

Insights into Fullness of Life in Christ

12 Praying in and through adversity

Habakkuk - A prayer warrior for our time

The story of the Prophet Habakkuk is truly amazing. For a start his name has the special meaning of "one who clings or embraces" In the context of his life and work as told in the book of Habakkuk, he certainly did cling to God in the most dreadful of circumstances. We would do well to follow his ways, for our days in the world at this time, although different in the detail, are just as difficult in prospect as his were, given the state of our world today as we approach the end of the age.

Habakkuk's communications with God Himself occurred about 606 B.C. He had a number of deep concerns about the world he lived in and asked God about them. The answers God gave were not particularly those Habakkuk wanted to hear. However, there is much to be learned from his responses to what God told him was going to happen to him and to the people of Judah.

It is evident from Habakkuk's response to God, that God's sovereignty will and ways, were paramount over every consideration that he himself could have brought to the situation. Without God, Habakkuk realized that there was no hope and that he simply had to, not only allow God His way, but he had to agree with what God had planned, even with the inherent extreme adversities that would afflict his people.

After we look at what actually happened to Habakkuk and Judah, we will look at the parallels in our day, not only in terms of large issues such as the approaching end of the age, but more particularly in the everyday issues of life, where the principle of submission Habakkuk used would have extreme benefit in our day. With respect to this, there is one particular aspect that seems to be so important as to warrant close examination. This is where (for example) we have loved ones or friends who do not yet know the Lord and are suffering to various degrees because they do not have the protection and keeping power of God within their lives. Based on Habakkuk's actions in his time, we will look at how we can apply them to the many situations in our lives. Let's move into the study.

As always, the Spirit of God is your teacher.

Ken Walker

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This study is also available in two parts in MP3. Go to <http://www.goodnews.org.au/fullness/12prayinginadversity-1.mp3>

And <http://www.goodnews.org.au/fullness/12prayinginadversity-2.mp3>

No	Thematic point	Development of theme / point	Illustration and connections
1	Personal and corporate prayer today	<p>Who can claim to be an effective prayer warrior in our time? There are probably many, for the world is a big place with many wonderful believers worshipping our God. However, from the observation of my own efforts in prayer and those of personal and church family and friends of my acquaintance I don't hear of a high level of effectiveness, although I see some. <i>(it is not always easy to assess all the things that God actually does, despite our efforts)</i></p> <p>It could be we are not doing things the way that God would desire. Dr. Larry Crabb's addressed the issue in his book, <i>The Pressure's Off</i>. This book touches on the same issues that Habakkuk makes very clearer in his short book. Both are worthy of study. My comments and way of praying that way can be found at</p> <p>http://www.goodnews.org.au/life/2008augusttrueprayer.pdf</p>	<p>Also, Dr Martyn Lloyd – Jones on Habakkuk also provide valuable insights into how a true saint can respond to the extremities of adversity. It is quite amazing that just a few correct attitudes towards God, expressed in prayer could make so much difference. That is what we are going to explore in this study.</p>
2	Historical background to Habakkuk's situation	<p>Habakkuk's work as a prophet came about when he asked God about the state of Judah and the violent and unjust ways in which they were living. God's answer to Habakkuk shocked him to the core. God told him that He was going to use the (much more) wicked Chaldeans to chasten his own people of Judah. Although Habakkuk was shocked and dismayed, he was able to come to a place of relative peace about the whole matter, and continued his life in praise and in awe of God. Judah did not have long to wait for they were overrun and the temple burnt to the ground in 586 B.C. In this 21st century, 2600 years after Habakkuk, our world is not too dissimilar. The wicked of the world are prospering; the righteous to some degree battle against the ways of the world and God's judgement is also coming to us in this modern age. In this year of 2010, we may not have to wait much longer for more of God's chastening.</p>	<p>It is already upon the world in various ways and the end of the age will eventually bring God's final judgements. But that is a subject for discussion elsewhere. In this study we are going to look at how, if we use Habakkuk as an example, we may better respond in attitude and prayer to the prospect of seeing our own families and friends suffering the most tragic of ends, UNLESS they know the Lord soon. Can Habakkuk teach us something today?</p>
3	Habakkuk's	Habakkuk not only had a problem with his people of Judah but he also	We often pray to God for the

