

[A Devotional Study *on* Living by Faith]

LORD,
Where Are You
When Bad Things
Happen?



KAY ARTHUR

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WHEN BAD
THINGS HAPPEN?

A DEVOTIONAL STUDY *on*

LIVING *by* FAITH

K A Y

A R T H U R



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LORD, WHERE ARE YOU WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

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INTRODUCTION

It's hard today to look at the chaos, at the tragedies, at the broken relationships, families, and lives...and explain how a sovereign God who is seemingly all-powerful and all-wise could allow these things. Compound this with the wars and the manmade and natural disasters occurring throughout the world and the question becomes, "If God really is who He says He is, how can He allow these things? Why doesn't He intervene, if He's God?"

If this is not your question, it certainly is the question of multitudes. And you and I need to have the answer—a right answer, a truthful answer. The answer God would give.

This, Beloved, is why this devotional study was written: that you might know God and understand where He is when bad things happen and why He, as God, would ever allow such things.

You are about to discover the answers to those questions, to solve the dilemma. And yet more is going to happen in the process. You are going to encounter God, to come to understand, love, and appreciate Him to a greater depth. And in the process you're going to be equipped so you can be strong and courageous and minister to others.

As you study this book, you will notice that each week's devotional study is divided into seven days. This is for a purpose. You need to be in the Word of God on a consistent basis, day in and day out, gathering spiritual bread so you can be sustained and not grow weary and faint through lack of spiritual nourishment. Believe me, this makes such a difference in your outlook, your peace, and your confidence as you face and deal with the varied issues of life. Daily time with God helps you keep your focus where it needs to be—on God and on truth.

As you launch into this study, Beloved, please read what follows before you begin the first chapter. If there's a possibility of your using this as a group study in which you would be a facilitator, then read "Guidelines for

Group Use” in the “Study Resources” section at the back of this book, where you’ll find other valuable tools to enhance this study.

For many, the blessing of this study has been enhanced by the companion video and audio teaching tapes. For more information on these, simply call Precept Ministries International at our toll-free number (1-800-763-8280) and let one of our staff members help you. It would be their pleasure. We also provide training if you would like to develop your skills in handling the Word of God more accurately or in leading others in group studies designed to minister to people of all ages at any level of commitment while respecting the restraints on their time. We’re known as “The Inductive Study People: everybody, everywhere, any time, any place, any language, any age. One message: the Bible. One method: inductive.” Please don’t hesitate to call us.

Finally, let me share my vision—it’s the possibility of a new avenue of ministry for you, Beloved of God...

*A new beginning—
An avenue of ministry—
A sense of doing something that has eternal value*

These are three things I think are so important for you and for me. There’s so much to learn, to know, to experience, to do—and we never want to lose sight of that. To do so would be to miss what God has for us. To fall short of the tremendous potential of our lives—a potential that is ours because we are His, because we are children of the Creator of the Universe, indwelt by His divine Spirit and given the mind of Christ. You and I, Beloved, are God’s workmanship gifted by the Spirit of God and created in Christ Jesus unto good works that would absolutely stagger our minds if we were to see them before they ever happened.

And what has God put into your hands? What are you holding and reading right now? Is it an accident? A coincidence? No! You are holding a devotional study that first and foremost will be the beginning of a new

depth of understanding about God's sovereignty over even the most horrible things that happen in our lives and in our world.

God is going to speak to you because through this book you are going to come face to face with the living Word of God—the Word that not only discerns the thoughts and intentions of your heart, but becomes the means of throwing His light on the direction your life is taking so you can know with absolute confidence where you are headed. If you listen to what He says—and by that I mean ordering your life accordingly—then there is, in a sense, a new beginning...of understanding, of purpose. A new level of Christlikeness is attained. You will be, as Paul would say, pressing on and attaining that for which Jesus Christ laid hold of you.

