

The Scrolls

Helping CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N44 November 3, 2024

UNDISTRACTED

"Rekindled Faith" Haggai 1:12-15

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Biblical Community

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as He had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Acts 2:44-47





Why is Biblical Community good?



Biblical Community, fellowshipping "with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes," is an essential component of a vibrant Christian life. Believers need others to serve and to sharpen each other's spiritual maturity. Followers of Jesus are "better together."

Unfortunately, some can misinterpret the call to Biblical Community as form of "prosperity gospel." We may falsely claim, "If I join a group of Christians then God will bless me." Or the inverse can be falsely concluded: "If I do not actively participate in a group of believers, God will curse me with all kinds of misfortunes." We do not "win" or "lose" based on the number of groups we have joined. Instead, participation in Biblical Community gives us a place to use our gifts, our resources and our wisdom. We can also learn much from others much wiser and more spiritually mature than ourselves. Prayers with and for one another help us stay close to God and filled with his power (Eph 6:18-19).

Samaritan's Purse is an amazing charity that each Christmas, through its Operation Christmas Child (OCC), sends millions of "shoeboxes" filled with Christmas gifts and Gospel literature for children all around the world. You can pack up a box by yourself for a child and drop off at a local drop-off center. Everyone should do this. You can even create a box online now. Yet imagine the impact of a group of people joining together to pack gifts. Or imagine the impact of your group serving together at a shipping warehouse helping process thousands of gift boxes. I have packed shoeboxes on my own and have served in the warehouse with my Community Group. My fondest of memories of OCC have come from serving together with my Biblical Community at the local warehouse. Serving together makes the service sweeter. I don't expect any more "blessings" from God because I served in the warehouse with my friends instead of packing a box alone. But I would miss out on the shared sense of accomplishment if I only did OCC alone.

The people of Haggai's day faced a similar dilemma: building homes for themselves rather than serving together at "the house of the Lord." A focus on personal benefit from either isolation or joint benevolence misses the whole point of what it means to serve God and participate together as his people. Serving God alone or

together is all to God's glory. Personal benefits from either are secondary to God's ultimate praise.

"Passages such as Haggai 1 are sometimes misapplied, as though they guarantee material blessing to the NT believer who puts God's kingdom as his first priority (in its most crude form, 'If you give to God's work, he will give back blessings in abundance'). This misapplies Haggai 1. Haggai's generation should do the Lord's work not so that he will bless them but so that he may again 'take pleasure in' their sacrifices and be glorified. That is, the motivation is focused on God, not self. A motivation that at its core seeks blessings for self is not first seeking God's kingdom. There is a further reason we cannot take the OT promises of material blessing and automatically apply them to ourselves: The material blessings of the old covenant were linked to inheritance in the Promised Land. The new covenant believer will receive material blessings from the Lord, but we must wait for them till the new creation (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 22:1-3). If we receive material abundance from the Lord in this present life, it is not necessarily because God has blessed our covenant obedience. It is a gracious gift from the hand of God (and, as a gift, it is to be shared with others).

"Haggai confronted his generation by telling them they experienced covenant curses because of forsaking the Lord, and they repented. They feared (revered) the Lord and responded in obedience to his voice. As a result, God declared, 'I am with you,' and, believing that promise, the people began the work on God's house, even though their material situation had not changed. How will we respond to the challenge to build God's kingdom? Will we say, 'Now is not the right time'? Haggai 1 says to us, 'Now is the time.' It calls us to commit ourselves to 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness' — to make this our first priority, not what we do with the leftovers of our time or resources. And if we, perhaps like Haggai's generation, are anxious that devoting our best endeavors and firstfruits to the Lord will leave us short, we must trust in the words of Jesus: 'Your heavenly Father knows that you need [these necessities of life]. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you'" (Michael Stead, "Haggai," in Daniel-Malachi, vol. VII, ESV Commentary, 616).