	<p>questions</p>	<p>had a problem with God Himself. To him, God seemed to be inactive about the nation of Judah. Why did He allow them to go the way they were going? Why didn't God somehow correct them? God's people were in another stage of apathy and every evil was evident in the land.</p> <p>So Habakkuk asked lots of questions. He asked things like; Why did God allow the wicked to prosper? Why were the righteous beaten down? Why was God doing nothing about the wickedness in Judah?</p> <p>Do we not, in our day, also see people live in ungodly ways? Mostly it is the unbeliever that seem to do well in this world, despite their wicked ways, covered over with a thin skin of humanism and apparent well being.</p>	<p>light of God to appear to them, in order that they become regenerate. In many cases, years go by without a positive result. Why is that so? The Habakkuk principle may well supply some of the answer.</p> <p>But we also see some believers off track. Sometimes we pray for them but not always with the effect we desire, that of bringing them back into godly ways.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>What God told Habakkuk</p>	<p>Habakkuk was in shock at God's answer to his questions. Yes He was going to do something about Judah, but the means He was going to do it was received in dismay and shock by Habakkuk. God was going to use another nation to come against Judah, to chasten them for their wickedness.</p> <p>The people that God was going to use, the Chaldeans were far more wicked and corrupt than Judah, yet God had chosen them as His rod of correction.</p> <p>So Habakkuk was shocked at God's method. But more importantly his dismay was that his people would have to suffer in such a way. Eventually of course, we know the outcome just 20 years later. So what a situation for Habakkuk to be in, emphasised by the shock and dismay of what was going to happen.</p>	<p>His situation is not too dissimilar to those we have today when a loved one is not able to respond to the gospel. The consequences of that are too horrible to contemplate. So, we must do all we can through God to have Him rescue them.</p> <p>How was Habakkuk able to respond to this very difficult situation? Might we learn something from it for situations in our day, of which there are many?</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>Habakkuk's response to what God said.</p>	<p>His prayer was neither mournful nor joyful, but expressive of profound emotion at what God told him that He was going to do to Judah. He was moved to the very depth of his being and had conflicting emotions, starting with shock and dismay, but eventually getting to those of triumph and victory.</p> <p>His prayer was far more than just petition, including praise, thanksgiving, recollection of what God had done in the past, along and adoration. Mentioning history is often an essential part of prayer, reminding God of what He has said and done in the past, a technique often used by O.T saints.</p> <p>There were certain facts and attitudes that Habakkuk had that were the basis of his proper attitude towards God. Firstly, he had heard and accepted what God had said, although fearful of the consequences,</p> <p>Habakkuk told God to continue on in His work, but pleaded with God that as He applied His wrath to Israel, to remember to be merciful. This was a most important part of His attitude and prayer towards God. It shows that he knew of God's mercy even in situations where punishment had to come. Habakkuk's prayer is special in other ways. He humbled himself before God. There was not a sign of any self-righteousness in him.</p> <p>Habakkuk did not try to defend Judah or himself. Haballuk knew they deserved God's punishment. He did not ask God to intervene. Isn't that our common approach in such situations? He did not ask why God was going to allow these thing to happen. Isn't that often our first question? Why me? Why now? Habakkuk did not ask God why He allowed the ungodly Chaldeans to seem to be successful. Habakkuk knew that what others do was God's business and not his.</p>	<p>In our day we might ask God why He does not revive the church, or save a particular person.</p> <p>But should not we then ask ourselves why our attitude should not be the same as Habakkuk's? Surely we should consider that.</p> <p>Parts of his prayer are a model of what the Christian's attitude should be in times of crisis.</p> <p>But we often say things such as:</p> <p>Why does not God intervene and change the situation?</p> <p>Why does God allow such things in our lives or the lives of our family?</p> <p>Why does not God come and send revive?</p>
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<p>6</p>	<p>The extremity of trust of Habakkuk</p>	<p>Habakkuk's response to God was based on him viewing God as righteous and holy and that because of his view of God, he saw that God had every right to discipline His people. So Habakkuk put himself in total submission to God and accepted God's judgement on Judah.</p> <p>He was able to do this so successfully that he was able to stop thinking of Judah and the Chaldeans and focus entirely on God and His work. So he was able to see what was going to happen in an entirely new light and focus on the glory of God. Forgetting the problem he was able to see spiritual truth.</p> <p>Had he continued to focus on the problem of the Chaldeans and their future attack on Judah, he would not have been able to focus on God. By avoiding this problem of incorrect focus he was also able to avoid the secondary issue of comparing the degrees of sin between the Chaldeans and Judah. Had he done that he would have become bogged down and incorrectly focussed. He also avoided the issue of how God could use one set of evil people to bring chastisement and correction on another group of people who were also in sin. We know of course that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.</p> <p>Absolute abandonment to God and His ways is what was needed. Habakkuk was able to fully abandon his life and the life of Judah to God, by fully trusting Him, no matter what was going to happen. The pride and arrogance of man attracts the chastisement of God. Both Judah and the mighty Chaldeans deserved what came to them, Judah initially and the Chaldeans later.</p>	<p>Notice the parallels with us living in today's world. Are we not at fault by focussing on the problems we face, instead of looking to God for the answers?</p> <p>Don't we find it just so difficult to avoid thinking on the problem and attend to God only? Perhaps we are in need of a dose of self humiliation. Perhaps the church also.</p> <p>Ultimately says Lloyd - Jones, only two things matter. God's holiness and man's sin. God's holiness and what He has done with it through Jesus is what makes possible the proper addressing of the sin of man. Jesus came to remedy that.</p>
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<p>7</p>	<p>What can we learn from the experience of Habakkuk? (generally)</p>	<p>Deep and frightening dangers faced Habakkuk. Yet he was able to so place his trust in God, exhibiting the fullest of faith that one could ever imagine, that he was able to face what was coming to his people in Judah, without any complaint, or of considering to ask God to change his mind. He avoided any degree of self-righteous argument that would conceive of any other way of handling the situation, but the way God Himself had decreed.</p> <p>At the end of Habakkuk's writing he stated so clearly that even if they had nothing by way of crops and animals to supply food, yet he says I will exult in the Lord. He said, "I will rejoice in the God of my salvation". Read those verses in full in chapter 3, verses 17-19.</p> <p>I am well aware that there are many believers in the world who face these same deprivations daily, and many of them have learned to rely on the Lord as did Habakkuk. I personally know some in several parts of Africa, The Philippines, India and Indonesia)</p> <p>In Australia, and some of the other westernized countries, that sort of dedication and trust in God seems quite rare. Some say we are too comfortable, but it is apparent to me that there is far more to it than that.</p>	<p>Another reason is that we do not fully appreciate the value of these Biblical stories and have not learned how to apply them in our lives. Groups of Christians in various part of the world are beginning to suffer – Egypt, India China and Indonesian are three examples. China always leads the download volume on my web site.</p> <p>In Australia, we have not yet suffered in these ways, but the Habakkuk principle is something we need to learn and practice in the ordinary every day things of life. I believe we tend to look at the wrong in such things, focussing on it, whereas Habakkuk, although aware of them, just focussed on God.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Others writers on this same issue in other ways.</p>	<p>Before we move into some more detailed conclusions, we are going to look at three different ways, by three different writers of how this Habakkuk principle can be explained and practiced, all out of the N.T. The first is from the teaching of Jesus, (from Dan Stone and Norman Grubb) the second from outcomes of OT and NT, from Moses and John, (from my own observation) and the final one out of deep teaching about the Christian life out of the whole Bible (from Dr. Larry Crabb)</p>	<p>By studying the views of these other writers we can see that they bring a similar perspective to the way Habakkuk handled these difficulties in his day. And so we can learn from them.</p>

