



# **Old Testament Survey**

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# Group Exercises: Leader Guide

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Welcome to Our Daily Bread University's (ODBU) Old Testament survey course. In this course, ODBU provides the content of the Old Testament survey through online lectures and related study materials. On the days when you meet with the students who are participating in the course, you, as the students' leader, will encourage them to interact meaningfully with the content they have already taken in. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some ideas for activities and exercises that will challenge the students to engage and interact with the teaching.

These exercises and activities have been provided to us by Dr. Sid Buzzell, former Chairman of the Theology Department at Colorado Christian University. He used the ODBU courses in his teaching of both Old and New Testament survey to hundreds of college students each year. The suggestions he makes in this guide have already been tried in classrooms and proven to be successful teaching/learning tools. You now can benefit from his creative thinking and from his experience.

In addition to using Dr. Buzzell's materials, we want to encourage you to think of some exercises that will be unique to your personality and teaching style. Here are some general ideas of types of activities you might develop:

- 1. Provide additional information on the Bible book or topic you are discussing with your students. As you view the ODBU lessons the students are completing, you may think of additional information that you want to cover in your meetings using a short discussion. Feel free to add material as you desire, but keep in mind that you should allow time for students to interact with each other and, with your oversight and involvement, to engage with and apply the information they are learning.**
- 2. Exegetical Exercises. The importance of teaching students to exegete the biblical text cannot be overstated. While there is an enormous amount of material to be covered in a survey course, we cannot neglect Bible study skills. Periodically modeling the exegesis of a Bible passage in your meetings will contribute to their ability to read the Bible well.**
- 3. Discussion. Some topics lend themselves to open discussion on a particular topic led by the teacher. Often these discussions can be initiated by questions the students may have as they study the biblical text.**
- 4. Small-group discussion. You might break the group of students into smaller learning teams to discuss and/or debate on one of the topics or to share with one another their own exegesis and application of a passage or question.**
- 5. Case studies/problem-solving groups. You might give students a problem to solve or an example (fictional or actual) that will encourage discussion and application of the concepts taught in the lesson.**

Be creative and innovative. This kind of teaching is an opportunity to try new ideas, which will encourage students to be actively involved in learning. By the time they meet with the group, you know they have taken in the course material and have tested their level of understanding by taking a quiz. In the group meetings, the real assimilation of the material begins, and there is almost no limit on ways in which that engagement with the text can occur. So enjoy this course as you use the activities in this guide and as you develop your own style of interacting with students that will encourage their lifelong study of the Bible.

# OT227 Haggai - Malachi: No Substitute for Obedience

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## 227.1 Haggai and Zechariah

Read Haggai 1 and respond to the questions below. Be prepared for a discussion in the next group meeting on that topic.

1. What was Haggai's view of why the temple wasn't being built?
2. What tends to distract you from Spiritual ("Spiritual" is capitalized because the reference is to God's Holy Spirit) priorities?
3. What have you found helps you get your focus back?
4. Have Spiritual priorities ever been among your most important priorities?
  - a. If so, describe one or some of your "Up" times.
  - b. If not, explain why Spiritual matters have never been a priority with you.

# Team Learning Exercises

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These are lengthier exercises that can be take up to half of a group session. Or they can be assigned for an “instead-of-group-session” assignment. The first agenda is helpful if you plan to have your “learning teams” stay together for various exercises. It is designed to help them learn about themselves and each other.

## **Agenda for Team Learning Exercise #1**

**Overview.** This session is devoted to get you more fully acquainted with the people on your team and to begin building a sense of “Team.” Some of the questions ask you to probe into your private life. Don’t hesitate to keep your responses within your comfort range if that’s the case. But be as transparent and forthcoming as you are comfortable with.

Appoint a discussion leader who will read the questions. Each member of the team should answer the question and then go on to the next question. Don’t hesitate to make this session interactive. Feel free to ask each other questions and make the session conversational rather than a series of sterile “reports.”

### 1. Describe your home during your teenage years.

Christian, non-Christian or mixed?

