



[Haggai 2:11-14](#)

(11) "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Now ask the priests concerning the law, saying, (12) "If one carries holy flesh in the *skirt* of his garment, and touches his *skirt* to bread, or boiled food, or wine, or oil, or any food, will it *also* become holy?" ' " And the priests answered and said, "No." (13) Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean by a dead body touches any of these, shall it *also* be unclean?" And the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean." (14) And Haggai answered and said, " 'So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before Me,' says the LORD. 'And so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean.

A Faithful Version

[God](#) is teaching us through Haggai that the uncleanness of [this world](#) can be transferred from one person to another, but [holiness](#) *cannot*!

In like manner, preparedness for God's Kingdom cannot be transferred from person to person, because in this lesson, it represents something internal—amatter of the heart. It is an intangible spiritual thing that accrues as a result of spending long periods of time learning, understanding, and honing one's spiritual skills. It is too late when a skill is needed immediately, and it is not there.

The same is true of character. It cannot be borrowed or lent. We cannot borrow a [relationship with God](#). It is non-transferable as holiness is non-transferable. This teaches us that opportunity knocks, and then it passes.

The foolish virgins of Matthew 25 failed to face the possibility that the bridegroom might come later than expected. When they were awakened by the shout, there was no time to do anything except to fill their lamps.

Nobody can deliver his brother. Each person within his relationship with God determines his own destiny. The Laodicean's [faith](#) has become perfunctory ([Revelation 3:15-19](#)). He attends church and is involved socially with brethren, but in daily life and private times,

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he merely goes through the motion in much the same manner as the Israelites in Amos' day (see, for instance, [Amos 5:1-27](#)).

God shows that those unprepared are not admitted to His Kingdom, but this should not be construed as a callous rejection of a person's perhaps lifelong desire. For, unless the [Laodicean](#) repents, he has rejected the [Kingdom of God](#) *on a daily basis*—dayafter day declining to do [God's will](#), even though it is in his mind to desire the Kingdom. He is not taking care of business, so God gives the Laodicean what he shows by his life what he really wants.

This is the principle of reciprocity. It is similar to an unmarried person who, despite surface appearances to the contrary, never makes preparations for his or her coming marriage. Suppose a man meets a woman who could become his future mate, but even though there may be admiration on his part, the relationship never develops because the woman does little or nothing to show her own admiration. A Laodicean is like this woman, rarely showing any affection for God, too busy to deepen the relationship.

We have to seek God—that is our part. It cannot be casual. It has to be zealous. Is that not what God says to the Laodicean? "Be zealous and [repent](#)" ([Revelation 3:19](#)).

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Laodiceanism and Being There Next Year](#)



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