

# Habakkuk

## "What are You Doing, God?"

*"Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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## Habakkuk

### What are You Doing, God?

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**Habakkuk 1:1-11**  
How Could You let this happen to Me?  
Questions

1. :1 Who is Habakkuk?
2. :2&3 What is the question?
3. Is it OK to ask questions of God?
4. :4 What are things like in this prophet's day? What is he so upset about?
5. What things in our nation are most upsetting to you?
6. :5-11 How does God answer Habakkuk's question?
7. What have you learned about God in these 11 verses?
8. What have you learned about Habakkuk in these 11 verses?
9. Now...apply this to yourself. When you consider the things you have learned, are there any changes you should make?
9. Do you pray for our nation? What do you pray for?
10. What if, in answer to your prayers for America, God told you that He was going to allow militant Muslims to invade and then conquer our country..... What would your next question be?

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## Habakkuk 1:1-11

How Could You let this happen to Me?

Discussion Notes

### 1. :1 Who is Habakkuk?

Let's use verse 1 as our "jumping-off point" for a short introduction to this book. In answer to the question above, verse 1 tells us that Habakkuk was a prophet. From there, we will jump off:

**What is a prophet in the Old Testament?** A Jewish person who received messages from God. Those messages were not just for that prophet, but were to be delivered to the Jewish people. There were only two qualifications to be a prophet in the Old Testament: Know the LORD God, and be willing to obediently deliver His message. No family, age, experience or education requirements.

### Where is this happening?



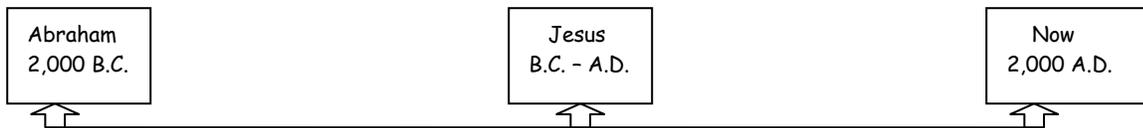
The Northern Kingdom of Israel has already been taken into captivity to Assyria by the time Habakkuk appears. His ministry is in Judah, at the same time Jeremiah is also prophesying to Judah.

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

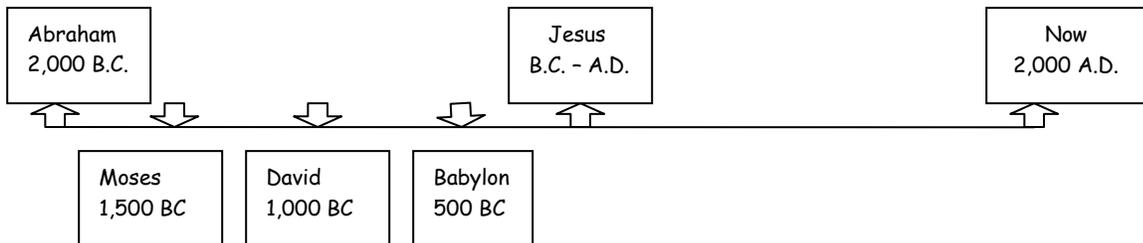
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**When is this being written?** It's interesting to look at the history of the world in a timeline, using God's dealings with the Jewish people as our guide. The mid-point of our timeline is the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We live 2,000 years after that mid-point. The Jewish people first came into existence (Abraham was the first Jew) 2,000 years before that mid-point. Thus, here's how our basic timeline looks:



Now...in the time in between Abraham and Jesus there are 3 major time periods: From Abraham to Moses was about 500 years, then from Moses to King David was about 500 years, and from King David to the Babylonian captivity was about 500 years. Here's how that filled-in timeline looks:

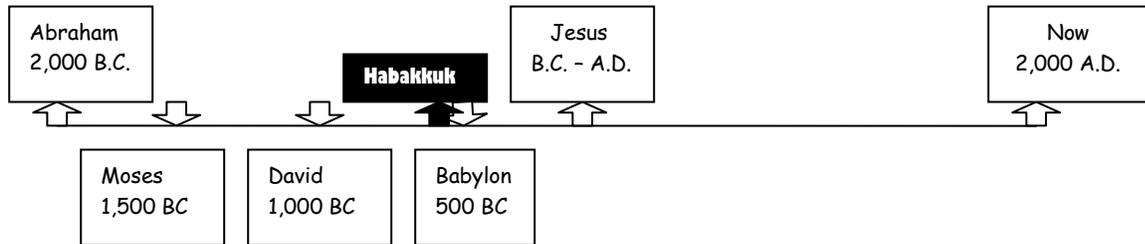


Habakkuk prophesied to the Jews of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) just before the time of the Babylonian invasion of Judah...so here's our simple timeline for Habakkuk:

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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### What do we know about the prophet, Habakkuk?