<p>8.1</p>	<p>Dan Stone's and Norman Grubb's teaching on The Single eye, taught by Jesus Christ.</p> <p>(Part a)</p>	<p>Bear in mind that Habakkuk was able to focus his mind on God and not on the immense problem he and his people faced with the threat that would come from the Chaldeans. Jesus Himself taught this principle. (This excerpt is from my writings on the subject)</p> <p>Scripture has a guide for every situation and this one is no exception, as we may learn from Jesus in both Matthew and Luke. Jesus, in the following scriptures talks about the relationship between a good eye and light (seeing single), comparing it with a bad eye and darkness. (seeing double)</p> <p>On this issue we have to go to the King James Version to get either Matthew and Luke's words as other modern versions do not convey the correct meaning, by not including the word "single" in the verse. These other versions, by using good, healthy or clear, do not convey the full meaning. As will be seen, the word single has special meaning in the Greek, which these other words do not convey.</p> <p><i>"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" <u>Matt. 6:22-23 (KJV)</u></i></p> <p><i>"The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." <u>Luke 11:33-36 (KJV)</u></i></p> <p>The word "single" in Greek is Strong's 573 haploos. It means singleness and is used of the (spiritual) eye <u>not seeing double</u> as when</p>	<p>it is diseased. It means single, sincere and <u>without duplicity</u>, without deception and without evil. Such seeing involves prudence in knowing how to deal with fellow humans in the circumstances of life and in seeing the good in any situation.</p> <p>Notice what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is saying that an eye that is not single is evil (or is seeing double) In other words an evil eye, an eye that is not single, is seeing both good and evil. He also says that the eye that is single will have a body that is full of light, but if the eye is also seeing the evil in a situation, then the whole body will be full of darkness. (is that not a disturbing warning?)</p> <p>So if we want to have our body full of light, we need to have an eye that sees single and not double or evil. All this is another way of saying that our faith with regards to a particular matter will be tainted by the darkness of unbelief if we see at all with a double or evil eye at the bad or evil in the situation.</p>
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<p>8.1.</p>	<p>Dan Stone's and Norman Grubb's teaching on The Single eye, taught by Jesus Christ.</p> <p>(Part b)</p>	<p>So this issue becomes a vital factor in having our issues of faith being brought forth into victory. In any situation therefore, we need to see beyond any evil or apparent wrong relating to the situation and focus only on the good, in full faith without any unbelief, that good may come from it. (If we focus on the negative, or see both - with a double eye - light and good cannot be the result) It is perhaps another way of saying that even when things are bad, we need to see the good or possible good that can come out of that situation – as per this scripture.</p> <p><i>"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:28 (KJV)</i></p> <p>Pastor Dan Stone, from whom I have taken some parts of his teaching for this section, says of this issue.</p> <p><i>"We need a single eye. Which means what? We don't consider what we see and think – external appearances and our human evaluation of them – as absolute in themselves. Granted, we have to initially see a situation or person based on appearances. That's how external information comes to us. But we take that information into us, and inside us is a union where God is all. In that spirit union, things have their source and their being in God regardless of how they appear. (Stone pp 133)</i></p>	<p>So seeing the good in an otherwise evil or difficult situation is a step in applying faith in God to that situation.</p> <p>Consider Habakkuk again. The NT was not yet written, yet he knew this principle – to focus on God, His will and ways and not on the problem.</p> <p>That is what I am calling the Habakkuk Principle.</p>
<p>8.2</p>	<p>The new and living way – from living in the Spirit and not from law.</p>	<p>Dr. Larry Crabb in his book, The Pressure's Off, came to the same conclusion, using different words. He says in part, that we need to seek the God of the blessings, rather than the blessings of God. He points out that modern day believers are obsessed with the blessings God can deliver and seeking whatever grace that God can bring to the problems of life, and our willingness to do whatever we can to get them. (pp 167) In other words, we use legalistic means that, as in Moses day, if we get to live right, we get His blessing. (which was true for that time) Now we might pray "I've got it right now God, so bless me" indicate the believer taking themselves as the centre of everything, rather than allowing God to be God and in full control of</p>	<p>We never get to really know God that way or trust Him with our lives.</p> <p>Compare this to Habakkuk. He cared what was going to happen to Judah, but because they had sinned and disobeyed God for so long, he knew that they had to suffer the consequences of</p>

