



FORMED BY WHAT MATTERS

Lessons in Character through Habakkuk

Faith When God Doesn't Make Sense

FORMED BY WHAT MATTERS



Habakkuk is unusual because much of the book is a conversation between a confused prophet and God. Habakkuk sees things that are wrong. He prays. God answers—but the answer creates even more questions.

Yet by the end of the book, Habakkuk has moved from: “How long, Lord?” to: “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.” The circumstances have not necessarily changed. Habakkuk has. This series is about what faith can look like when life is confusing, God seems quiet, injustice appears to win, and you do not have all the answers.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET



READ

Read the passage in your Bible, then the study reflection.



THINK

Reflect on what Habakkuk teaches us about God and faith.



TALK

Use the questions to listen, discuss and learn from one another.



LIVE

Choose one practical action and carry it into the week.

Bible references are provided for each study. Read the passages in your Bible.





HABAKKUK



FAITH WHEN GOD DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

You do not have to pretend. You do not have to have everything worked out. Biblical faith gives us permission to ask honestly while continuing to seek God faithfully.

01 Can I ask God hard questions?

#HONESTY

Habakkuk 1:1-4

02 When wrong seems to win

#JUSTICE

Habakkuk 1:2-4

03 God's unexpected answer

#TRUST

Habakkuk 1:5-11

04 Faith and thinking

#WISDOM

Habakkuk 1:12-17

05 Learning to wait

#PATIENCE

Habakkuk 2:1

06 Living by faith

#FAITH

Habakkuk 2:2-5

07 Power doesn't get the last word

#JUSTICE

Habakkuk 2:6-14

08 What are you worshipping?

#SELFCONTROL

Habakkuk 2:15-20

09 Remember what God has done

#GRATITUDE

Habakkuk 3:1-15

10 Even if...

#JOY

Habakkuk 3:16-19

“How long, Lord?”

“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.”



01 Can I ask God hard questions?

#Honesty · #Courage · #Faith

KEY IDEA

God is not threatened by an honest question.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 1:1-4

Read the passage slowly. Notice the questions Habakkuk asks: How long? Why? Why do you tolerate this? Habakkuk looks around and sees violence, injustice, conflict and people ignoring what is right. Instead of pretending everything is fine, he brings his frustration directly to God.



THINK

Sometimes we assume that having faith means never questioning God. Maybe you have heard Christians say things like: “Just trust God.” “Don’t question it.” “Everything happens for a reason.” But Habakkuk begins his book by doing exactly what we sometimes think faithful people should not do. He questions God. And God allows his questions to remain in Scripture. That tells us something important. There is a difference between walking away from God and wrestling with God.

#Honesty · #Courage · #Faith



01 Can I ask God hard questions?

#Honesty · #Courage · #Faith

KEY IDEA

God is not threatened by an honest question.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 1:1-4

Habakkuk does not stop believing that God is there. In fact, his questions exist because he believes God is there. He thinks: God, if you are good, why is this happening? God, if you care about justice, why aren't you doing something?



THINK

Faith does not always begin with certainty. Sometimes faith begins by turning toward God with the question. The Bible contains many people who do this—Job, David, Jeremiah and even Jesus praying in anguish. God is not threatened by an honest question.

#Honesty · #Courage · #Faith





Q1 What problems does Habakkuk see around him?

Q2 Why do you think God allowed Habakkuk's questions to become part of the Bible?

Q3 What is the difference between questioning God and walking away from God?



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

This week, write one question you would genuinely like to ask God. Don't try to make it sound spiritual. Start with: "God, I don't understand why..." Then spend one minute talking honestly to God about it.

PRAYER

God, sometimes there are things I do not understand. Help me to bring my questions to you instead of hiding them from you. Give me the courage to seek you even when I don't have answers. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"We reverence that wrestling in our own sacred text."

— **Bishop Robert Barron**

#Honesty · #Courage · #Faith



02 When wrong seems to win

#Justice · #Compassion · #Courage

KEY IDEA

Faith does not mean ignoring what is broken.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Look again at what Habakkuk sees: Violence. Injustice. Conflict. Wrongdoing. Even worse, it seems as though people doing the wrong thing are getting away with it.



