

## Cell Group Material for w/c 28.1.07

### Haggai 2 v 10-23

**To start things of:** What is your favourite TV programme? Why does it appeal to you?  
Which TV programme would you rather be pulled through a holly bush than forced to watch? Why do you dislike it so much?

**To point things in the right direction.** You could perhaps read Psalm 126 which was written around the time of the return from Exile and reflect on the great things God has done – and also on your current situation which may be closer to the desert experience of v4-6. There are plenty of worship songs to celebrate the former-rather less to help in the desert places.

**To bring together the Word and the world.** If any of the group were not at church on Sunday read Haggai 2 v10-23. The leader may need to give a brief explanation of what questions to the priests were really about.

It has been said that the dominant themes of western civilisation are sex, money and power. Look a daily paper before you come. The balance of the three will be different in The Independent and The Sun – but try and see how many stories fit with each of the three. Read Romans 12v1-2. J.B. Phillips translated v2 as “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mould”. Do you feel pressure to conform to the world?

**Read Matthew 6v27-30.** What would be the reaction of the editor of The Sun to this? What is your reaction? How come the world has got one of God’s greatest gifts so wrong? How does the world’s attitudes to sex make life difficult for you as a Christian? If appropriate you might share ways you have found helpful in sticking to God’s standards.

**Read 1 Timothy 6v 6-10.** How might the editor of the Financial Times react to this? Why is everyone so obsessed with money? How much time do you spend thinking and planning about it? Why is “the love of money a root of all kinds of evil” ? and what sort of evil are you tempted to in connection with it? How does Matthew 6 v25-34 (especially v31-33) help us get our approach right?

**Read James 4 v13-16** and contrast it with the lines from “Invictus” (W.H.Henley)  
...I thank whatever gods there be  
For my unconquerable soul

It matter not how strait the gate  
How charged with punishments the scroll  
I am the master of my fate  
I am the captain of my soul”

Think about articles in the papers (especially the weekend supplements) on “empowerment” and “being who you want to be” ? What are the differences between the world’s attitude to power and control and God’s approach? How might being infected by the world’s attitudes- even without realising it – affect our relationship with God?

**To remind us that there is hope.** God-through Haggai-was condemning the insidious contamination by the world that rendered their lives worship unacceptable (v14)- even when done conscientiously and with the best of motives. How might Zerubbabel ,their leader for the last 20 yrs have felt? (how do you feel?). What words of encouragement did God have for Zerubbabel, grandson of the disastrous King Jehoiachin? In the light of Jeremiah 22v 24 why might this have been “extra special” to him? Can you tell of any special words of encouragement you have had when you were feeling you were a failure? Why was it possible for the people to make a new start with God (c1 v12, 2v4, 19b, 23b)? Do we need to-individually and collectively?

**To impact on the world .** What differences will this study make in your attitude to the pressures of the World around and how might this affect the way you relate to others?

note to leaders: you may not cover all the questions and the amount of time devoted to the three “prime movers” will obviously vary according to the makeup and age of the group.