Very little, except that he was a Jewish man, a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, and that he was a man of deep faith...evidenced by what is written in this short, 3-chapter book. A complete commentary on the first 2 chapters of the book has been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

### Will this book be important to me?

Since we know that all scripture comes directly from God, the answer to that question is yes, of course. But in addition to that, Habakkuk deals with a down-to-earth part of life...not only an Old Testament prophet's life, but also our lives...the part where we have questions for God.

Maybe we don't always verbalize those questions, even to ourselves, but we do have them. Habakkuk shows us that it is acceptable to God for us to ask questions. And then he also shows us how to ask those questions, so that we can follow his example. The answers Habakkuk gets from God are so deep and stirring that we may not even have questions left to ask once we are through with his book.

He begins with the first question in verses 2&3 of chapter 1:

2. :2&3 *What is the question?*

Put this in your own words. If I were to put it in mine, I would say he is asking: "There's sin everywhere....especially amongst believers....what are you doing about it, God?"

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3. *Is it OK to ask questions of God?*

I bring this up again just so we can take a quick overview of the Bible and see if there are other people who asked questions of God...and see how God responded to them:

<u>Who asked it?</u>	<u>What passage?</u>	<u>God's response</u>	<u>Good or bad question?</u>
	Genesis 4:9		
	Genesis 15:2		
	Genesis 18:23&24		
	Genesis 32:24-30		
	Exodus 3:11		
	Exodus 4:1		
	I Kings 3:6-11		
	Psalms 6:3		
	Psalms 10:1		
	Psalms 13:1&2		
	Psalms 22:1		
	Psalms 74:1		
	Revelation 6:10&11		

After you look these verses up and fill in this chart, come to some conclusions about asking questions of God. Is it OK? What kind of questions does God seem to be pleased with? What kind of questions does He hate?

4. :4 *What are things like in Israel in this prophet's day? What is he so upset about?*

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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The law is not being enforced  
The justice system is not working  
The wicked are in charge  
Innocent people are suffering  
....and it is the PEOPLE OF GOD who are doing these things

5. *What things in our nation are most upsetting to you?*

Opinion question. See what everyone thinks.

6. *:5-11 How does God answer Habakkuk's question?*

- In your lifetime I am going to be doing something about this.
- I am going to use people who do not fear Me to accomplish My will.

The rest of these questions are personal opinion and application. As a leader of your group, you should answer these personally, then encourage sharing of others' responses, using your own responses as examples if necessary. There are not right or wrong answers here.

7. *What have you learned about God in these 11 verses?*

8. *What have you learned about Habakkuk in these 11 verses?*

9. *Now...apply this to yourself. When you consider the things you have learned, are there any changes you should make?*

11. *Do you pray for our nation? What do you pray for?*

12. *What if, in answer to your prayers for America, God told you that He was going to allow militant Muslims to invade and then conquer our country..... What would your next question be?*

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## Habakkuk 1:12 - 2:20

### Are You really Who You say You Are? Questions

1. (1:12-13a) God has told Habakkuk "The Babylonians are coming!" - and now Habakkuk is doing a good thing - gathering together all the truth he knows about God - in order to help him know how to deal with this awful reality. What are some of the truths he gathers?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

2. (1:13b - 17) Even after listing all these truths, Habakkuk still has a question for God.....what is the question?

- Do you see any accusation of God here?
- Do you see any pride here?

3. (refer back to 1: 2-4) How are Habakkuk's first question and second question similar?

- How are they different?

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4. (1:14-17) What does Habakkuk say about the wicked?

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- 
- 
- 

5. (2:1) What is Habakkuk's attitude after he asks this question?

**In Chapter 2, verses 2-20, the LORD answers Habakkuk.**

6. (2:2) First, he tells Habakkuk what to do with the answer he gets.  
What is he to do?

7. (2:3) Then, He tells Habakkuk that there is something about His answer which is special...unique...different than just a black & white answer. What is it?