THINK

One of the hardest questions in life is: Why doesn't God stop bad things? You may have seen someone treated unfairly. Someone lies and gets away with it. Someone bullies another person and stays popular. Someone cheats and succeeds. Someone who has done nothing wrong suffers. Habakkuk knows that feeling. He is not just upset because his life is difficult. He is upset because the world is not the way it should be. Interestingly, Christianity agrees with him. The Bible never says evil is simply something we need to accept as normal.

#Justice · #Compassion · #Courage



02 When wrong seems to win

#Justice · #Compassion · #Courage

KEY IDEA

Faith does not mean ignoring what is broken.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 1:2-4

The Christian story begins with a creation God calls good. That means violence, cruelty, exploitation and injustice are not simply “the way things are.” Something has gone wrong. The fact that injustice bothers us may actually tell us something.



THINK

We recognise that there is such a thing as right and wrong. Habakkuk’s anger at injustice points beyond himself toward a God who loves justice. Faith does not mean ignoring what is broken. Sometimes faith is learning to see what is broken clearly—and asking God what faithfulness looks like within it.

#Justice · #Compassion · #Courage





TALK



Q1 What kinds of injustice seem to trouble Habakkuk most?

Q2 Why do you think injustice bothers human beings so deeply?

Q3 When you see something wrong, what are some wise responses besides ignoring it or becoming angry?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Notice one situation this week where someone is being overlooked, excluded or treated unfairly. Ask: Is there one small thing I can do that moves this situation toward what is right? It could be speaking up, including someone, refusing to join in, or telling a trusted adult.

PRAYER

God of justice, help me notice what is wrong without becoming cynical. Give me courage, wisdom and compassion to do what is right when I can. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"Pain insists upon being attended to."

— C. S. Lewis

#Justice · #Compassion · #Courage



03 When God's answer isn't the answer you wanted

#Trust · #Humility · #Patience

KEY IDEA

God sees history from beginning to end.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 1:5-11

Habakkuk asks God to do something. God responds. But God's answer is completely unexpected. God says he is raising up the Babylonians. Habakkuk wanted an answer. He probably did not expect that answer.



THINK

Have you ever asked for something and received an answer you did not expect? You pray that a situation will change—but it doesn't. You ask God to fix something—but the path ahead becomes more complicated. You think: God, that wasn't what I meant. That is where Habakkuk finds himself. Sometimes we unconsciously imagine that trusting God means God will eventually agree with the plan we already have. We know what should happen. We know when it should happen. We know how God should do it.

#Trust · #Humility · #Patience



03 When God's answer isn't the answer you wanted

#Trust · #Humility · #Patience

KEY IDEA

God sees history from beginning to end.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 1:5-11

Then reality doesn't cooperate. Habakkuk is forced to confront a deeper question: Do I trust God only when God's plans make sense to me? That doesn't mean every event is good. The Babylonians certainly were not. But it does remind us that God sees more than we do.



THINK

A student sees one lesson. A teacher sees the whole unit. A player sees today's training. A coach sees the season plan. God sees history from beginning to end. Faith sometimes means admitting: "I cannot see enough yet to know what God is doing."

#Trust · #Humility · #Patience





TALK



Q1 Why would God's answer have surprised Habakkuk?

Q2 Why do we sometimes assume God's answer should match what we already want?

Q3 What is the difference between saying "I don't understand God" and "God cannot be trusted"?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

When something doesn't go according to plan this week, catch your first reaction. Then say: "I cannot see the whole story yet." Ask God for wisdom for the next step, rather than demanding the whole plan.

PRAYER

God, I often want you to work according to my plan. Teach me to trust your character when I cannot understand your timing or your ways. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

— A. W. Tozer

#Trust · #Humility · #Patience



04 Faith doesn't mean switching off your brain

#Wisdom · #Curiosity · #Humility

KEY IDEA

Faith is not the opposite of thinking.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 1:12-17

Habakkuk receives God's answer. And then he questions it. Again. His basic question is: How can a holy God use a nation even more violent than Judah to bring judgement?



THINK

This is one of the most interesting moments in Habakkuk. God has spoken. Habakkuk does not reply: "Well, I guess I'm not allowed to think about this anymore." He thinks carefully about what God has said. Habakkuk begins with what he knows about God's character. God is eternal. God is holy. God is just. Then he asks: How does what I am seeing fit with what I know about God? That is a healthy model for Christian thinking.

