

How to Handle What Life Throws at You!

Habakkuk

Life, sometimes, is hard. There was a little boy named Chris, whose face had been burned in a fire. He sent this note to his psychotherapist:

Dear Dr. Gardner. Some big person, it was a boy about 13, he called me a turtle. And I know he said this because of my plastic surgery. And I think God hates me because of my lip and when I die, he'll probably send me to Hell. Love, Chris.

Believe it or not, an Old Testament prophet named Habakkuk also had similar struggles with God! Habakkuk's life was a riches to rags story.

First, Habakkuk lived under the prosperous reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22-23).

Then, Habakkuk endured the tyranny of wicked Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23-24).

Finally, Habakkuk saw his nation fall to the ruthless Babylonians (2 Kings 25).

Life is supposed to be a rags to riches story not the opposite.

Jim and Sally Conway tell about the tumor the doctors found in the leg of their daughter Becki. The doctors said her leg must be amputated because of the malignancy. Jim was a pastor when he received the devastating news. He told his daughter Becki, "You're not going to have your leg amputated. I believe God is going to do a miracle. He said we could come to Him in times of trouble. I'm absolutely convinced you are going to be spared this surgery."

Just before Becki went in for surgery, Jim Conway told the doctor, "As you go into the operating room, please verify that the cancer has been healed. God is going to come through. I'm sure."

After several hours the doctor came out and told the family that they had amputated her leg. Jim Conway started beating the hospital walls and saying, "Where are You, God? Where are You?"

He went into the morgue in the basement of the hospital because he felt it appropriate to be surrounded by death. Pastor friends took turns sitting with Jim around the clock. He said if he were a plumber he could go out the next day and fix pipes. But he was a pastor. How could he preach God's Word and tell people that God had let his daughter lose her leg?

What really bothered pastor Jim Conway were comments from believers who barely knew him. "I remember a guy I saw in a restaurant a few days after Becki underwent surgery. He was sitting at a table, and as I walked by he reached out and grabbed my coat. He said, 'Jim, I think God has allowed this to happen because it has brought about a revival in our church.' I said, 'So what is God going to do to bring another revival when this one passes, chop off Becki's other leg? Then her arm and her other arm? There isn't enough of Becki to keep any church spiritually alive, if that is what it takes.'"

I know this is disturbing to hear a believer and also a pastor talk this to God and about God. But this is how Habakkuk talked God and said about God.

Habakkuk was a unique prophet.

1. Most prophets spoke for God to His people about their sin.

For example, Jeremiah, a contemporary with Habakkuk, warned God's people that Babylon would defeat them because of their sins: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith you fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city" (Jeremiah 21:4).

2. In contrast to the usual prophets, Habakkuk spoke to God about His people's sins.

Habakkuk questioned God. Habakkuk's first complaint is recorded in 1:1-4. Habakkuk complained about the "violence" in Israel that God had not punished. Habakkuk uses the word "violence" six times (1:2, 3, 9; 2:17) as an indication of how this issue plagued his mind. When Josiah was in power, Habakkuk saw him end violence as a part of his sweeping reforms. In 2 Kings 23:10, Josiah ended the worship of Molech, the Ammonite god, by the burning of children.

Jehoiakim reversed all that Josiah had accomplished by way of reform. 2 Kings 24 says the God punished Israel because of "the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the books of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"

Is not there a national violence in our nation against the innocent? Approximately 3000 innocent pre-born babies a day are aborted. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a proponent of abortion on demand, claims that there have been more than 50 million abortions in the U.S. since Roe Vs Wade. Do not the righteous ever think, "Why doesn't God stop this genocide?"

Even Blue Dog Democrats oppose the nationalize health insurance with its provision to federally fund abortion.

Habakkuk charged God with injustice on a national level in 1:4. Job is similar to Habakkuk except Job accused God with injustice on a personal level. Job lost his ten children in tragic deaths, his wealth, and his health. Job said God was wrong in Job 19:7.

Perhaps our struggle with God is more on Job's level. Perhaps you have had these thoughts or even voiced these words: "Why doesn't God get me a job?" or "Why doesn't God get me a better job?" or "Why doesn't God heal me?" or "Why doesn't God save my husband?" or "Why doesn't God turn my children around?" or "Why doesn't God save my marriage?" or "Why doesn't God make me happy?"

Remember the disciples in Mark 4:35-41. Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side." But when they got in the boat and a sudden storm arose and Jesus was asleep, the disciples panicked and said, "Master, don't you care that we are about to perish?" These

disciples had Jesus in the boat with them. What were they thinking? That Jesus the eternal Son of God was going to drown to death? Jesus rebukes the storm and then His disciples: “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” In other words, “You can’t question my sovereignty, my deity, or my care for you and have faith in me at the same time.” Are you thinking, “How could the disciples think and say what they did with Jesus in the boat with them?” If you are a believer today, Jesus is in your heart not just your circumstance. “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

God answered Habakkuk in 1:5-11. In essence God told Habakkuk that He was concerned, involved, and had already determined to deal with the violence in Israel. God was already raising up the Babylonians to chastise God’s people. In 2:4, God says to Habakkuk what Jesus said to the fretful disciple: “The just shall live by faith.” In other words, you can’t question God and trust in God at the same time.

Jim Conway came to realize that as he faced his dilemma after his daughter Becki’s leg was amputated, he only had two choices. He could stay angry at God and live in despair or he could “let God be God, and somehow say, ‘I don’t know how all this fits together. I’m not even going to ask for the explanation. I’ve chosen to accept the fact that You are God and I’m the servant, instead of the other way around.’ And there I left it” (James Dobson. *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 1993, 83-89).

You have two choices: One is not trust in God and allow bitterness, anger, and despair ruin your life. Or trust in God and His promises even if there are no answers in this life.