Which brings me to my next point—an avenue of ministry. What you have learned, God intends for you to share. I have a vision, and you, Beloved, are part of that vision. Our Lord's commission in Matthew 28 was that we make disciples of all men—that we teach them to observe all that He has commanded us. Acts 1 tells us that when we are saved and receive the Holy Spirit we become His witnesses—yet the question is often, “How?”

Here is the how. This “Lord” book contains truths every human being needs to know and to apply to his or her life. These are precepts for life; through them we will gain understanding and, as the psalmist says, “hate every false way” (Psalm 119:104). We hate it because it is false rather than true, and it is truth that sets us apart, sets us free.

So what is my vision for you, my friend? It is that you go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to direct you to at least one other person—but preferably at least ten—and that you, along with them, study this book together. You may not be a teacher, but you can be the group's facilitator. You can take the questions you'll find at the end of each chapter and use them to stimulate a discussion among those whom the Lord has brought together in answer to your prayer. These are those who will be part of your crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you watch them learn and grow in the knowledge of God and of His Word,

you will experience the humbling joy of knowing that you have been used of God. That what you have done has eternal value. That your life and God-given gifts have not been wasted. That your work will live on—that the grace of God poured out on you was not poured out in vain, for you have labored in the strength of His grace.

So as you facilitate a group using this book, you need to watch for and encourage others in your group to do as you have done—to take what they have learned and impart it to another as you did with them. Think of the multiplication that will happen! Do you realize, Beloved, that this is the way we can reach our neighborhoods, our communities, our nation, and beyond? Think of the transformation that will take place among all those people today who are so interested in “the spiritual” but won’t step inside a church. Think—just think!—what is going to happen!

The time is now. The hour is short. Stop and pray right now and ask God what He would have you to do. He will show you, because He is God and because such prayers are in accordance with His will. As you step out and begin, just know that if you will step out in faith, God will give you an avenue of ministry, person by person or group by group, that will not only stagger your mind but absolutely delight your soul.

I cannot wait to hear what God does in and through you, my friend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kay". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, elegant loop at the end of the word.

HE'S THERE, LISTENING TO THE CRY OF YOUR HEART

— D A Y O N E —

Has there ever been a time when you questioned God? Possibly you found yourself in a trial you never *dreamed* would happen to you. Maybe you cried for help, and it seemed God didn't hear. You weren't delivered. You suffered.

When you watch the evening news or pick up the newspaper, do you wonder, *Where is God? If He is God and in charge of this universe, why does He allow the world to continue on its course of self-destruction? Why doesn't He put an end to all the cruel and bizarre things happening in our society?*

Do you know about something that happened to a child of God that seemed so unjust, so evil that you doubted God? In the secret chambers of your mind, have you wondered how God could allow such things to happen to those who belong to Him? Maybe you wouldn't allow yourself to verbalize such a question because it would seem unholy. But have you wondered, *Where is God when bad things happen?*

A friend of mine was raped. She had heard me tell stories of others in similar situations who had called on God and were delivered. So in the darkness of fear she, too, cried out to God. In a trembling voice she commanded the man to stop in the name of Jesus. He didn't. Why didn't God answer her cry and deliver her?

Where was God?

A twenty-year-old girl, a personal friend of ours, a Christian with a sterling reputation, was found brutally murdered in her bedroom.

Where was God?

Hitler exterminated God's chosen people—men, women, and children—in gas chambers and ovens.

Where was God?

In countries with oppressive political systems, countless Christians have suffered for their faith, living on almost nothing, enduring the ravages of malnutrition, beatings, and hard labor. Others have been committed to psychiatric institutions and subjected to all sorts of chemical treatments simply because they refused to be silent about their faith in Christ.

Where was God?

These are tough questions, aren't they? Skeptics delight in asking these questions. They are questions many of us would prefer to ignore...or bury under weak and insufficient theological theories.

Where is God when bad things happen?

It's a question that many who call Him "Father" want to avoid. It doesn't fit with their concept of God. They can't explain it from the Word.

Are we afraid to ask these questions for fear God will not have an answer? Or do we fear that if we find the answer, it will distort our view of God or make Him into someone we cannot explain or understand?