#Wisdom · #Curiosity · #Humility



04 Faith doesn't mean switching off your brain

#Wisdom · #Curiosity · #Humility

KEY IDEA

Faith is not the opposite of thinking.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 1:12-17

Faith is not the opposite of thinking. There will be questions Christianity asks us to wrestle with: Why suffering? Why judgement? Why does God sometimes seem silent? Can science and faith fit together?



THINK

How do we know Christianity is true? Mature faith does not panic when someone asks a difficult question. It investigates. It reads. It listens. It thinks. It prays. And sometimes it says: "I don't know yet."

#Wisdom · #Curiosity · #Humility





Q1 What does Habakkuk already believe about God?

Q2 How do those beliefs create his next question?

Q3 Why is “I don’t know yet” sometimes a better Christian answer than pretending certainty?



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose one question about Christianity that you would genuinely like to understand better. Instead of relying on a short social-media clip, comment section or random search result, find one thoughtful Christian source dealing seriously with the question.

PRAYER

God of truth, give me a faith that is willing to think. Help me ask good questions, seek truth humbly and trust you while I am still learning. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“Faith is a reasoning trust, a trust which reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God.”

— John Stott

#Wisdom · #Curiosity · #Humility



05 Learning to wait

#Patience · #Perseverance · #Attentiveness

KEY IDEA

He asks. Then he watches.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 2:1

Habakkuk says he will stand at his watch and wait to see how God answers. The questions have not disappeared. So Habakkuk waits.



THINK

We are not particularly good at waiting. Messages arrive instantly. Videos load instantly. We can search almost anything in seconds. So when God doesn't answer immediately, something feels wrong. Habakkuk gives us a different picture. He asks. Then he watches. There is a difference between passive waiting and faithful waiting. Passive waiting says: I can't do anything. Faithful waiting says: I will keep watching, listening and doing what I already know is right.

#Patience · #Perseverance · #Attentiveness



05 Learning to wait

#Patience · #Perseverance · #Attentiveness

KEY IDEA

He asks. Then he watches.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 2:1

You may not know what your future career will be. You may not know how a friendship situation will end. You may not know why a prayer has not been answered. You may not know what God is doing. But there are still things you can do.



THINK

You can pray. You can read Scripture. You can ask wise people for help. You can keep your commitments. You can treat people well. You can keep showing up. Sometimes God forms us not only through the answer, but through the waiting.

#Patience · #Perseverance · #Attentiveness





TALK



Q1 What does the image of a watchman suggest about Habakkuk's waiting?

Q2 Why is waiting difficult?

Q3 What could faithful waiting look like for someone who does not know what comes next?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Set aside five quiet minutes this week. No phone. No music. No multitasking. Read Habakkuk 2:1 again. Then simply pray: "God, help me notice what you want me to see."

PRAYER

God, I want answers quickly. Teach me to wait faithfully. Help me keep listening, praying and doing what is right while I wait. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"Much praying is not done because we do not plan to pray."

— D. A. Carson

#Patience · #Perseverance · #Attentiveness



06 The righteous will live by faith

#Faith · #Trust · #Humility

KEY IDEA

Faith has an object. God.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 2:2-5

Pay particular attention to Habakkuk 2:4. This small statement becomes enormously important later in the Bible. See also: Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38



THINK

God contrasts two ways of living. One is built around pride. The other is built around faith. Pride says: I can secure myself. I need enough success. Enough control. Enough approval. Enough strength. Enough popularity. Enough achievement. Then I will be okay. Faith says: My security ultimately rests somewhere bigger than me. Biblical faith is not positive thinking.

#Faith · #Trust · #Humility



06 The righteous will live by faith

#Faith · #Trust · #Humility

KEY IDEA

Faith has an object. God.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 2:2-5

It is not convincing yourself that everything will turn out exactly how you want. Faith has an object. God. The Christian claim is not: “Believe hard enough.” It is: Trust the God who has shown himself to be trustworthy.



THINK

The New Testament eventually points this faith toward Jesus—his death, resurrection and grace. We are not saved because our faith is impressive. We are saved because the one we trust is faithful.

#Faith · #Trust · #Humility





Q1 What contrast does Habakkuk make between pride and faith?