		<p>what happens in our life. (pp 169) Crabb says that followers of God, outside of legalistic means and self effort accept the unresolved tensions of life when God is allowed to be in total control. It is a matter of how we choose to see life, with either us at the centre, or God at the centre and directing us to do His will in His way in His time. We tend to care what happens to us, our families and friends and normally do all we can to engineer the results that we want. We don't want us or them to suffer and our prayers are often directed to ends that suit us.</p>	<p>their lives of disobedience to God. As we will see, when we apply the Habakkuk principle to our situations and our lives, so do we benefit in the long run</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Putting it all together</p>	<p>What do we have here? Let's take a look. The basic story is of Habakkuk when he asked God a series of questions concerning the violence and injustice that he had observed in the land of Judah</p> <p>After God had told Habakkuk what He was going to do to Judah, Habakkuk's response was one of absolute faith in God, His ways and purposes.</p> <p>Habakkuk accepted God's verdict on himself and Judah and told God to go ahead. So he was accepting that Judah and himself would suffer terribly, but accepted he knew the judgement was fair and because he knew there was no other way. He did not try to change God's mind of method of having the punishment come from another people far more wicked.</p> <p>Then we have Dan Stone commenting on Jesus words that, through his metaphor of the single eye, we should do exactly that same thing, i.e. to ignore the problem and any other method of looking at it, except by looking to God for the answer. This way fits neatly with Habakkuk's own way of handling such issues. Look away from the problem towards God for His answer.</p> <p>Habakkuk initially compared the evils of the two nations, but God negated the value of that idea. He just went the way that would bring life to God's people, even knowing they would have to go through the suffering in order to get there. Judah was sent to Babylon for their 70 years of punishment and then God arranged for the return to Jerusalem of their descendants, through Cyrus, Nehemiah and Ezra.</p>	<p>Each of these illustrations recognises that we cannot bring blessings upon ourselves by our behaviour or by any other means. If we try to do things that way, we only get caught in the bondage of self-effort and/or legalism. Even though it might seem a strange way to live our lives, we need to submit ourselves to the Spirit of God, relying on Him for whatever He might bring to us, whether it be blessing or some negative.</p> <p>Everything is by faith alone. Prayers of faith in NT terms, still require the attitude of Habakkuk, in acceptance of God's way and waiting for fruition. Ultimately all that He does in our lives is for the glory of God, which always should be our ultimate aim. Modern believers tend to try to get</p>