There are some who would have you believe that God, who is a God of love, mercy, and compassion, does not have a thing to do with the evil that takes place in this world. But if He doesn't...then what does that imply about His power, His authority, His involvement in the affairs of men?

Are these new questions which, until now, have never troubled the heart of man? Oh no, my friend! They are as old as human history. They are the questions of Habakkuk the prophet:

How long, O LORD, will I call for help,

And Thou wilt not hear?

I cry out to Thee, "Violence!"

Yet Thou does not save.
Why dost Thou make me see iniquity,
And cause me to look on wickedness?...
Why dost Thou look with favor
On those who deal treacherously?
Why art Thou silent when the wicked swallowed up
Those more righteous than they?
(Habakkuk 1:2-3,13)

These questions are the burden of Habakkuk's heart. He bears them without shame or apology. And rather than ignoring them, God has preserved these questions for all to read. His answer to Habakkuk is also His answer to us.

What a study lies in store for us! Your faith will grow immensely as you learn God's answers to these tough questions. It is my prayer that as you diligently study, you will learn how to walk with hinds' feet on high places through life's valleys.

Victory will come in the measure to which you give yourself to this study. You can skip questions, not write out the assignments, and do nothing but read what I have written. Yet, I sincerely believe the benefits of this penetrating look into the heart of this neglected book of Scripture will be much greater and longer lasting if you participate wholeheartedly!

All of this study is designed with a purpose in mind. I urge you to shut yourself up each day in a quiet place where you can be still and know that He is God—where you can take His yoke upon you and learn of Him. Remember, grace and peace are multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2 Peter 1:2).

What questions about God have you hidden in your heart? Write them out below, and we will see how God will answer in the weeks to come.

— D A Y T W O —

We live in a world that is going the wrong way.

Men have forgotten God.

There is no fear of God before their eyes. In pride and arrogance they walk their own way, flaunting their sin, taking His name in vain. They refuse to blush, and they demean those who do. They scorn anything that would restrain them from pursuing their desire. They are their own god!

Where is God? Why does He allow such things? Why do the wicked continue? Why do the wicked prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why aren't the righteous delivered? Why doesn't God hear the prayers of His people?

This was the cry, the dilemma of Habakkuk. And it is from Habakkuk's conversation with God that we will begin to find God's answers to our own dilemmas.

Although you may be tempted to skip today's assignment because it will take a little while, *please don't*. As a teacher called of God, I long to help you know Him in a more intimate way so that you might live in the confidence of a strong, established faith. But that will not happen apart from spending time in the Word, for "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

If you'll do as I ask, you will begin to get a glimpse of where God is when bad things happen.

Therefore, Beloved, you need to stop and read through the book of Habakkuk. It's only three chapters long. You will find the book of Habakkuk, as translated in the New American Standard Bible, printed in the back of this book.

Before you begin reading, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth. We cannot understand and discern spiritual truths apart from His work in our lives. Just as Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesians 1:17, we, too, need to ask the Lord to give us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the true knowledge of Him. We can be confident that He will

answer because we have asked according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). Psalm 119:18 says, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law."

Pause a few moments to confess to the Lord your inability to hear and discern truth apart from His enabling. Ask Him to enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may truly know what He longs to show you. Thank Him that He will.

As you read Habakkuk, I'd like you to do several things:

1. The book of Habakkuk is a conversation between the prophet and his God. As you read through the text, note carefully who is speaking and when he speaks. Note when the conversation shifts from Habakkuk to God, and then back to Habakkuk. You might want to note these shifts in pencil in the left-hand margin of the text in the back of this book. When you are finished and are sure you know when God is speaking and when Habakkuk is speaking, ink it in.
2. As you read, also note every question Habakkuk asks God. You might want to highlight these questions and number each one in the left-hand margin of the text.
3. How does the book of Habakkuk begin and end? Depending on what you see, note the contrasts or similarities.

To appreciate the book of Habakkuk and how it parallels our day, we must consider its historical context. So, that's the thrust of our study for the next two weeks.