Q2 What are some things people use to create a sense of security?

Q3 Why is Christian faith different from simply saying, “Everything will be fine”?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Notice one area where you are trying to control everything. Write: “I can be responsible for _____, but I cannot control _____. ” Do what belongs to you. Entrust the rest to God.

PRAYER

God, free me from needing to control everything. Teach me to live faithfully, responsibly and confidently in your grace. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God’s grace.”

— Martin Luther

#Faith · #Trust · #Humility



07 Power doesn't get the last word

#Justice · #Integrity · #Courage

KEY IDEA

Success and goodness are not the same thing.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 2:6-14

Notice the repeated warnings against greed, exploitation, violence and building success by harming others. Then notice where the passage is heading. God's glory—not human power—will ultimately fill the earth.



THINK

The Babylonians looked unstoppable. They had military power. Political power. Wealth. Influence. From Habakkuk's perspective, they appeared to be winning. God says: Their power will not last forever. That is important because history often makes injustice look permanent. The powerful can appear untouchable. People can gain influence by humiliating others. Companies can profit by exploiting people. Leaders can misuse authority.

#Justice · #Integrity · #Courage



07 Power doesn't get the last word

#Justice · #Integrity · #Courage

KEY IDEA

Success and goodness are not the same thing.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 2:6-14

Students can gain social status by making someone else the joke. Habakkuk reminds us that success and goodness are not the same thing. Just because something works does not mean it is right.



THINK

Christian hope says evil does not have the final word. Jesus' resurrection makes that claim even stronger. Rome executed Jesus. The tomb looked like the end. It wasn't. God can bring life where evil appears to have won.

#Justice · #Integrity · #Courage





TALK



Q1 What kinds of power does Habakkuk 2 challenge?

Q2 Why can success sometimes make wrongdoing look acceptable?

Q3 Where might someone your age be tempted to gain status at another person's expense?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Pay attention this week to how influence is being used around you. Ask: Does this person's influence help others flourish, or does it make others smaller? Then consider the same question about your own influence.

PRAYER

God of justice, teach me not to confuse popularity, money or power with goodness. Help me use whatever influence I have to serve rather than control. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"Hope is what you get when you suddenly realize that a different worldview is possible."

— N. T. Wright

#Justice · #Integrity · #Courage



08 What are you worshipping?

#SelfControl · #Contentment · #Faithfulness

KEY IDEA

God is God. We are not.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 2:15-20

The chapter finishes with a contrast. People create idols that cannot speak. But the living God is present. The appropriate response is reverence and silence.



THINK

An idol is something created that takes the place that belongs to God. We probably do not bow down to carved statues. But that does not mean we do not have idols. Anything can become one. Achievement. Appearance. Sport. Relationships. Money. Popularity. Our phones. Even our reputation as a “good Christian.” A good thing becomes an idol when we quietly start believing: “If I have this, then I will finally be enough.” The problem with idols is not only that God dislikes them.

#SelfControl · #Contentment · #Faithfulness



08 What are you worshipping?

#SelfControl · #Contentment · #Faithfulness

KEY IDEA

God is God. We are not.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 2:15-20

The problem is that they cannot carry the weight we put on them. Popularity can disappear. Results change. Relationships change. Bodies change. Money can disappear.



THINK

Habakkuk finishes chapter 2 by moving our attention away from all the things humans manufacture and control. God is God. We are not. Sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is stop filling every moment with noise and remember who is actually at the centre of reality.

#SelfControl · #Contentment · #Faithfulness





TALK



Q1 Why are idols ultimately unable to save the people who trust them?

Q2 What good things can become ultimate things in people's lives today?

Q3 How can you tell when something important has become too important?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Look at where your attention went this week. Your screen time, thoughts, worries and conversations often reveal what feels most important to you. Ask: "What am I expecting this thing to give me?"

PRAYER

God, show me the things I sometimes ask to give me what only you can give. Teach my restless heart to find its centre in you. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

— Augustine

#SelfControl · #Contentment · #Faithfulness



09 Remember what God has done

#Gratitude · #Hope · #Faithfulness

KEY IDEA

Memory matters.



READ

THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 3:1-15

The final chapter changes tone. Habakkuk begins to remember God's mighty acts. His problems have not disappeared. But instead of looking only at the problem in front of him, he remembers the God behind him.



