

"MAJORING IN THE MINORS: EXPLORING THE MINOR PROPHETS" FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 14

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "EVEN IF"

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Almighty, help us be still in your presence and know that you are God (Psalm 46:10). We confess that often we do not understand your ways and your plans, and we become impatient. Forgive us for not trusting you. Increase our faith and joy as we worship and praise you. In the faithful name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

CONNECTING QUESTION

How do you or did you respond when you were younger when told to "wait for it?" What is difficult about waiting for anything? What are the benefits and what do you learn from waiting?

How does your faith influence your success in waiting?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Aloud & Meditate on God's Word: Habakkuk 1:1-5; 3:1-19; Luke 12:22-31

WATCH VIDEO

Video Presenter: Nick Stevens

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.

1. What is Habakkuk's complaint in Habakkuk 1:1-5? As you listen to the news about local, national, and international events, do you ever ask, "Lord, how long will you allow this violence, evil, and injustice to go on?" How comfortable are you in lamenting about these things to God? How can you understand better and then help others acknowledge God's presence and power when there is injustice and suffering in the world?
2. Even though Habakkuk questioned God about the evil going on around him and could not understand the "why" of it, what did he determine to do? (See Habakkuk 2:1.) He had an attitude of expectation and wanted to be in the best possible place to receive God's message. Does this describe you when you wait for God? Why or why not? (See Psalm 5:1-3.)
3. How does Habakkuk 2:4... "but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness" connect with the gospel? (See Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 3:10-11; Hebrews 10:38-39.) "The just shall live by faith means that they shall endure and survive and thrive by faith." (John Piper) Is there a time in your life when you knew you were walking by faith? Please share your story.

4. In Habakkuk 3:1-16 the prophet expresses awe of God's past deeds and trust in his future justice. What do you learn about God's justice and righteousness in Psalm 11:7, 37:28-29; 89:13-14; Matthew 12:18-21? Identify the most significant verses for you and explain why.
5. Describe Habakkuk's declaration of faith in Habakkuk 3:17-19. It would be devastating if what happened in verse 17 occurred. Yet what does Habakkuk declare in verses 18-19? How and why do you believe that Habakkuk could be that confident in God? What would you say and do if you were in Habakkuk's position?
6. What kind of situations would be most worrisome and damaging to you if they took place (e.g. business folds, overdrawn at bank, child expelled, nobody called all weekend, etc.)? What does Jesus tell you in Luke 12:22-27 about worry? What do you learn about the Heavenly Father that will help you be joyful in difficult circumstances?

FAITH – EVEN IF...

"Even If" challenges us to embrace a faith that does not depend on our circumstances but is rooted in the unchangeable character of God. Paraphrase Habakkuk 3:17-19 in your own words or write a prayer based on the passage. Include your circumstances and declaration of trust in who God is and your trust in him.

What key verses can you "write down," "run with," or wait for," (Habakkuk 2:2-3) especially as you wait for God to act, have questions, or desire to increase your faith? Places to begin: Psalm 13; Proverbs 16:4-6; Psalm 97:9-12; Psalm 18:32-33; Luke 12:31; Luke 17:5.

"Habakkuk didn't rejoice because his problems changed; he rejoiced because his perspective changed... If you find yourself in a low place go honestly to the Lord with your hurts or frustration. When you do, God will give you his perspective; He will lift your spirit to "tread on the heights." Ask God to help you see that his presence is far more valuable than answers". (Jennifer Rothschild – "66 Ways God Loves You").

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Romans 5:1-5; Philippians 4:11-13; James 1:2-4

CLOSING PRAYER

Sovereign Lord, you want us to trust you and to know that you are holy and that you care. You will act in your time and your way to answer our questions, and bring justice where it is needed. Increase our faith so that we declare that no matter what happens, we trust in you. As we wait, enable us with strength and patience to walk on the high, rocky terrain, and even thrive in those difficult places as we cling to you. We rejoice in you, Lord, and we are joyful in you, God our Savior. (Habakkuk 3:18). In the trustworthy name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Our Father...

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