Parents involved in your life or more passive?

Siblings? Where are you in the birth order? How close to your siblings?

Did you feel close to your parents?

A “Fun” home or not so much?

Did you grow up in a rural, suburban or urban setting? How do you feel that influenced you?

Parents supportive of education or not so much?

### 2. Describe your church during your teenage years.

What Denomination (or not)?

What size?

Worship style in your church? Quiet, not so quiet?

How do you feel about your home church now? Miss it? Glad to be gone? Passive? Still there?

Were you involved in your church during your teenage years? As a leader, participant, just “there?”

How involved were your parents in the church? How did you feel about that?

Are you involved in a church now? Is it a good experience for you?

Do you think you will be involved in church for the rest of your life? Why (not)?

### 3. School

Did you attend High School? If so, what kind? Christian, Public, Home, Prep?

Glad you did it that way? Wish it was one of the other? If so, what other option? Why?

Friends and Support. Did you have a good group of friends?

Did you hang out mostly with Christian or non-Christian kids?

Were you involved in school activities? If so, what?

Did you enjoy high school? What parts did you like most? Like least?

### 4. Present

Where are you “at” in life right now? What do you do for a living? Do you have a family?

How confident/comfortable are you about your ability to succeed?

Do you have a close group of friends?

What are your plans or dreams?

What do you want this learning experience to “Do” for you?

### 5. Participation in this Learning Team

What are you good at – your strengths? What are not so good at - your weak areas?

How are you wired?

Outgoing or Quiet?

Transparent or Private?

Leader or supporter?

Up-front or Behind the scenes?

High energy or Low energy?

Morning person or Night person?

Lean more toward athletic, musical, academic, artistic or other?

How do you feel about how you’re wired?

What are you glad about and what would you like to change?

What do you think you can contribute or how can you most helpfully contribute to this team?

How do you think this learning team can most significantly contribute to you?

### 6. Experience with the Old Testament

How much exposure have you had to the Old Testament? A course, sermons, reading, none?

1. Who is your favorite Old Testament Character, or what is your favorite Event, story or Passage? Why?
2. Do you see this course in the Old Testament contributing to you as a person? If so, how; if not, why not?

Summary:

Each of you write a short paragraph about each of the other people on your team. Summarize:

Your sense of who that person is,

What makes them tick,

What you believe is the greatest way that person – specifically – can contribute to you,

How you believe you – specifically – can contribute to that person.

Write your summaries on separate pieces of paper so you can give it to the person you wrote about.

Spend some time praying for each other.

## **Agenda for Team Learning Exercise #2**

**Procedure.** Talk your way through the following exercise. This should take about an hour. Then complete the brief exercise at the end of this agenda. The first two discussions are a bit longer than the last two so plan your time accordingly. Look over the whole exercise before you begin.

**Overview.** One person read this aloud to the group:

Solomon's writing reveals his God-given wisdom. Millions of people since his time have benefited from reading Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

But we are confused by his obvious departure from his own teachings. His life ended tragically in God's condemnation for his idolatry.

Proverbs 3:5-12 contains four of Solomon's proverbs that, if Solomon had followed, would have kept him from going astray and would have made him even more successful. There is great reward in heeding these four wise insights, and there is tragedy in ignoring them.

This study is designed to help you explore these four proverbs and make a conscious, informed choice about their advice. You should be able to:

1. Explain what each proverb is instructing us to do;
2. Suggest specific actions that will accomplish what the proverbs tell us we SHOULD DO.
3. Suggest specific actions that will help us avoid what the proverbs warn us NOT to do.
4. Describe the rewards for obeying these proverbs and the dangers of ignoring them.

Discussion.

1. Read the Proverbs passage aloud as follows:

- a. There are 8 verses and they are divided into four segments with two verses each.
- b. Each of these 2-verse couplets is a proverb.
- c. Have a different person read each couplet and briefly summarize its advice.