		<p>We have to learn from that principle of looking at where life comes from and avoiding looking at the evil that comes, looking alone to Christ our Redeemer.</p> <p>Then we have Dr. Larry Crabb saying we need to look to seeking and knowing the God of blessing, rather than the blessing of God. Moderns tend to seek the blessing of God but ignore their source – who is God.</p>	<p>their live “right” so God will bless them, rather than simply surrender, as in Romans 12:1-2, so that the Lord Himself can take our lives and use them in any way He sees fit.</p>
10	The basis and ways and means of prayer	<p>It struck me that what I have written might sound a little like formulae for prayer. So, just in case you might be thinking down that line, I want to add a few things. In our Christian faith, there are many things where there is a distinct element of mystery, prayer being one of them. Humility, adoration, confession and petition were all a part of Habakkuk’s prayers to God. In our day we may well add elements of thanksgiving and praise for God, for Who He is. One of the differences with us moderns is that we tend to focus on petition alone. Habakkuk did not just petition to God for what he thought was right, whereas we often do exactly that, without acknowledging God for Who He is, in the other aspects of prayer. It was his humility, adoration and confession that makes Habakkuk’s prayer stand out.</p> <p>As we have noted earlier, Habakkuk did not plead for any change of God’s mind and God’s plan. He had two petitions of note. One was to plead for mercy amidst the wrath. The other was to his concern for God’s work, knowing that ultimately, God’s will and justice has to prevail on this earth. There is another caution I would wrap around this study.</p>	<p>It is that in our communication with the Lord, we need to ask His mind and will on matters of concern, before we get caught in praying our own will and not His.</p> <p>The whole issue of prayer is one for a life time of learning. Ultimately it can only be based on a knowledge of who we are in Christ and by our ability to abide through a revelation knowledge of that it is the life of Jesus Christ within us and His Spirit that fills us. That is the key to prayer as envisaged and practiced by Jesus Himself.</p>
11	Using this Habakkuk principle in our lives.	<p>One can easily imagine Habakkuk’s plight when he heard that God was going to permit (really it was His conscious choice) for His people to suffer severely. Habakkuk’s own people, because of their sin and separation from God, were going to be chastised by God in order to bring them back to Himself. Do we not often find ourselves in this same situation? A loved one has lives in the darkness of sin, or is unaware he has slipped away from abiding in Christ.</p> <p>When we pray for them, we ask the Lord to turn their lives around by the convicting and leading of His Spirit, hoping they will not have to</p>	<p>I certainly had to when I was away from the Lord for several years. So it seems to me that when we see a loved one trying to live without God, we should not be surprised if they find it impossible. That can be really difficult to accept. We know that God’s light must shine</p>

