

A Building for God
By Bob Young
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The Old Testament prophet, Haggai, urged the people to get about the task of rebuilding the temple with these words: “Give careful thought to your ways! You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but you never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it” (1:5-7).

In the New Testament, God’s building is not a physical structure, but a spiritual one. Paul describes Christians as “fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22). Peter’s description is similar: “...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood....” (1 Pet. 2:5a).

What plans do you have for building your spiritual house in 2009? Haggai reminds us that it is easy to let physical concerns outweigh spiritual realities. It is easy to become weary concerning our spiritual lives. Malachi’s words are as modern as today’s headlines: “And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it (the Lord’s table) contemptuously” (1:13). When people, even the people of God, become too busy with their own lives and their own success and their own standard of living, it is hard to find time for the things of God. We build nice houses for ourselves while ignoring the need to become a fitting house for the Lord. To the common phrase, “the tyranny of the urgent,” I add another: “the tyranny of the obvious.” That which confronts us daily, that which we see regularly, that which demands our attention frequently becomes of paramount importance.

The struggle is not new. What is the solution? Christians must diligently make time for the things of God. Otherwise, less important things take the place of God. Anytime is a good time to reflect on one’s commitment to God, but the beginning of a New Year provides a special opportunity to reflect on the past and to plan the future.

- Where are you spiritually, compared to a year ago?
- What kind of spiritual construction projects have you completed in the last year?
- What should you do in the coming year to build a stronger relationship with God?
- How can you help build a stronger house for the Lord with your church family?
- What spiritual construction project could you begin this year that would still matter ten years from now?
- What part of your spiritual house is weakest and in greatest need of repair?

God continually calls us to build the house of the Lord. We are collectively the building or temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16) and we are individually the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Let us resolve with David to build a house fitting for the Lord!