Let's begin today to try to gain a comprehensive view.

1. Read through Habakkuk again today, and do two things:
 - a. Look for and mark in a distinctive way or color every reference to the Chaldeans (Babylonians)*. Then record below all that you learn about them from the book of Habakkuk. Just as a note may I share with you that it is most helpful to mark key words in the passage you are studying or to mark words that are key to the Word as a whole. You can note these by using symbols, different colors, or a combination of both. Then, as you study, you will be able to track information on key subjects and quickly identify significant truths in a passage or throughout the Scripture as a whole.

* See page 245 for section on marking your Bible.

— D A Y F O U R —

As I said yesterday, understanding Habakkuk's historical setting is vital, especially if you are unfamiliar with Israel's history. Not only will this perspective help you in grasping more of the meaning of the Old Testament, it will let you see how the truths of the Old Testament can be applied to our lives today! First Corinthians 10:11, in reference to Israel, says, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for *our* instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (emphasis added).

After the death of Solomon, the nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom was composed of ten tribes and was called Israel. Israel went into idolatry immediately after it split from the other two tribes. In 722 B.C., it fell to the Assyrians.

The southern kingdom was composed of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. It is often referred to simply as Judah. Its capital was Jerusalem.

At the time Habakkuk was written, the northern kingdom had already gone into captivity.¹ Habakkuk prophesied sometime between 621 B.C. and 609 B.C. The Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom was on the horizon in Habakkuk's time and started in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and took a handful of nobles and princes to Babylon. Daniel was in that group.

Then in 597 B.C. when King Jehoiachin rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar again besieged Jerusalem and took ten thousand captive. Among that group was Ezekiel.

The final siege and destruction of Jerusalem occurred in 586 B.C., when the city and the temple were destroyed.

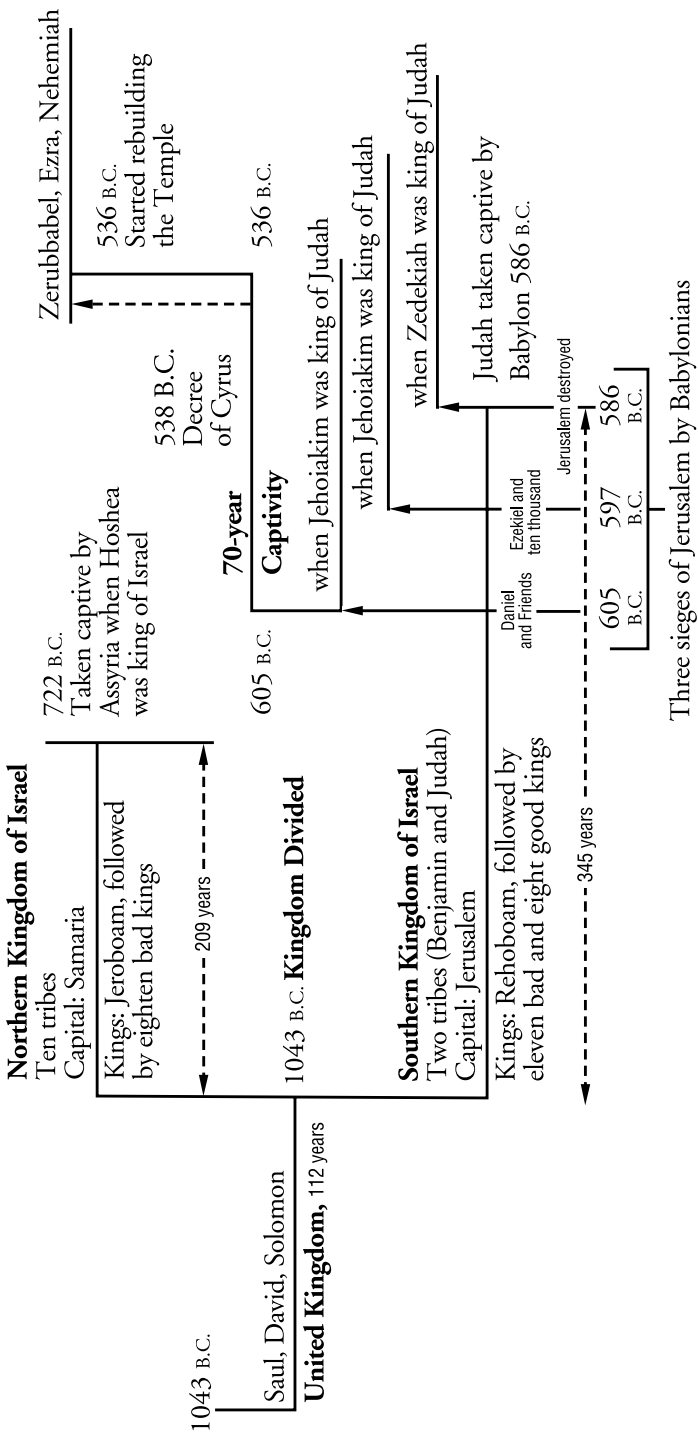
Nineveh, where Jonah prophesied, fell to the Babylonians about 612 B.C., just as Nahum had foretold. By this time the Assyrians, who had captured the northern kingdom of Israel, faded from view as a dominant world power.