8. (2:4 - 20) Then, He answers Habakkuk's question, and in the process does the following:

- Describes the Babylonians
- Describes what their judgment will be like
- Tells Habakkuk how to survive
- Describes what the future will be like

Describe the  
Babylonians

Describe the  
judgment of the  
Babylonians

How to survive

What the future will  
be like

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**Application:**

9. How does God's answer to Habakkuk refer to not just his present circumstances, but also to the future?
  
10. Our title this week was "Why?" - what help do we see here for us as we face uncertainties/fears?
  
11. What does this passage teach us about God?
  
12. What does this passage teach us about suffering?
  
13. What does this passage teach us about pride?
  
15. We began this book saying that questions for God are good - it is OK to ask questions of God. What does Chapter 2, verse 20 tell us should be the end result of a question asked of God?

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**Habakkuk 1:12 - 2:20**  
**Are You really Who You say You Are?**  
**Discussion Notes**

1. (1:12-13a) God has told Habakkuk "The Babylonians are coming!" - and now Habakkuk is doing a good thing - gathering together all the truth he knows about God - in order to help him know how to deal with this awful reality. What are some of the truths he gathers?

1. (:12a) God is forever...everlasting...no end to Him
2. (:12b) God is personal..."my" God
3. (:12b) God is Holy....totally unique - different from anything else
4. (:12b) God will not let Habakkuk die...in the sense of true death - separation from God for eternity
5. (:12c) This decision to use the Babylonians - God has the right to make that decision whether Habakkuk likes it or not
6. (:12c) God is a rock. He will not be moved from His decisions
7. (:12c) God will punish sin. How He chooses to do it is His business.
8. (:13a) God cannot even look at sin. He is too perfect and pure.
9. (:13a) God cannot allow sin to continue

2. (1:13b - 17) Even after listing all these truths, Habakkuk still has a question for God.....what is the question?

Why do you not zap these horrible sinners? Why do they even exist? How could you possibly allow these awful creatures to even touch your chosen ones..much less be their instrument of punishment?

- Do you see any accusation of God here?

Yes. He is asking why God has been silent. Sort of an acknowledgment that God knew these people were there...knew what they were doing....and has let them exist in the world. If He can't even look on sin...how does He look on them? How does He decide to choose them for punishment of believers?

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*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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In other words, I think Habakkuk is asking: *God, are you really God?*

- Do you see any pride here?

Well, of course. How else could the creature confront the creator if not with pride?

3. (refer back to 1: 2-4) How are Habakkuk's first question and second question similar?

They are both asking *God* how *He* can tolerate sin.

- How are they different?

The first question is focused on Habakkuk and what he has to endure. Sort of: "Don't you love me?" "How could you let this happen to me?"

The second question focuses more on *God* and what *He* is really like. Or: "Are You really Who You say You are?"

Interesting...maybe what *God* is doing here is deliberately taking Habakkuk from a position of pride and self-centeredness in his "religiousness", to a position of actually questioning whether or not *God* is....so that *He* can bring Habakkuk to a true *God*-centered way of thinking: "It's not about me, is it?"

"What is it you want me to do, *God*, so that I can be useful to Your plans, not mine?"

4. (1:14-17) What does Habakkuk say about the wicked?

- They prey on the defenseless
- They get happiness from hurting others
- They worship themselves, and their own "power"
- They destroy, and have no mercy

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Now, after he says these obvious things about the Babylonians...I wonder if Habakkuk is comparing the "powerful" enemy to the Powerful God... Look what Habakkuk concludes after making this comparison:

5. (2:1) What is Habakkuk's attitude after he asks this question?

He is more humble now. Willing to wait on God. Trusting that God actually cares enough about him to give him an answer. Another man, centuries before Habakkuk, also faced an intolerable situation where he questioned God. Job. Here is what Job said at this point in his questioning: *"But He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold."* (Job 23:10)

**In Chapter 2, verses 2-20, the LORD answers Habakkuk.**

6. (2:2) First, he tells Habakkuk what to do with the answer he gets.  
What is he to do?

This answer isn't just for Habakkuk. (Again with the "it's not about me")  
It is for many, many other people, too. The people who will listen to Habakkuk when he writes out what his question was, and what God's answer was. The soul-searching of Habakkuk is simply symptomatic of the soul-searching necessary of the whole nation of Israel...(and the soul-searching needed in our lives)

7. (2:3) Then, He tells Habakkuk that there is something about His answer which is special...unique...different than just a black & white answer. What is it?