The Passage – Proverbs 3:5 – 12

*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart*

*And do not lean on your own understanding.*

*6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,*

*And He will make your paths straight.*

*7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;*

*Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.*

*8 It will be healing to your body*

*And refreshment to your bones.*

*9 Honor the LORD from your wealth  
And from the first of all your produce;  
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.*

*11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD  
Or loathe His reproof,  
12 For whom the LORD loves He reproves,  
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*

2. Follow the procedure below that walks you through each proverb.

Couplet #1 - Verses 5-6

*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
And do not lean on your own understanding.  
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight.*

The command in verse 5 line 1 is obvious, but it's important to see how it is contrasted with the negative command in vs. 5 line 2. Take a closer look at the two verbs: "Trust" and "Do Not Lean."

- The word "Trust" refers to things that are solid and dependable (Deut. 28:32 = trusting a strong city wall; in 2 Kings 18:5 = trusting God himself). Synonyms are, "Confidence, Reliability, Dependability."
- The word "Lean" is used of holding someone's hand for balance, or of placing something against a wall. Not putting your whole weight on something, but just resting against it.

One of you explain how you see the difference between these two verbs.

Now compare the two objects in view. In v. 5 line 1, "Yahweh" is the object of trust. He brought them out of Egypt, led them through the desert, even in their disobedience. He helped them invade and own their land.

Each of you describe your personal level of trust in God. Why do you think it is like that?

What does Verse 5 Line 2 – say we should NOT "Lean on?" Why not?

- Explain the difference between "Using" our understanding and "Leaning on" it.
- Discuss how Israel's "understanding" had served them from the time they left Egypt.

- How dependable is your own understanding? Share some positive and negative ways your understanding has served you (or not).

Explain what verse 5, line 1 says about how much we should trust the LORD.

Consider the fact that the “Heart” in Hebrew refers to the whole thinking, feeling and willing process.

How does that fact influence how you understand the caution against leaning on our own “Understanding?”

Verse 6, line 1 gives another command.

“In all your ways acknowledge Him.” The Hebrew word translated “Acknowledge” is a complex word and can mean to:

1. “Observe, realize”    2. Recognize, perceive”    3. Care about, be concerned about.”

- Which of these three emphases do you think Solomon had in mind here? Why?
- What do lines 1 of vs. 5 and vs. 6 say about how completely we should trust and acknowledge God?

“Trust in the LORD with....” and “In \_\_\_\_ your ways acknowledge Him.”

Verse 6, line 2 tells the reward of obeying these three commands. One of you explain what that reward means. The key word to interpret here is the word, “Straight.” How do you interpret what that means?

So now read verses 5 & 6 this way.

“If you will...” (three commands),

“Then He will...” Line 2 of v. 6.

Before leaving this proverb, tell a story – either of yourself, someone you know, a biblical or other historical character who illustrates this proverb in a negative way and then a story that illustrates in a positive way.

## **Agenda for Team Learning Exercise #3**

### **Daniel Teaches A Discouraged And Devastated Judah That God Still Cares For Them.**

Dr. Howard Hendricks lost a daughter to heart disease. Shortly after she died, he contracted cancer that disfigured his face and took one of his eyes. As he was recovering from that surgery, he was told his daughter-in-law had terminal cancer and would die within a year. During this time a student asked, “how can you deal with all this stuff ?” He answered simply, “God’s sovereignty. After 60 years of watching God work I trust Him completely.” Then he said, “Whatever else you do, cultivate an incurable confidence in God’s sovereignty.”

This exercise is designed to help you explore five stories in Daniel that demonstrate how God’s sovereign will is accomplished even in life’s difficult times. In a dark moment in Israel’s history, God intervened in human experience to remind His people that He controls His world. He showed discouraged and devastated Judah that He will accomplish His sovereign plan for His people.

You will need to meet in groups of FIVE for this exercise. Assign each person in your group a number (1, 2, 3, 5, or 6). Your number designates the chapter you need to read for the exercise.

Read the exercise and prepare accordingly. The agenda for this team meeting will take a full 95 minutes so plan accordingly.