If you will take a few minutes to study the following chart taken from the *New Inductive Study Bible*, it will help you put all I've said in perspective.

Habakkuk, a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, probably lived during the time of King Josiah and, therefore, experienced the revival which occurred under Josiah. Jeremiah 1:1-3 tells us that Jeremiah prophesied to the Kingdom of Judah during Josiah's reign right through the exile of the southern kingdom in 586 B.C. This is the exile Habakkuk referred to when he wrote, "I must wait quietly for the day of distress" (Habakkuk 3:16).

Now, Beloved, in the light of all that history, take a few minutes to read 2 Kings 22. It's a wonderful chapter. If you'll read it today, you'll appreciate it so much more when we discuss it tomorrow.

ISRAEL'S DIVISION AND CAPTIVITY



— D A Y F I V E —

What happens when God's people neglect His Word?

What happens in a nation when men turn from knowing God?

What happens in the life of a church when the Word of God loses center stage and is given a minor or "bit" part?

What happens to *you* when day after day you neglect to spend time alone with God in His Word? When you neglect the Word of God, does it make any difference in your life? Let's look at what happened in Israel and then see if there is any comparison to today.

Yesterday I asked you to read 2 Kings 22. Did you? I hope so. If not, do so now. It will give you a greater appreciation and understanding of what will follow in today's study.

Second Kings 22 opens around 622 B.C., a hundred years after the Assyrians had invaded and captured the northern kingdom. The current king of the southern kingdom is Josiah, who became king when he was eight years old. Yet, this was no surprise to God! Nothing is a surprise to Him because He is the sovereign, omniscient (all-knowing) ruler of the entire universe.

In 1 Kings 13:1-2, we read a prophecy given around 930 B.C. regarding the birth of Josiah and the events which will take place in his lifetime. This prophecy was given over three hundred years before Josiah appeared in history! How awesome is our God! He calls into being that which does not yet exist. He moves in the affairs of mankind to perform His will, and He brings His desires to pass exactly as they are predicted. Why do we refuse to bow before Him and honor Him as God, King of kings, Lord of lords, very God of gods?

Second Kings 22 focuses on the events that occurred in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, when he was twenty-six years old. This makes the time about 622 B.C. Remember, Judah went into captivity in 586 B.C., thirty-six years later.

Shaphan the scribe was sent to clean and repair the damage in the

temple of God. In the process of helping with these temple repairs, Hilkiah the high priest found a copy of God's Word. *Can you imagine?* The Word of God was lost in the house of God!

What effect did this have on God's people? Read 2 Kings 23:1-27, and you will see how religious people lived when they worshiped God without the knowledge of His Word. List the kinds of things in which they were involved.

