

## Growing in Wisdom part 5

### Study Guide at work

Haggai 2:1-5

The Lord encourages his people

On October 17 of that same year, the Lord sent a message through the prophet Haggai. <sup>2</sup>“Say this to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of God’s people there in the land: <sup>3</sup>‘Does anyone remember this house—this Temple—in its former splendour? How, in comparison, does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all! <sup>4</sup> But now the Lord says:

**Be strong, Zerubbabel.**

**Be strong, Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.**

**Be strong, all you people still left in the land.**

And **now get to work**, for **I am with you**, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. <sup>5</sup> **My Spirit remains among you**, just as I promised when you came out of Egypt. So do not be afraid

### Background

The context of the bible reading was that King Cyrus of Persia issued a decree in 539BC for Jewish exiles in in Babylonia could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple *Ezra 4:1-5,24*.

19 years later in 520BC, Haggai comes on to the scene and in his 2<sup>nd</sup> prophecy, when everyone was discouraged because they had experienced such opposition from the Samaritans, the rebuilding of the temple had come to a halt.

The Jewish people and their nation had diminished and declined from the time of Solomon with the Temple in all its splendour and the nation being made up of the 12 tribes. Decline did not happen overnight but over years where there were key moments in it, such as in 722BC when the 10 Northern tribes went into exile and the in 586BC the 2 southern tribes did the same.

### Ice Breaker

Do you think UK has diminished a bit, if so, what may be the contributing factors? (Not all of them may be because of bad decisions and choices we have chosen in the nation or had thrust upon us.)

**Q1** What wisdom and encouragement can we glean from the passage which as Christians we can appropriate today as children of God as we seek to contribute to our community and country?

We are reminded in Genesis that we are created by God for work. John Stott helpfully defines work as, [the]

**“Expenditure of energy manual or mental or both, in the service of others, which brings fulfilment to the worker, benefit to the community, and glory to God.”**

The key principle to being wise at work in Proverbs is seen in:

### **Proverbs 9:10**

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,  
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

*Version 2* **Respecting and obeying the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One leads to understanding.**

Which results in **being wise by making good decisions and choices in life, discerning and doing what is right.**

**Being wise means “Saying or doing the right thing – and at the right time in the right way”  
– RT Kendal**

Wisdom is having the ability to get the right things done.

Wisdom is about making good decisions now that you will be happy with later.

Wisdom is about getting God’s opinion on any matter and discerning the mind of Christ.

A living, vital relationship with the Lord is a prerequisite for God’s Wisdom in our lives.

**Q2** What part of being wise do you like most and want to grow in?

### **Work**

Exploring aspects of wisdom at work in Proverbs

### **Wellbeing**

*Proverbs 23:4-5 GNT* **Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich. <sup>5</sup> Your money can be gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle.**

**Q3 a.** What are the main reasons you can over work?

- B. What do you find helps you to have a good balanced life: work – home – recreational?

### **Diligence and hard work**

*Proverbs 13:4 NLT* **Lazy people want much but get little,  
but those who work hard will prosper.**

*Proverbs 18:9 NLT* **A lazy person is as bad as  
someone who destroys things.**

**Q4 a.** Discuss some of the potential consequences of laziness with work.

Diligence is a vital part of wise living.

**4b.** What are the good qualities that arise from those who work diligently?

## **Integrity and honesty**

*Proverbs 28:20-25 NLT*

**The trustworthy person will get a rich reward,  
but a person who wants quick riches will get into trouble.**

<sup>21</sup> **Showing partiality is never good (bribery), yet some will do wrong for a mere piece of bread.**

<sup>22</sup> **Greedy people try to get rich quick (make a profit through being unwilling to pay well or spend or invest at appropriate times)  
but don't realize they're headed for poverty.**

<sup>23</sup> **In the end, people appreciate honest criticism  
far more than flattery. (Other people use deceptive business practices)**

<sup>24</sup> **Anyone who steals from his father and mother  
and says, "What's wrong with that?"  
is no better than a murderer. (Exploit vulnerable people)**

<sup>25</sup> **Greed causes fighting; or evoke hostile opposition by being too ruthless)  
trusting the Lord leads to prosperity**

**Q5a.** Can you think of examples when a culture of dishonesty, bribery and corruption has ruined nations or workplace?

**5b** Do you have any examples at work when you chose to be honest and have integrity?

**Q6a** Discuss what makes a good employer.

***Colossians 4:1* Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven**

**Q6b** Discuss what makes a good employee.

***Colossians 3:23-24*** *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward. For Christ is the real Master you serve.*

***Galatians 6:4*** *Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.*

**Q7** What can we learn from Jesus being wise and faithful at work?

Jesus said this, "My Father is always at His work, and I too am working." So, God works, and He says, I want my children to learn how to work too. *John 5:36 & 17:18 (TLB)*

*John 4:34* "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of God who sent me and to finish his work".

Share and pray for each other in your different places of work whether paid or voluntary.