		suffer. Isn't that what we are asking for? But it does not seem to be the reality. The story of Habakkuk paints a different picture of how God may work. The Habakkuk principle seems to suggest that no one gets off easily. Holiness is at stake. People have to suffer in order to be awoken from their sin. The people of Judah were destined to suffering by the hand of God. If the principle follows into the NT – and it appears to do so - then moderns who stray from God may well have to do the same.	into that darkness. Surely this is the hardest thing to see. We may attempt to shine light on them, however, the principle in the Habakkuk story seems to say we must stand back and let God. He knows far better than we do.
12	What can we learn from Habakkuk about how we go about our lives, our prayers and intercession for others.	<p>What can we do when we face similar dilemmas for ourselves, family and friends? Habakkuk faced several dilemma where he and his people faced something that he could not do anything about. He considered his options, made a decision and accepted what needed to happen.</p> <p>Can we learn something from the way Habakkuk acted when we face similar trials, particularly in our desires for and intercession for others? We are now in the final stages of this study. We are going to take just seven aspects of the Habakkuk principle and try to learn what we can do from the incredible stand that he took 2600 years ago.</p>	<p>The chart below analyses these things. Those in normal black print related to Habakkuk in his time.</p> <p>Those in red are similar issues for us in our time, God's principles, responses and our decisions and consequences.</p>

A Comparison of Habakkuk's ways with ours
(Habakkuk situation in black – Ours in Red)

Habakkuk's questions and problems of life.	God's principles applied in this case.	God's response according to mercy and wrath.	Habakkuk's options and his decision.	Consequences of his decision.
Typical issues of ours in our times	God's principles applied to our case.	God's responses according to mercy and wrath	Our options and likely decisions	Consequences for us and those for whom we are interceding

