

Message Discussion Guide

QUESTIONING GOD

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

August 29, 2010

Habakkuk

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.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Dr. Platt shared a little about his experience during and following Hurricane Katrina. Ask a volunteer to share about a difficult or painful experience in which he or she ultimately found God to be completely trustworthy. What were the initial circumstances? What subsequently happened? What was God accomplishing in his or her life through this experience? What was God accomplishing in the lives of others?

Share with the group that today we're going to see how Habakkuk questioned God in the midst of difficult times and then how he grew to trust God's Sovereign plans and rule.

Option 2

Ask your group: What are the kinds of circumstances or experiences in which we tend to doubt God's trustworthiness, goodness, justice, or power? Why is it hard to trust God in the midst of pain and difficulty? Does trust come naturally to us? Or do we tend to want to work things out on our own? Do we tend to think in the short-term or the long-term?

What feelings, thoughts, or false assumptions can lead to our doubts? What truths can comfort us and relieve our doubts?

Share with the group that today we're going to see how Habakkuk questioned God in the midst of difficult times and then how he grew to trust God's Sovereign plans and rule.

Review the Message . . .

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The Hard Reality of Habakkuk:

God uses _____ painful _____ experiences to accomplish His sovereign _____ purposes _____.

- The struggle of faith...
 - Does God _____ hear _____ ?
 - Does God _____ care _____ ?
 - Is God _____ good _____ ?
 - Is God _____ holy _____ ?
 - Where is God's _____ power _____ ?

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- Where is God's Word?
- Will God show that He is just?
- Is God worthy of my trust?

Discussion . . .

- Read Habakkuk 1:1–17.
- In these verses, can you find the kinds of questions Dr. Platt outlined above?
- Are these questions common in the Bible? How can that fact encourage us?
- If our lives held no pain or difficulty would God be glorified? Why or why not? If so, how? Since our lives do hold pain and difficulty, how can God be glorified in these experiences? (Think back to the story of Job).

Application . . .

- Why is it important, even good, to ask the hard questions, especially during painful experiences?
- Does God know our questions even before we ask them? What are the benefits of being honest before God?
- How can deep questioning before God lead to deep praising of God?
- All of us have experienced pain or difficulty of some kind in our lives. How will those experiences and the questions we have asked better equip us for the future?

- The life of faith...
 - Listen to the truth of God.
 - Lean on the timing of God.
 - Live with your trust in God.
 - For your salvation.
 - Amidst your suffering.
 - Look forward to the triumph of God.
 - He will show His glory.
 - We will stand in awe.

Discussion . . .

- Read Habakkuk 2:2–4.
- During times of trials in our lives, where should we place our focus? How will a focus on God's truth sustain us during trials?
- Is our sense of timing the same as God's? Who is in a better position to understand the best timing of events—a just, loving, all-knowing God or us? How can understanding this truth strengthen our faith during times of pain?
- Read Romans 1:16–17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:37–39. How do the righteous live by faith? What does trust in yourself look like? What does trust in a Sovereign God look like?
- How is Job a model of faith and trust?

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- Read Habakkuk 2:14 and 2:20. Ultimately, who wins? How does the certainty of God's ultimate victory give us hope and strength?
- How widely will God's glory be made known?

Application . . .

- During trials, we may be tempted to withdraw. How can we encourage others to continue in worship, Bible study, prayer, and fellowship during difficult times?
 - Dr. Platt said, "Short-term circumstances provide a poor measurement of the long-term character of God." How does this statement apply to the natural disasters we so regularly witness in our world today? What about the trial of illness or death of a believer? Other circumstances?
 - How can we point people to the long-term character of God while meeting short-term needs?
 - Why is it sometimes hard to wait on God's timing? How can God's Word and the stories of other believers (past and present) encourage us in our waiting?
 - Who will you trust in—yourself or God? How does this question relate to salvation? How is it a daily question? How does trust in God sustain us day-to-day, and during times of pain and difficulty?
 - During painful experiences, can we honor God by living in our own strength? How can we find strength to continue to trust in God?
 - How can the fact that God's glory will one day fill the earth as the waters cover the sea give us boldness in our witness to others?
- The song of faith...
 - God is awesome .
 - God is full of wrath .
 - God is full of mercy .
 - God is present in all of creation.
 - God is praised by all of creation.
 - God has power over all things.
 - God is sovereign in all things.
 - God is the protector of His people.
 - God is the deliverer of His people.
 - God is our satisfaction .
 - God is our strength .
 - God is our victory .

Discussion . . .

- Read Habakkuk 3:2 (awesome, wrath, mercy). How do these truths sum up the message of the prophets?
- Read Habakkuk 3:3 (present, praised). How can God's universal presence encourage our trust? How can God's creation, which shows His splendor, strengthen our faith?

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- Read Habakkuk 3:4–11 (power, sovereign). Can anyone or anything stand against God? Does anything happen outside God's sovereignty?
- Read Habakkuk 3:12–16 (protector, deliverer). Who fights for us? If God is our Father, do you think He takes responsibility for our welfare?
- Read Habakkuk 3:17–19 (satisfaction, strength, victory). What is Habakkuk's attitude at the end of this chapter? Did his circumstances change or did his outlook change? Where did his strength come from?

Application . . .

- How does God's presence with us comfort us?
- How do the prophets help us reconcile God's wrath and God's mercy?
- How does Habakkuk chapter 3 expand our view of God?
- Will God ever completely abandon His people?
- What does the world fear? If God is our protector, what do we need to fear?
- How can God help us do more than just endure suffering? Is rejoicing in the midst of suffering possible? How does God-focused praise comfort our spirits and glorify God, especially during painful experiences?

The Comforting Reality of the Cross:

God uses His Son's _____ suffering _____ to accomplish His people's _____ salvation _____.

- His pain brings us _____ peace _____.
- His death brings us _____ life _____.
- Because of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, we know...
 - Our suffering is _____ temporary _____.
 - Our God is _____ trustworthy _____.

Discussion . . .

- How did the Son's suffering secure our salvation?
- Read 2 Corinthians 4:17 and Romans 8:18.
- Why do we trust our suffering is temporary? Why can believers view death as "temporary"? Do unbelievers have either of these confidences?

Application . . .

- How can we bring this comforting reality to a suffering world?
- How does this comforting reality help us face illness, death, or persecution? How is a Christian's view of suffering and death different from the world's view?
- If God is trustworthy and suffering is temporary, is there any call/mission we should fear if it comes from Him?