

First Things First
Proper Perspective
Haggai 2:1-9

- I. How to lose perspective
 - Optical illusions examples and quote
 - Focus and process using limited - and ultimately flawed - perceptions and boundaries

- II. Gaining a proper perspective
 - Start - and Finish - with what God says (1)
 - October 17, 520 BC (Last day of Feast of Tabernacles)
 - Stop comparing based on your own standards (3) - G. Campbell Morgan quote
 - Know that God understands your struggle (3) - cf 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - Proper orientation involves inward, outward and upward alignment (4-5) - cf Ephesians 6:10
 - Plaque in Westminster Abbey commemorating Lord Napier: "He feared man so little because he feared God so much."
 - God can work in both short- and long-term ways (6-9)
 - God always sets the proper perspective (6-9)

- III. Putting it to the test
 - See GMD²
 - Hebrews 12:1-2
 - Hebrews 12:25-29 (NLT)
 - Pray, Read/Meditate on the Bible, Be with God's people

GMD²

*...Go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
(Matthew 28:20 NET)*

One of the best places in the Bible to go for proper perspective is Hebrews 12:1-2:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This week, fix your eyes on Jesus. Three of the best ways to do that are prayer, reading and meditating on the Bible, and being with His people. Be intentional about these things. Set aside time in your schedule. They won't happen consistently unless you plan for them.

When in obedience to the prophet they began to build, they looked at their building in the light of the past, and their outlook was entirely material. They compared the poverty of the material erection with the glory of the ancient temple of which they had heard, and which some of them had seen. The old men amongst them, in childhood's days had gazed upon the glory of the past temple, and they put this new temple in its material poverty, into comparison with the one of old and its material glory. The result was that they were filled with discontent, and broke out into lamentation. That was a note of false discontent.

G. Campbell Morgan

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. (Ephesian 6:10)

Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.

Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire. (Hebrews 12:25-29 NLT)