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Haggai 1:12-15

12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

13 Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: "I am with you," declares the Lord. 14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Above the word "Then" (v.12), write the reference "vv. 1-11."
- Circle all the names that are the same in v. 12 and v. 14.
- Draw brackets around each use of the name LORD in this passage.
- Underline the words that describe the people in v. 12 and v. 14.
- Draw a box around each action the people took in v. 12.
- Double circle what the people obeyed in v. 12.
- Double underline the phrase of hope in v. 13.
- Draw a double box around the action of the LORD in v. 14.
- Draw a box around the action of the people in v.
 14.
- Triple underline the added word describing God in v. 14.
- By the words "twenty-fourth day" in v. 15 write "See 1:1."

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."

DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What was the "voice of the Lord" and the "message of the prophet Haggai" that the people obeyed (consider Haggai 1:1-11)? 2. What was involved when the people "obeyed the voice of the Lord their God"? 3. Who was included in the "whole remnant" and why were they called this name? 4. How is the "message" different in v. 13 than in v. 12? 5. What are the implications of the declaration of the Lord, "I am wih you" (v. 13)? 6. Describe what is meant by the phrase "the Lord stirred up the spirit" of the people. 7. What contribution does the word "Almighty" bring to the description of the Lord in v. 14? 8. What difference does the detail shared in v. 15 make to the understanding of this passage? 9. How do vv. 12-14a influence the "work" done as mentioned in 1:14b?

10. How does this passage change the way you think about obedience to God?

EXPLORE RESOURCES Commentary On The Text

The end of Haggai chapter one (vv. 12-15) details the response of God's people to the message of the prophet found in Haggai 1:1-11. For a more detailed treatment of the setting of the book of Haggai, review Dr. Tom Bulick's fine work in *The Scrolls* Volume 26 Number 43 (wearecentral.org/mt-content/uploads/2024/10/october-27-2024-hag1.1-11.pdf).

Haggai 1:12 includes mention of key leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua. The people themselves are mentioned as being the "whole remnant of the people." This phrase suggests that many of those who had returned to Israel after exile chose to respond in obedience to Haggai's message. There may have been some who did not respond, but a large number, perhaps even a majority of returnees, responded with acknowledgement and action towards God's message. "The whole remnant of the people is a fixed expression in the prophetic literature to denote those who have survived the catastrophe caused by God's judgment. The term does not, of itself, describe either those who returned from exile or those who remained in the land, but all who survived to be the true Israel, the people of God in the restricted area of Jerusalem and Judah ... We may assume that the covenantal aspect of the 'remnant' theme, which was characteristic of the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos, is also implied in Haggai's prophecy. In this connection the listening of the people acquires a deeper meaning: those who obeyed the word of the Lord were the 'remnant' as the representatives of God's own people" (Pieter A. Verhoef, Haggai and Malachi, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 81).

The "whole remnant" are described as ones who "obeyed the voice of the Lord" (v. 12). This word "obeyed" comes from the root word for "hearing" or "listening." The central prayer and claim of Judaism is famously called the Shema. "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. And as for you, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Dt 6:4-5). This "hearing" is not just registering the reception of sounds. "Hearing" is listening intently with the intent of following and obeying what is heard. Haggai was calling the people of God, "the whole remnant," back to the very foundations of their faith: faithful obedience and love of the One True God. Obedience begins with careful listening to the message and word of God. Obedience continues with actions fulfilling what was comprehended through intent listening.

The repetition of the word "message" and "messenger" (vv. 12-13) may be a play on words with the inclusion of the word "work" in v. 14. "Haggai may be anticipating these words and forming a subtle semantic link between them. The wordplay underscores the prophet's role. He is the Lord's messenger (mal'ak) who is proclaiming the Lord's message (mal'ăkût) and is calling people to the Lord's work (mělā'kâ). These lexical choices form a literary thread that connects the several statements by the use of sound patterns" (Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai*, *Malachi*, vol. 21A, The New American Commentary, 142). The message of God, carefully listened to and obeyed, leads to the work of God. Haggai is describing the way away from complacency to the path of devotion and God's blessings.