<p><u>A The big issue of his day was this.</u> Habakkuk could see iniquity, wickedness, violence and strife in Judah and asked God about it.</p> <p>The big issue of our day is similar to Habakkuk, except that the prospect of the largest event in all history, the end of the age is close, with the full ramifications of that.</p>	<p>God's wisdom see Him respond with both mercy and wrath, to punish wickedness and provide mercy, both at a time of His choosing.</p> <p>The same applies – God's wisdom over His mercy and wrath, but with differences relating to the rapture, tribulation period and Second Coming of Christ.</p>	<p>God appointed a time of chastisement for the Chaldeans to overcome Judah.</p> <p>God has already spoken through His Word on the end of the age, to watch for the signs, know what is going to happen and be prepared – and make disciples.</p>	<p>Habakkuk fully accepted God's decision, because he himself could not change the situation. He told God he agreed and to go ahead.</p> <p>We cannot avoid the decisions and timing of these things that God has already decreed, even though we do not know the timing. We must be aware and ready</p>	<p>If Habakkuk lived for more than 20 years, he would have seen the slaughter, which is why he asked God that in His wrath to remember mercy.</p> <p>For those who miss the rapture and the safety of heaven, times will come which will be worse than what happened in 586 B.C.</p>
<p>B. Habakkuk was afraid when God gave His answer</p> <p>Many things can bring us fear. Let us take just one example ; that of an unsaved loved one</p>	<p>God is God, supreme over all. He has a right to rule over His people and His world, with wisdom and justice.</p> <p>God is over that loved on as well as us. We must believe He has the same right to rule over us and the loved one</p>	<p>God had seen the sin of His people Judah and, being perfectly just He chose to punish Judah and Habakkuk at this time.</p> <p>All have sinned and fallen short. So God sees both our sin and the sin of our loved one.</p>	<p>Habakkuk was human and feared of God's desire for the coming consequences, but he chose to be humble before God and accept God's judgement.</p> <p>Somehow, by the grace of God, we must get from fear to faith, through our expressed humility before God</p>	<p>Habakkuk had to wait for God's judgement to be applied, but waited in such a humble state that he affirmed that no matter what happened, he would rejoice in the God of his salvation.</p> <p>So must we, for God knows best.</p>
<p>C. Habakkuk knew that he must accept God's answer and verdict on himself and His people of Judah.</p> <p>We often think we can fix things and</p>	<p>When God speaks all need to listen and do according to what He says.</p> <p>God speaks through His Word, the Bible,</p>	<p>Accepting what God said, he still appealed to God that when He was applying His wrath, to remember to be merciful. We can do but the same as</p>	<p>Habakkuk did not protest at God's decision, nor appeal to Him to reverse it. Nor ask Him to stay His hand. Commonly, we make all sorts of</p>	<p>It is not easy to accept God's word, particularly of judgement on others; even more so the judgement on loved ones. Waiting for God</p>

<p>sometimes with God's guidance, we can. But often, we are powerless and must rely on God to act for us.</p>	<p>through circumstances, but also through His blessed Holy Spirit. Without His guidance, fear and lost-ness may remain.</p>	<p>Habakkuk? God's ways are mighty, just and loving. Whilst we listen for guidance about we can do, we simply wait on God for His outcome for our loved one</p>	<p>appeals to God on every issue of life, sometimes forgetting that unbelievers are sinners subject to God. Maybe we are trying to make them more pleasing to God.</p>	<p>to somehow draw a loved one to Himself can be so painful. But we must give them to Him for Him to deal with, hoping that by a miracle of grace, they will come to know Him.</p>
<p>D. When Habakkuk considered his own imperfect position before God, righteousness and humility were issues he had to resolve.</p> <p>So must we. God is righteous and we must humbly submit ourselves and loved ones to Him and intercede for them.</p>	<p>As God sees things, there was only one acceptable righteousness and that was His. Man must submit to the righteousness of God. God does not change His ways and we must learn to submit to them</p>	<p>All God really did was listen to Habakkuk's submission to Him and be delighted with what He said. God hears our every prayer and by a full expression of our faith in Him, we have what we ask for – in His time. 1 John 5:14-15</p>	<p>Habakkuk set aside any degree of self righteousness and in full humility accepted the righteousness of God's way and trusted Him fully. Our way will never achieve what we need. We must learn to accept His ways and righteousness</p>	<p>The consequences for Habakkuk led him to a full and deliberate surrender to the sovereignty of God, involving full trust, not matter how he felt. Our human emotions often dominate our lives and the enemy plays on that. True faith can stand at the same time as negative emotions</p>
<p>E. Habakkuk had to decide whether to focus on God or continue to look at the problem as he had been doing.</p> <p>Is this not one of our biggest failures? We need the Holy Spirit to help us her. It cannot be done in our own strength.</p>	<p>God stands alone as the graceful lover of all and as the dispenser of merciful justice as He brings judgement and mercy according to His will. God can bring the same mercy, justice and grace towards all our concerns for us and loved ones.</p>	<p>The judgement on Judah was to lose its temple and homeland. The mercy was that many of them lived in Babylon, whose descendants returned later. Our loved ones may suffer loss or suffer as God deals with each one.</p>	<p>Habakkuk, because of his right attitude towards a holy God, did not look at the problem, only to God, from Whom just and righteous answers would come. As hard as it is to do, we also must trust God and continue to look at Him.</p>	<p>Focussing on God instead of the problem is so difficult for human beings, as it brings pain and suffering. It was so for Habakkuk. "I heard my inward parts tremble and the sound of my lips quiver". But it is the only way. Somehow we must learn to do the same.</p>
<p>F. Out of his focus on</p>	<p>The Westminster</p>	<p>God did not have to do</p>	<p>Out of all of his</p>	<p>To focus on God's glory</p>

