

STUDY 9

Growing Through Perplexing Situations

HABAKKUK 1-3

Best-selling author Thomas Moore, whose books *Care of the Soul* and *Soul Mates* point out the fallacy of quick-fix solutions for our problems, said in a magazine interview, "It's not necessary to get so burdened about everything turning out right." He said that in our intense efforts to improve ourselves, "we ignore the soul." If we try to run away from suffering, "then our pleasures will tend to be superficial as well" (*American Way*, June 15, 1994).

The prophet Habakkuk did not run away from pain or perplexity. When things in Judah seemed to go awry, he pleaded with God to straighten things out. In the end, he found satisfaction in his soul, not in being rescued, but in committing his questions to God's wisdom, love, and power.

1. When have you suddenly faced a situation that seemed unjust, impossible, or beyond understanding?

READ HABAKKUK 1:1-2:1.

✎ 2. What caused Habakkuk to question God about the society in Judah (1:1-4)?

✎ 3. What questions do you ask God about your society?

✎ 4. Why would God's answer have perplexed Habakkuk even more (1:5-11)?

5. How did Habakkuk's understanding of God's character create more questions for him (1:12-2:1)?

✎ 6. Habakkuk determined to watch and wait for God's answer to his questions (2:1). Why is this an appropriate way for you to face perplexities as well?

What difference does your faith make regarding how you wait for an answer from God or for a change in your circumstances?

READ HABAKKUK 2:2-20.

✎ 7. How might God's answer in verses 2-5 have stretched and encouraged Habakkuk's faith?

✎ 8. In contrast to the righteous who live by faith, how did the Babylonians live (verse 4-19)?

9. What does verse 14 say that puts the glory and power of the Babylonians and their idols into perspective?

✍ 10. What difference does it make to look at an impossible situation in the light of verse 20?

READ HABAKKUK 3.

✍ 11. How does the tone of Habakkuk's prayer in this passage differ from the tone of his prayers in chapter 1?

✍ 12. Habakkuk wrote his worst possible scenario in terms of the agricultural society of his time (verses 16-17). How would you rewrite these verses in terms of our society today?

✍ 13. How have God's power and mercy helped you wait patiently and rejoice in him in a perplexing situation?

Pray the Bible into Life

- Thank God that no circumstances take him by surprise or are outside his control.
- Confess your fears and doubts about the evil or injustice you face.
- Pray Habakkuk's prayer together:

LORD, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.
Renew them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy. (Habakkuk 3:2)