Along with actualized listening ("obeyed"), Haggai also

mentioned that the people "feared the Lord" (v.12). Hearing of their disobedience and God's judgment upon them (1:9-11), the people understood that God must be obeyed and revered. "To fear the Lord does not mean to be terrified of him, but to give him the wholehearted reverence and respect he deserves as the one and only Lord (Deut. 6:12–15). Fearing the Lord and obeying his commands are how the covenant people of God should respond to him (Deut. 6:24; 10:12; 31:12). Through the preaching of Haggai, the Lord reorients the hearts of the people, who turn from indifference and disobedience to reverence and obedience. This change of heart leads to changed behavior" (Stead, 614). The people "hear" and "fear" the LORD in response to Haggai's message.

Haggai assured the people that though they had experienced the disciplining hand of God (vv.3-11), God was present with them. "The phrase *I am with you* is the customary assurance of God's merciful, guiding presence in a variety of situations: in an oracle of promise (Amos 5:14), in theophanies (Gen. 28:15; Judg. 6:12), in the calling of prophets (Exod. 3:12; Jer. 1:8, 19). This was the experience of persons like Moses (Exod. 3:12; 33:14), Gideon (Judg. 6:16), and Jeremiah (1:8); this was also an aspect of Christ's promise to his disciples (Matt. 28:20). In some contexts the promise of God's support and blessing is joined with the injunction 'fear not' (Gen. 26:24; Isa. 41:10; 43:5; Jer. 1:8). Although this reassurance is not added to the promise of the text, we may assume its presence here, with reference to v. 12" (Verhoef, 85).

After the response of the people with obedience and reverence, they were "stirred up in the spirit" by the Lord (v. 14a) and began the work of rebuilding the house of the Lord (v. 14b). The people had been complacent (v. 2). Now they were passionate about the great work of restoring the worship of God in their midst. "The root of the verb *stirred* means 'to rouse, awaken, set in motion' and is frequently attributed to God's sovereign work in enlivening people to accomplish his purposes (e.g. Ezra 1:1; Isa. 13:17; 41:25; Jer. 51:1, 11). Like Zechariah, Haggai recognizes the dynamic relationship between the empowering presence of God's Spirit and the spirit of the people in rousing the community to action" (Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi,* Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 72).

The "house of the LORD Almighty their God" is an interesting phrase. "LORD Almighty" is used 14 times in the small book of Haggai. The phrase is translated "LORD of armies" (NASB) or "Lord of hosts" (ESV). God is regarded mighty for many reasons, one of which is that he commands many who follow him. He commands angels, nations and peoples. He does not lack for followers. Haggai describes a small remnant of refugees who return to the burnt out shell of a city judged by God. They now move from just "these people" (v. 2) to people who excitedly rebuild the house of the Lord Almighty their God. God does not need the people; he is already the Lord of hosts. Instead, the people find their hope and purpose by joining in the mighty company of the Lord. Focusing only on their own four walls, the people were floundering. The people, obedient and reverent, were supernaturally stirred to a cause greater than themselves by a God who is greater than anything they could manufacture on their own. We are always better together when this together is with the LORD of Hosts.