### **Daniel: Team Learning Agenda**

1. Explain why Daniel IS considered a prophet by some and IS NOT by others.
2. State and describe Daniel’s “Bifid” structure (see Dr. Stuart’s “Daniel” lecture in ODBCUC 223.1).
3. Explain how Judah’s political situation interacts with Daniel’s repeated emphasis on God’s sovereignty.

### **Team Meeting Agenda**

1. Discuss why the book of Daniel is considered a book of prophecy by some and not by others.
  - What was a prophet’s role in Israel?
  - What was Daniel’s role? What office did he hold?
  - How did Daniel’s role compare with the traditional prophetic function?
  - What do chapters 2 and 7-12 of Daniel’s book deal with?
  - So why would some consider Daniel a prophet and some not consider him one?
2. Using notes from Dr. Stuart’s lecture on Daniel compare and contrast the two parts of Daniel’s bifid structure. Give this point adequate time – 15-20 minutes.

Write a Title for each chapter that gives a clear description of its content. A Study Bible with chapter and paragraph headings will help you here. I have summarized chaps. 7-12 – you do 1-6.	
<b>Section 1: Chapters _____ to _____</b>	<b>Genre -</b>
1	4
2	5
3	6
<b>Section 2: Chapters _____ to _____</b>	<b>Genre -</b>
7 – Daniel’s Four Creatures & Four Empires	10 – Daniel’s Vision of Opposition to God’s Plan
8 – The Ram and Goat – The Persians and Greeks	11 – Prophetic Picture of the Greeks and Romans
9 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Messiah	12 – The Time of the End

3. Briefly describe the political setting for Daniel’s life and book.

What was Judah’s condition?

Where was Daniel? Why?

Describe what you think would be the mental, emotional, spiritual condition of Judah’s people.

4. Given Judah’s political situation, why was it important for Judah’s people to believe that God was still in control of the world?

5. Daniel was written to people who “Believed” that their God, Yahweh, controlled the world. Like many of us, they “Believed” it theologically, but in their daily routine, they didn’t always (or Usually? or Ever?) live with it as a conscious, functioning reality.

**Talk for a few minutes about how your belief in God does and doesn’t influence your daily practice.**

Judah’s citizens were like today’s Christians in another way. When things got tough, their belief in God became more important to them. In Daniel’s time, Judah’s people thought Yahweh had lost control. It appeared that the Babylonian gods had defeated Israel’s God. They had destroyed God’s temple and taken His people to Babylon as exiles. What had happened to Yahweh? Had He lost His power to govern the world and protect His people?

Daniel can be read as a document that helped a disillusioned people clarify their view of Yahweh. Daniel 1-6 is narrative. Each chapter tells a story; but it’s more than a storybook. ***Each story illustrates God’s sovereignty and each chapter contains direct statements about God’s sovereignty.***

6. Your task is to divide Daniel 1-6 among your team members (Chapter 4 has been done as an illustration). Each take your assigned chapter and:

a. Play the role of storyteller to your group as if they are the people of Judah.

b. Summarize the “Story” in your chapter and explain how it demonstrates God’s sovereign control.

- c. Identify & Read the verses where the writer *specifically states or refers* to God’s sovereignty.
- d. Give an application from the chapter that helps your listeners live under God’s sovereignty today.

Chapter	Theme or Topic	How God’s Sovereign Control is Reveled – key verse or statement.
1		
2:1-36 & 46-49		
3		
4	God Humbled Nebuchadnezzar	The great Babylonian king who had conquered his whole world became arrogant. God humbled him in an elaborate process and at the end of the chapter he honored and praised God. <b>Read verses 34-37.</b> Application = If God can humble the most powerful ruler on the planet we should humble ourselves and pursue His sovereign will. Nebuchadnezzar’s statement about God should be our testimony. Read vv. 34-37 together.
5		
6		

7. Discuss one “Applicational Principle” from Daniel’s book and write it down. Write a principle you are proud of – both in content and in your crafting of the statement.