<p>God, came the thoughts of the glory of God. This is the highest order of thinking for any of us.</p>	<p>Confession says that the aim of man should be to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Not many realize this. We must.</p>	<p>anything here. He knew the knowledge and faithfulness of Habakkuk. God may have to teach us to do things this way – His way, so we can respond to Him.</p>	<p>thoughts, Habakkuk’s biggest concern - the glory of God; and nothing else. Judah, the Chaldeans were almost irrelevant. We can think on this and hope we might learn.</p>	<p>is to accept any degree of suffering that God brings or allows. Unless we apply the cross to our lives and appreciate the resurrection we will not get into this state!</p>
<p>G. Out of the perplexity of the situation in Judah and of the Chaldeans, Habakkuk considered his own personal peace. Our lives are often perplexing with multiple issues, but we can at least ask the God of peace for His peace.</p>	<p>It is God’s view that to rest in God, without concerns about circumstances is a peaceful condition. Rest, the NT says comes out of obedience and faith. God knows how difficult this is, but as we focus on Him He will lead us.</p>	<p>From Habakkuk’s responses to Him, those of faith and obedience, God would have provide peace to the heart of Habakkuk. God is using the lessons in life to bring us to a greater degree of faith and peace.</p>	<p>Out of all this, peace came to Habakkuk. Although sometimes in our day this seems impossible in terms of our loved ones, it is a lesson we have to learn. We are never without the help and guidance of the Spirit of God.</p>	<p>Although Habakkuk would have lived out his days in a degree of tension due to the ongoing and approaching situation, his absolute trust and faith made his heart peaceful. The greatest of saints have had this apparent paradox. It is God’s way to teach us.</p>

No	Thematic point	Development of theme / point	Illustration and connections
	Concluding remarks	<p>God’s sovereignty reigns over all. We moderns have not learned to fully submit to His will and ways – and we need to do so. Until we learn these lessons under His chastening hand we will continue to operate out of some mixture of pride of life, along with law and self-effort, not even realize it, nor know why, we are not getting to know as we need to in order to do His perfect will.</p> <p>If you have read other writings of mine on how God uses adversity, or even organizes it, you will know that how we view adversity is a key factor in how we mature in God. Somehow, Habakkuk knew these things and as Paul says more than once, these lessons are there for us to learn. Nor does this story conflict with the NT ways of praying, such as 1 John 5:14-15, where John says that when we pray</p>	<p>This is true, even though like Habakkuk we have to wait for the Lord to bring it about in His way, even through suffering. The NT church has, or should know they have, the Spirit of God and the life of Christ operating within them. But we must know these things by revelation and not just out of the letter of the law which kills. Let’s seek</p>

		according to His will, we know He hears us, and we have our petition.	these things together.
	Prayer	Father, when we see others trying to live without You, and they suffer, we should not be surprised. Everyone has to learn that we cannot live (as you intended) without the Spirit of God in control of our lives. Father, give us the grace to allow you to work in the lives of others, even as we also allow you to work in our lives, in order that we discover that adversity is your very tool to stop us in our tracks and to refer us to your ways.	Father, may every reader and listener to this study become aware of You and Your ways, as we learn more and more about your love and grace and our oneness with you.

*This is the twelfth in a series of articles
to further outline and provide resource for believers to move towards Fullness of Life in Christ.*

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Availability. This study is for use in one to one teaching or in small groups by those who know this experience for themselves, or by those open to the Spirit to learn together.

References used in this study

Although I have freely used the ideas in these books freely, I know them like the back of my hand. So there is no clear dividing line where my ideas and theirs begin and end. However, a small number of quotes were referenced.

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