

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Study the Text . . .

The book of Habakkuk is a very special look at the mind and heart of a prophet. Books about the prophets and their prophecies vary in the amount of information they give. The stories of other prophets often record the happenings of the time or how the word of the Lord was delivered by the prophet, and even the response of those who heard it. In Habakkuk we have a much narrower focus. We are allowed to observe the intimacy of conversation between God and Habakkuk. This different approach is even highlighted by the absence of Habakkuk delivering God's message, within the context of book. Our focus is therefore drawn to Habakkuk as we identify with the essential complaint he presents, that God would allow the evil sinners to flourish.

Read

Hab. 1:1-4

Habakkuk presents a complaint to God that is not too different from a question we have all heard, "How can God let evil go unpunished?" This is only a slight variation from the possibly more popular, "Why do bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people?"

- Habakkuk assumes that God does not hear, that He will not save, and that He will sit idly by.
- He cannot see a plan for justice.

Discuss

Have you ever looked around you and questioned whether or not God was just?

Should we ever question God's justice?

Do you think it is possible for God to be doing good without us even realizing it?

Do you think God ever does good, wise, and perfect things that are beyond our present circumstance or understanding to even see?

Hab. 1:5

God's response begins with this simple and clear assertion that Habakkuk just doesn't get it. God even gives commentary on Habakkuk's heart when he says you would not believe it if I told you. God continues to share that He has a plan for punishment, but it is far from what Habakkuk expected or wanted to hear.

- God speaks of raising up a nation Habakkuk felt should be destroyed. (v.6)
- God recognizes that this nation is a conceited nation with confidence in their own abilities (v.7)
- He calls them guilty and knows their “own might is their god.” (v.11)
- This seems an unlikely response to a complaint such as Habakkuk’s.

Discuss

Do you ever wonder, stand amazed, and give God glory even when we don’t understand what is happening around you?

Do you trust God even when things don’t look favorable? Why or why not?

Hab. 1:12-13; 2:1

- Habakkuk remembers God’s promises to prosper His people and has confidence in His God. (v.12)
- Habakkuk also realizes God’s intention to use this nation He raises up as a judgment on disobedient Israel.
- Habakkuk also still feels as though this cannot be the right answer, and makes a case against the people of Babylon claiming they are more evil than Israel.
- 2:1 continues to show Habakkuk’s heart. He may realize that God is readying to punish Israel, but he still speaks as though confident God has chosen the wrong way to go about it.

Discuss

Should we ever question God’s wisdom?

What causes us to question God’s wisdom at times?

In those moments of questioning, who are we trusting in?

Hab. 2:2-4

- God is clear in verses 2 and 3 that His timing is perfect and must be trusted.
- The center of the issue is exposed. This is not only the central point God makes to Habakkuk but the central idea behind the teachings of the apostles in the New Testament, and the primary message of the whole of Scripture: “the righteous shall live by his faith.” (v.4)

Habakkuk was cut to the core with this reminder of the necessity of faith. He had been complaining about a mighty nation who put its confidence in its self and its own power, but he too had grown dependent on self, placing confidence in his own understanding and perceptions. After God had dealt personally with Habakkuk and his faith He gave him a

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word against Babylon. Following that revelation we see once again the condition of Habakkuk's heart as he puts away his complaints and doubts to offer a prayer of praise and confidence.

Hab. 3:17-18

- Now in humility Habakkuk recounts the faithfulness of the Lord.
- He remembers the miraculous parting of the waters and the stopping of the sun as examples of God's faithfulness and divine planning. (v 8;11)
- Only in faith can he "take joy in the God of His salvation" while even in the midst of despair.

Discuss

Have you ever (or recently) asked the Lord why He allowed evil to continue, seemingly unchecked?

Can you recall the condition of your heart when you asked such a question?

What can you learn from studying this account of the way God dealt with his messenger?

Is a lack of faith in your life keeping you from sharing God's message?

What is the relationship between humility and faith?

When you find yourself in times of despair do you tend to reflect on other similar times you have suffered, or do you remember ways God has proved His faithfulness to you in the past?

Have you ever considered it possible to truly have joy in the midst of suffering, or have thought it is only possible to have joy after suffering passes?