Word Studies/Notes

- v. 12 *remnant* "First, the term is used only after members of the community and their leaders are obedient to the voice of Yahweh (so too Yahweh is now called their God in verses 12 and 14). Second, the term may not apply to the entire community that returns from Babylon, for only the leadership and 'the whole remnant of the people' respond. Since the term 'this people' appears earlier in verse 2, one may suppose that the 'remnant' here refers to only part of the community who responds in obedience (cf. Zeph 3:11–20)" (C. Ham & M. Hahlen, *Minor Prophets*, College Press NIV Commentary, 288).
- v. 12 obeyed "The word translated 'obeyed' (šāma') can simply mean 'to hear', but the echoes of Deut. 4:30 and 30:2, which envisage a time after exile when the people return to Yahweh and 'obey' (šāma'), suggest this idea is uppermost. There is possibly also an echo of Jeremiah, whose hearers refused to obey (e.g. Jer. 43:4) (J. Kessler 2008: 20). The leaders and people all respond in obedience to 'the voice of Yahweh their God, that is, [they obeyed] in accordance with the words of Haggai the prophet'. The 'voice of Yahweh' and 'the words of Haggai' are one and the same and indicate the divine and human nature of the prophetic word, which here powerfully works obedience among God's people. Like Moses and other prophets, Haggai is 'sent' by Yahweh as the mediator of his word (e.g. Exod. 3:10-15; Zech. 7:12)" (A. R. Petterson, Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi, vol. 25, Apollos OT Commentary, 62).
- v. 13 *messenger* "The start of a new episode is marked by a shift in the terms with which Haggai is characterized. In 1:1–12 he is repeatedly described as a 'prophet' (nābî') through whom Yahweh's 'word' (dābār) came (1:1, 3). Here (1:13a) he is described as Yahweh's 'messenger' (mal'āk, which can also be translated 'angel'), who speaks Yahweh's 'message' (mal'ākût). This latter terminology has somewhat broader connotations than the former. All prophets might be called 'messengers of Yahweh' in some sense (2 Chr 36:15–16; cf. Isa 44:26; Mal 1:1; 3:1); but all 'messengers of Yahweh' cannot be called prophets. The main function of a messenger is to be a sign of Yahweh's presence" (Michael Floyd, *Minor Prophets: Part* 2, vol. 22, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, 276).
- v. 13 with you "The comforting words 'I am with you' (ănî *'ittekem*) call to mind similar promises found elsewhere in biblical literature. Jacob received such a promise at Bethel as he began his journey to Haran (Gen 28:15). Joseph's amazing success in Egypt was attributed to the fact that 'the LORD was with him' in all he undertook (Gen 39:2, 21, 23). Moses heard similar words at the burning bush (Exod 3:12). So too did Joshua, Moses' successor, as he assumed the mantel of leadership upon the death of Moses (Josh 1:5), as did Gideon when he faced the Midianites (Judg 6:16). So also did David when the Lord entered into a covenant with him (2 Sam 7:9) and Jeremiah when he began his prophetic ministry (Jer 1:8). When faced with the Assyrian threat, the Israelites took comfort in such words (Isa 8:10; cf. Ps 46:7, 11). And in the New Testament messianic expectations and hopes were fulfilled in one who was called 'Emanuel, God with us' (Matt 1:23)" (Taylor and Clendenen, 143).