This message is also for future generations of believers in the One, True God. The things God is about to tell Habakkuk about the coming of the Babylonians are things God also wants to tell a future people about the coming of a future enemy. This verse specifically tells this future people (us?...or future Israel?) that the coming of a future enemy like the Babylonians may seem to be delayed, but not to

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be fooled by that. Look at II Peter 3:8-10, and see why this future enemy is still being delayed. But, the future people are told, wait for God's revealed plan. He may seem late, but He always comes through.

8. (2:4 - 20) Then, He answers Habakkuk's question, and in the process does the following:

- Describes the Babylonians
- Describes what their judgment will be like
- Tells Habakkuk how to survive
- Describes what the future will be like

<u>Describe the Babylonians</u>	<u>Describe the judgment of the Babylonians</u>	<u>How to survive</u>	<u>What the future will be like</u>
:4 Puffed up	:6 the very people they capture will turn on them with scorn	:4 Live by faith	frightening
:4 Evil desires	:7 the captured will fight back	:13&14 Understand the truth: only working for God will build something that lasts. Only the Glory of God will be around in the end.	Controlled by God, not the enemy, no matter how it looks
:5 drunken	:7 the Babylonians will become the victim	:20 keep silent before God	
:5 arrogant	:8 the Babylonians will be plundered		
:5 restless	:10 they will die		
:5 never satisfied	:10 the very houses they build will shout against them		
:5 makes prisoners of people	:16 they will be filled with shame, not glory		
:8 plundered nations	:16 they will drink the cup of God's wrath.		
:8 killed people	:17 their own violence will fill even them with horror		
:8 destroyed lands and cities	:18&19 the god the Babylonians have		

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:9 builds his power unjustly :9 thinks he is high above all danger :10 plotted and planned :10 brought shame on themselves :12 crime :15 causing drunkenness :15 pornography	worshipped is no god at all	
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**Application:**

9. How does God's answer to Habakkuk refer to not just his present circumstances, but also to the future?

There will be a future time of judgment against the people of Israel...for their pride and unbelief...and also a future time of judgment against the unbelieving gentiles of the world. The Day of the Lord. It is promised over and over again in scripture. It begins in chapter 8 of the book of Revelation.

And also, as in Habakkuk's day, there will be a future time of repentance by the people of Israel as they are brought face-to-face with Almighty God, and must do as Habakkuk is about to do....(next chapter)

*The following are opinion questions. Encourage everyone to participate with answers, based on the passage studied this week:*

10. Our title this week was "Why?" - what help do we see here for us as we face uncertainties/fears?

11. What does this passage teach us about God?

12. What does this passage teach us about suffering?

13. What does this passage teach us about pride?

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15. We began this book saying that questions for God are good - it is OK to ask questions of God. What does Chapter 2, verse 20 tell us should be the end result of a question asked of God?

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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## Habakkuk 3

Silence.....Faith  
Questions

### 1. Review:

1<sup>st</sup> Question: \_\_\_\_\_

God's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Question: \_\_\_\_\_

God's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **After God's response to Habakkuk's 2<sup>nd</sup> question, Habakkuk responds,** beginning at ch. 2:20, and through the end of chapter 3. Let's break down Habakkuk's response to God into 4 parts:

1. (2:20)

2. (3:1-2)

3. (3:3-15)

4. (3:16-19)

What is one word that describes all four of these responses? \_\_\_\_\_

3. **2:20 Why is silence a response to God?**

4. **3:1-2 What is Habakkuk's request?**

5. **3:3-15 What great event in history is being described here?**

Why is Habakkuk re-telling God's great acts?

What great acts of God in your life can you re-tell?

What great acts of God from scripture can you re-tell?

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**6. 3:17-19 What phrases pertinent to your life can you substitute?**

"Though the fig tree does not bud" \_\_\_\_\_

"and there are no grapes on the vines," \_\_\_\_\_

"though the olive crop fails" \_\_\_\_\_

"and the fields produce no food" \_\_\_\_\_

"though there are no sheep in the pen \_\_\_\_\_

and no cattle in the stalls

"yet I will rejoice in the LORD, \_\_\_\_\_

I will be joyful in God my Savior"

"The Sovereign LORD is my strength" \_\_\_\_\_

"he makes my feet like the feet of a deer \_\_\_\_\_

he enables me to go on the heights"

**7. Can you make these phrases into a song? A poem? A play?  
A scrapbook? A story? A painting? A pantomime? A recitation?**

Can you find a way this week to communicate, somehow, this truth  
to someone else?

