself included, second things are competing for first place right now. What if we allow God to examine our hearts and show us where those things are? Sound scary? Yep it does, but look at the last verse when the people obey. God is with them. God help us to trust You.

Struggling, Striving, Growing,

***Michelle***



# Stickman's Prayers

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

## stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of  
"loosing prayers"  
and the ministry of  
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter  
Terry Ewing  
Erin Garcia  
Margo Hanne  
Carolyn Knippers  
Carol McNamarra  
Sue Merrill

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

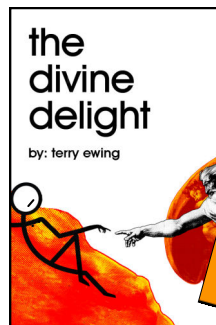
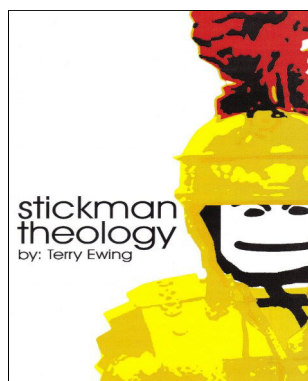
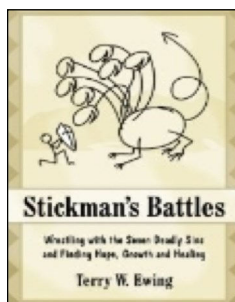
Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayer's* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

Available at Plumblin for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each



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## Stickman Theology

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<b>FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2016</b>	<b>Year-to-Date 2016</b>
Number of Client Hours	300	2,760
Contribution Income	\$11,536	\$94,823
Operations Expenditures	\$12,186	\$100,945
(Shortfall)	(\$650)	(\$6,122)



*Have A Happy Thanksgiving!*

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