THINK

Memory matters. When you are frightened, disappointed or confused, your current situation can become your entire world. You forget everything else. Habakkuk deliberately remembers. He remembers who God is. He remembers what God has done. He remembers that the current crisis is not the whole story. That is one reason the Bible repeatedly tells God's people to remember. Remember the Exodus. Remember God's promises. Remember God's faithfulness.

#Gratitude · #Hope · #Faithfulness



09 Remember what God has done

#Gratitude · #Hope · #Faithfulness

KEY IDEA

Memory matters.



THINK

CONTINUED

Habakkuk 3:1-15

For Christians, the greatest act of remembrance is the gospel. Remember Jesus. Remember the cross. Remember the empty tomb. Remember that the worst day imaginable—Jesus' crucifixion—was not the end of the story.



THINK

Remembering does not magically remove difficulty. It gives difficulty a larger context. The question becomes not simply: "What is happening to me right now?" but: "Who is the God I am trusting while this is happening?"

#Gratitude · #Hope · #Faithfulness





TALK



Q1 Why do you think Habakkuk spends time remembering God's actions?

Q2 How can fear make us forget the bigger story?

Q3 What parts of the Christian story are especially important to remember when life is difficult?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Write down three things that remind you of God's faithfulness. They might be: something Scripture says, something God has done in the past, a person God has used in your life. Keep the list somewhere you can return to it.

PRAYER

God, when today's problems become all I can see, help me remember who you are and what you have done. Keep the story of Jesus at the centre of my hope. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"People treat God's sovereignty as a matter of controversy, but in Scripture it is a matter of worship."

— J. I. Packer

#Gratitude · #Hope · #Faithfulness



10 Even if...



#Joy · #Hope · #Perseverance

KEY IDEA

Yet God remains faithful.



READ



THE PASSAGE

Habakkuk 3:16-19

Read the ending carefully. Habakkuk imagines everything going wrong. The crops fail. The fields produce nothing. The animals are gone. Then comes one of the most powerful words in the whole book: Yet.



THINK

Habakkuk does not finish by saying: “Don’t worry—everything worked out.” He finishes with something much deeper. Even if circumstances fall apart, God remains God. That is not optimism. Optimism says: “I think things will probably get better.” Christian hope says: “Even when I cannot see how things will get better, my future ultimately belongs to God.” Habakkuk began: How long? He ends: Yet I will rejoice. Notice what changed. Habakkuk did not receive every answer. Babylon was still coming. The future was still difficult.

#Joy · #Hope · #Perseverance



10 Even if...



#Joy · #Hope · #Perseverance

KEY IDEA

Yet God remains faithful.



THINK



CONTINUED

Habakkuk 3:16-19

But Habakkuk had learned that faith does not require understanding every part of the story before trusting the Author. Christians read Habakkuk from the other side of the resurrection. The resurrection does not tell us that Christians will avoid suffering.



THINK

It tells us something greater: Suffering and death do not get the final word. That means Christian hope can say: Even if this doesn't happen... Even if that prayer isn't answered how I want... Even if the future looks different from what I imagined... Yet God remains faithful.

#Joy · #Hope · #Perseverance





TALK



Q1 What circumstances does Habakkuk imagine going wrong?

Q2 What is the difference between optimism and Christian hope?

Q3 How has Habakkuk changed between chapter 1 and chapter 3?



LIVE

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Write your own EVEN IF / YET statement.

Use the reflection page that follows.

Keep it somewhere you can see it this week.

PRAYER

God, I do not know everything that lies ahead. I will not pretend that difficult things are easy. But teach me the faith of Habakkuk—the faith that can say “even if” and still say “yet.” Anchor my hope in Jesus, whose resurrection reminds me that darkness never has the final word. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“Hope is not this-worldly optimism.”

— Bishop Robert Barron

#Joy · #Hope · #Perseverance





- 01** For example: Even if I don't get the result I hoped for, yet I will not let a result decide my worth.

- 02** Even if I don't know what comes next, yet I will keep trusting God with the next step.

- 03** Even if this season is difficult, yet I will remember that God has not abandoned me.





Habakkuk

YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD

The circumstances have not necessarily changed.
Habakkuk has.