Who in your life needs to hear this the most?

**8. There are 4 passages in the book of Habakkuk which are easy to  
commit to memory...choose the one which best represents what you  
have learned from Habakkuk, and memorize it, then repeat it to at  
least 3 people this week.**

Habakkuk 2:4

Habakkuk 2:14

Habakkuk 2:20

Habakkuk 3:17-19

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9. **Challenge:** You have one of the easiest, most comfortable lives in the history of the world. What are you doing with this great gift from God? Are you willing to be uncomfortable?

## Habakkuk 3

Silence.....Faith  
Discussion Notes

To get conversation started, begin with an Opening Question. Have each person in the group answer. No wrong answers, of course - this is just a chance to give everyone the chance to be comfortable talking. Sometimes you need permission to talk about yourself.

Favorite Fruit. Favorite Vegetable. Favorite family story.

### 1. Review:

1<sup>st</sup> Question: How could you let people who believe in you do such rotten things?

God's Response: I'm getting ready to do something about it. I'm bringing a bunch of horrible pagans in to teach my people something.

2<sup>nd</sup> Question: Pagans? Why would you do that?

God's Response: I'm God. You aren't. This has a message for the future.

2. **After God's response to Habakkuk's 2<sup>nd</sup> question, Habakkuk responds,** beginning at ch. 2:29, and through the end of chapter 3. Let's break down Habakkuk's response to God into 4 parts:

1. (2:20) I will be silent before Almighty God

2. (3:1-2) I remember all You have done, God

20

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*

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3. (3:3-15) I recall your mighty acts - how you have saved my people  
in the past out of great distress

4. (3:16-19) I know I can trust you no matter what happens  
What is one word that describes all four of these responses? TRUST

3. 2:20 Why is silence a response to God? Try this: Read all of chapter 3  
out loud, and then observe 2 minutes of total silence in your group. Then  
answer this question: After hearing from God, what happened in your silence?

4. 3:1-2 What is Habakkuk's request?

Do your former deeds again.

5. 3:3-15 What great event in history is being described here?

The rescue of the Jewish people from Egypt. Passover.

Why is Habakkuk re-telling God's great acts?

To remember God's acts in the past is to remind yourself of what God can do in the  
future.

What great acts of God in your life can you re-tell?

(let people answer this individually from personal experience)

What great acts of God from scripture can you re-tell?

(ditto)

6. 3:17-19 What phrases pertinent to your life can you substitute?

"Though the fig tree does not bud" \_\_\_\_\_

"and there are no grapes on the vines," \_\_\_\_\_

"though the olive crop fails" \_\_\_\_\_

"and the fields produce no food" \_\_\_\_\_

"though there are no sheep in the pen \_\_\_\_\_

and no cattle in the stalls

"What are You doing, God?"  
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"yet I will rejoice in the LORD, \_\_\_\_\_  
I will be joyful in God my Savior"  
"The Sovereign LORD is my strength" \_\_\_\_\_  
"he makes my feet like the feet of a deer \_\_\_\_\_  
he enables me to go on the heights"

7. Can you make these phrases into a song? A poem? A play?  
A scrapbook? A story? A painting? A pantomime? A recitation?

Can you find a way this week to communicate, somehow, this truth  
to someone else?

Who in your life needs to hear this the most?

8. There are 4 passages in the book of Habakkuk which are easy to  
commit to memory...choose the one which best represents what you  
have learned from Habakkuk, and memorize it, then repeat it to at  
least 3 people this week.

Habakkuk 2:4

Habakkuk 2:14

Habakkuk 2:20

Habakkuk 3:17-19

9. **Challenge: You have one of the easiest, most comfortable lives in the  
history of the world. What are you doing with this great gift from  
God? Are you willing to be uncomfortable?**

What book of the Bible are you studying/ reading now? What book would you like to  
study/read next? Are you memorizing any scripture passages? When is your regular prayer  
time? Have you been wanting to change or add to your prayer time, or learn something new?  
Who are your close friends? How long since you have added someone new to your group of  
friends? Who is unsaved in your life?

Make a list. How can you get one chance to mention the name of Jesus to each?

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by Kathleen Dalton  
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*Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17,18*