



# Diamonds Aren't Just a Girl's Best Friend

Learn about this little-known scriptural gem



By Sister Carolyn Light

We all know diamonds are very valuable. I was really never sure why they are more valuable than any other stone, but I read once that you may have to dig through 250 tons of rock, gravel and dirt to get a mere 1 carat of diamond! That's a lot of work and effort for the tiny yield of one small stone. Yet there is an entire industry dedicated to these little gems because people are willing to buy them. In the diamond business, it is important enough to go through all that effort for the relatively small but valuable reward.

I recently found a diamond! It's called Haggai.

### Haggai? Who's Haggai?

I admit it. I am a 50-something-year-old Sister who's been baptized

longer than many of you who are reading this have been alive! And until this year, I don't remember ever reading the book of Haggai. (I also didn't remember hearing anyone preach about this prophet of the Old Testament — until the week *after* I read it! Funny how that happens sometimes.)

Perhaps it is because it is hard to find Haggai (pronounced "hey guy"). After all, it's right after Zephaniah and before Zachariah, who were also two lesser-known prophets. Perhaps it's because it's only two chapters long and probably takes up one or two pages of your Bible. It's easy to miss. Have I given you enough reasons as to why I (and you?) may have never read Haggai?

Earlier this year I opened up my

Bible and it actually fell to that one-page wonder, the book of Haggai. I'm not sure why, but I decided to read it. What I found was a short but valuable message that has profoundly affected me in my late-but-still-learning phase of life: *priorities!*

### Does God Stop Blessing You When Your Priorities Are Out of Wack?

To answer this question, let's go back and review a little history to understand why God told Haggai to speak to the people in his time. Haggai's message was given to the people of Israel long after the Israelites were attacked and scattered. Israel had been divided, and the temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed. The King at the time decided to allow the Jews to return to

their homeland. And boy, were they happy!

One of the first things they did was begin to rebuild their lives. They began by building their houses. They probably also started planting crops and vineyards and doing a little yard work, but their main focus was on their homes. After all, that's what we would do if we were driven from our motherland and finally allowed to go back, right?

But something was wrong. Haggai got a message from God, and God was not happy. It seemed that the Jews were so busy building their own houses and making them beautiful that they hadn't even considered that God's house, the beautiful temple that Solomon had built, lay in ruins.

*All we have to do is take one small step in the right direction of prioritizing God in our lives and God will bless us.*

Now, I'm a firm believer of the Scripture we find in the Book of Mormon and the Bible that states that God is to be served in Spirit and that we don't need a gorgeous church building to serve God (remember Rameumptom?). So it surprised me a little when God said, "consider your ways..." and then ordered them to go and get wood and supplies so that they could rebuild the temple. Pronto!

God explained through Haggai that the problems that the Jews had been having (we're talking drought, livestock and food problems) were because He had not been their main priority. He wanted to be first in their lives: build His temple *first*, and *then* build and beautify their own homes.

Thankfully, the people were obedient and began to rebuild the temple to its former glory. About

seven weeks went by, and what did God do? He encouraged his people! Haggai was again given the word of the Lord telling the people to "be strong... and work; **for I am with you**. My spirit remains among you, do not fear." Almost as soon as they had laid the initial stones for the temple foundation, God blessed them! He didn't wait until the whole temple was built; as soon as they prioritized, things began to get better. And finally, two months later, the Lord changed his message again. God said "consider now from this day forward... **I will bless you**" (Haggai 2).

#### Why Haggai's Message Should Matter to You

What impresses me about this story is that all we have to do is take one small step in the right direction of prioritizing God in our lives and God will bless us. Often as we go about our day we become very busy. It's easy to attend to the pressing and present things around us instead of focusing on the heavenly things, which are not always right in front of us, begging for attention.

As soon as we wake in the morning, we begin to plan our day. We immediately think of our agenda for the day: getting to class on time, studying, getting to work, making meals, finding time to network socially, the list goes on. I wonder if God is up there saying, "How can you plan your day when you haven't thanked me for it? How can you prepare for your day when you haven't consulted me?"

I know it's easy for us to say, "No problem, God. I've got this. I'll catch you on the way to work. I have a 20 minute drive, and I can certainly talk to you then. God, can you please wait?" Like Haggai spoke to the people, we must "consider our ways"

and set our priorities.

#### Rethinking Your Priorities

Of course, *in our minds*, our priority is first and foremost God. We all know "seek ye first the kingdom of God and..." But sometimes that test, that phone call, that boyfriend, or that sports event just gets in the way. We must "consider our ways" from time to time and check our priorities.

Before we even start our day, do we thank God and allot Him some quality time? Has prayer slipped down the priority list? Is fasting even lower? Are we too tired by the end of the day, when we finally find the time, to read and study scripture? Do we make time to attend meetings? If we are not able to attend, do we spend that time reading the Church blogs or listening to sermons that various branches put online? Do we spend time talking to our friends about spiritual things as much as we talk about what was on TV last night?

I'm going to present a challenge: assess your priorities by writing them down. Make two columns. In one column, write your priorities in descending order. In the other column, estimate the amount of time you spend doing various things in your daily or weekly life. *Be honest* and see if they match up!

Oh, there's another important assurance written in that hard-to find Old Testament diamond: God says that He has chosen His people. He has chosen you. He loves you and is patient with you when you need to reprioritize. That sounds to me like *you are His priority!*

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