- v. 14 *stirred* "The expression to stir up the spirit' generally depicts Yahweh's motivation of people to assume a particular action (1 Chr 5:26; 2 Chr 21:16; 36:22; Jer 51:1, 11). More significant for this context, however, are the accounts in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23, where Yahweh prompts Cyrus, and in Ezra 1:5, where Yahweh moves the hearts of the family heads of Judah and Benjamin as well as the priests and Levites to go up and build the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem (cf. Exod. 35:29; 36:2). Here the phrase also attests to Yahweh's sovereignty, even if it follows the people's obedience to the voice of Yahweh. Therefore, in verse 14, the action of the people in coming to work on the house of the LORD Almighty reverses their resistant declaration in verse 2" (Ham and Hahlen, 289).
- v. 14 *Almighty* "God is described as 'the LORD of hosts' (or 'Yahweh of armies'). This title occurs 14 times in Haggai (cf. 53 times in Zechariah and 24 times in Malachi). Tollington (1993: 70) notes that it is a title for God that became prominent in the early monarchy period and was associated with the theology of the Jerusalem temple and the dwelling of God among his people (e.g. 2 Sam. 7:8, 26–27). The 'hosts' are literally 'armies' and may be the armies of heaven ('angels'), armies of earth (military might) or encompass all multitudes in heaven and on earth. Since the post-exilic community had no army, its immediate reference seems to be to the armies of heaven" (Petterson, 57).
- v. 15 twenty-fourth "The first part of v. 15 specifies the day on which the temple work began. It was "the twentyfourth day of the sixth month." The modern equivalent is September 21, 520 B.C. According to Hag 1:1 the prophet delivered this initial message on the first day of that same month, that is, August 29, 520 B.C. This means that just a little more than three weeks had elapsed between the delivery of that sermon and the actual beginning of the work on the temple. Assuming the people's response to Haggai's message was more or less immediate, these several weeks probably were spent in getting things ready for the work. The preparations of gathering construction material, organizing the labor force, and securing the initial outlay of funds all would have taken some time. But now they were ready to move ahead. Haggai's initial message had been eminently successful in motivating the people for the important task before them. Although the path before them would prove to be discouraging at times, finally the people were moving in the right direction. Three more messages from the prophet would soon follow, each one providing at pivotal points the encouragement or prodding needed for the people to continue the work" (Taylor and Clendenen, 144).
- v. 15 *month* "The date when the actual rebuilding was resumed was 24 Elul (September 21), 520 B.C. There had been a delay of 23 days between the original prophecy (v. 1) and the resumption of the work (v. 15). This delay is explained by two factors: (a) the harvest of figs, grapes, and pomegranates was in Elul, the same sixth month, and (b) a period of planning and gathering of materials probably preceded the actual reconstruction" (F. Duane Lindsey, "Haggai," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, vol. 1, 1540).

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Listen intently and reverently obey God's Word, trusting him to spiritually empower you to work and serve him.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

I remember the first time my son rode a big roller coaster with me. He had been wanting to ride this big hunk of metal for years and was overjoyed to discover he finally met the height requirement. We waited in line for what felt like eternity, all the while listening to him declare how awesome it was going to be and how excited he was. The closer we got to stepping over the threshold, the more his bravado faded. When it was time for our turn, he nearly backed out. We took a seat, and I leaned down close to his ear and whispered, "I'm right here. I will be with you the entire time." He took a deep breath, triple and quadruple checked his harness, held my hand and we took off. Yes, he screamed most of the ride but before the coaster ever came to a stop, he was begging to do it again. There are moments as a parent we need to let our kids know we are with them — riding a bike, difficult conversations with a friend, first day of school, going to college. We hold their hand and reassure them of our presence, even if it's across the country. Isn't that what God does with us? When we are weak, when fear trumps our faith, when our circumstances seem to be overwhelming, He leans down and whispers in our ear, "I will be with you. I'm not going anywhere." What's happening in your life that you need to be reassured of His presence? Ask him to reassure you and declare, "I will be with you."

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Haggai 1:12-15

- 1. What did the people obey?
- 2. What message of the Lord did Haggai give to the people?
- 3. What did the people begin to do?

What Do You Think?

What is a remnant and who are they in this passage?

What Do You Do?

What is the Lord asking you to do as a recommitment to Him?

CORE COMPETENCY: Life Purpose

I believe God wants me to glorify Him in all I say and do.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 51:10

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15) *I choose to do the right things in my relation-ships with others*

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Eric Wright (B.A. Biblical Studies, Faithway College, Th.M. Pastoral Ministry, Dallas Theological Seminary). Eric served as a pastor in churches in Michigan and Texas for 15 years. He currently serves as a business administrator for a local medical practice. Eric has ministered for over 12 years internationally in Southeast Asia teaching the Gospel of Mark to seminary students and volunteers locally with International Students Inc. at UT Arlington.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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8001 Anderson Boulevard Fort Worth, Texas 76120 817-274-1315 wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION

Making God known by making
disciples who are changed
by God to change their world.