



PART 2: NOT “WHY?” BUT “WHO?”

Have you ever felt behind financially, relationally, or emotionally? Have you ever felt so behind that you didn't know how to start catching up? The more time went by, the more you lost hope. These are *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments. But when you feel down, don't lose hope. You're never out. You can still turn the game around.

All of us experience *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments when our problems become so big that the only thing we can see is our problems. We ask questions of God, like “God, if you're in control? Why is my life so out of control? Why aren't you moving and acting?” It's during those *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments when we choose to focus on God and worship Him, our big problems shrink when focused on a God who has moved—and will move again, in our life. Because being thankful and worshipping God is an intentional choice—not just a reaction to our circumstances of life.

BIG IDEA: Asking ‘Who’ instead of ‘Why?’ will help you move forward and not get stuck.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When life is going well, do you tend to plan and prepare for future challenges or just enjoy the moment? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your approach?
2. Why is it difficult for people to remember the good things in their lives when they're facing *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments?
3. During the message, Chris said, “*We rarely remember what God did in the light, but we never forget what God didn't do in the dark.*” To what extent is that statement true of you?
4. What kind of relationship do you think Habakkuk had with God? Do you think this gave him hope for the future? Why or why not?
5. Describe a time when God gave you hope through something amazing He did in the life of another person.
6. Habakkuk learned to rely on God in the midst of life's trials. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 4:12-13.* According to James, How does our response to trials shape and form us to have the character God desires? What is God trying to do with your faith during your *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments?
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Habakkuk 3:1 from the Amplified Bible.*

A PRAYER of Habakkuk the prophet, set to wild, enthusiastic, and triumphal music.

Habakkuk 3:1 (Amplified Bible)

Chris said that the definition of enthusiasm is comes from two Greek words: en (in) and Theos (God)—God in. To be enthusiastic about something means that you see God working in something. Where are some areas in which God may be setting the stage to work great things in your life? Hint: many times, it's in the problem areas of our life!

8. Why can the once woeful Habakkuk afford to be so joyful? Has his situation and circumstances changed? What has changed?
9. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Habakkuk 3:1-2.* Looking at the physical world around him, Habakkuk said:

I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy. I see God moving...

Habakkuk 3:1-2

Awe (n.): A mixed emotion of reverence, respect, and wonder inspired by authority, great beauty, or might.

10. Describe a time when, like Habakkuk, you were “awed” by God’s creation.
11. Do you feel like your relationship with God changed through this experience? If so, how?
12. To what historical events do these verses in Habakkuk 3 relate?
 - Habakkuk 3:3-5 (see Exodus 7-12)
 - Habakkuk 3:4 (Exodus 34:29, 35)
 - Habakkuk 3:6-7 (see Exodus 19:16)
 - Habakkuk 3:8-10 (see Exodus 14:15-31; Joshua 3:15-17)
 - Habakkuk 3:11 (see Joshua 10:12-13)
13. How does reciting God’s marvelous deeds in the past anticipate God’s future deliverance in our day? (Habakkuk 3:2)
14. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Habakkuk 3:17-18.* In the face of an apparently hopeless situation, what did Habakkuk still have to say about God and his faith in Him?
15. Has there been a time in your life when God gave you joy even though your circumstances appeared hopeless?
16. What evidence does Habakkuk have for rejoicing?
17. Habakkuk moved from hopelessness to joy over the 3 chapters of this book. In what areas of your life would you like God to take you from hopelessness to joy?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 22:42 and Hebrews 12:2.* Is there a difference between happiness and joy? When Habakkuk questioned God about evil and injustice, verse 4 was God’s response.
2. *Compare Habakkuk 3:8-10 with Psalms 74:12-17.* What similar images do these prayers use to evoke awe for God’s mighty works?
3. This poetic, hymn-like passage of Habakkuk 3 stirs up vivid images and memories in Israel’s history when God moved in impossible situations. When has God worked in impossible situations in your past? Share those times with the rest of the group.
4. In what impossible and difficult situations are you praying for God to work in now? Share with the rest of the group.
5. What new meaning would Habakkuk bring to the phrase “It is always darkest before the dawn?” In what areas of your life is God’s power dawning? Where are you still waiting in the twilight for the sun to rise?
6. What things are barren in your life as it was in Habakkuk’s day (Habakkuk 3:16-18)

MOVING FORWARD

It’s easy for us to lose sight of the faithfulness of our heavenly Father. It’s easy for us to forget what God has done in our lives. Write it down. Create a memorial. Then when you’re facing *bottom-of-the-ninth* moments, you can look back at the moments of light and see how they bring hope to moments of darkness.

Ask God to replace the hopelessness in our lives with the joy that comes from a relationship with Him. In your own words, pray the following:

- Thank God for the amazing things you’ve seen Him do and heard about from others
- Tell Him about your “awe” of Him
- Ask Him bring the joy of your relationship with Him to the places in your life that seem hopeless

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! Habakkuk 3:17-18