As you saw, they fell into idolatry, worshiping Baal and Asherah (2 Kings 23:4). They were also caught up in astrology (2 Kings 23:4-5), which was strictly forbidden by God in Deuteronomy 17:2-7. How this must have hurt our God!

Before I began writing today's lesson, I was on my face before our Father, telling Him that I wanted to feed His sheep only His Word. May we find it, live by it, and not bring grief to the heart of our Lord.

— D A Y S I X —

What happens in a nation when the Word of God is lost in the house of God? How does it affect the character of a nation?

Wherever you find idolatry, you will find immorality or some sort of sexual perversion. One follows on the heels of the other. Second Kings 23:7 tells us that male cult prostitutes were in the house of the Lord. They

were part of the sexual immorality and perversion associated with Baal and Asherah worship.

This departure from the Word of God not only affected the morals of the people, it also endangered the lives of the children. In 2 Kings 23:10 parents made their children “pass through the fire for Molech.” Is it any different today as our nation offers the blood sacrifices of aborted children on the altars of immorality? Just as they heard the screams of their children as the fire blackened their delicate skin, today can’t you hear the screams and see the twisted writhing of the children’s tiny bodies as their limbs are severed or as the flesh is burned from their bodies by the caustic saline injection used to abort babies?

Human sacrifice was not the only perversion! “God’s people” had become involved in the occult. Although this association was expressly forbidden in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the people turned to mediums and spiritists instead of consulting God. Behind idols, mediums, spiritists, and astrology, you will find demons (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).

Look around you. Is it any different today? No! But has it always been this way in the United States of America? No! In your lifetime you have seen great changes in what is condoned in America. Abortion used to be considered murder, and any doctor found performing an abortion was sentenced as a lawbreaker. Today, it is a common means of birth control. Even many churches will not take a strong stand against abortion.

At one time homosexuality and lesbianism were against the law, but now the law promotes their “rights.” Some in the church call homosexuality nothing more than a “genetic predisposition.” Others have established homosexual congregations, saying God is against promiscuity, but not homosexuality or lesbianism. They maintain that it is merely an alternate lifestyle.

At one time divorce wasn’t tolerated in many denominations. Now some in the church divorce one another, show up in church the next week with another spouse, and nothing is said. Church members are not held accountable for their behavior. For the most part, church discipline as set forth in 1 Corinthians 5 is no longer practiced.

Why are we in such a state? I believe it is because we've lost the Word of God—both in the house of God and in seminaries. Many graduate from seminary with thorough training in the technicalities of ministry and of psychology, but *they do not know how to study the Word and pray.*

Think about it. What place, what priority does the Word of God have in the lives of the majority of pastors, let alone churchgoers? Has your church lost the Word of God? Have *you* lost it?

What happened in Judah can happen again. It's the inevitable result of losing the Word of God. Over and over again, church history testifies to the effects of neglecting the Word. The church has been turned around only when a reformer has discovered, studied, lived by, and proclaimed the truths of God's Word in the hearing of His people.

Ask God to search your heart and to show you if you have neglected the Word of God. Be honest and open before Him as you ask Him to show you what, if anything, has taken priority over His Word. Ask Him what you need to do. Or, if you have given His Word its rightful place, spend time in worship and thanksgiving. Renew your commitment, so that in all things He will have the preeminence. Record your commitment below.

— D A Y S E V E N —

Anguish struck Josiah's heart when Shaphan the scribe read aloud the book of the law that had been lost in the house of the Lord. King Josiah saw how far they had strayed from God's standard of holiness. Once Josiah heard God's Word, he understood the righteous wrath of God that had to be executed in holy judgment.

If God's Word has been lost in many churches, how can we even expect the world to be aware of the righteous commandments in the Word?

So many write to tell me what has happened since they've started studying God's Word, learning it precept upon precept. As they've learned to dig out truth for themselves, their eyes have been opened to subtle errors which had crept into their thinking.

They see how they've been deluded by men's persuasive arguments, philosophies, and traditions.

They realize how they've bought into human reasonings and trendy teachings.

They discern how, in recent years, psychology and self-preoccupation have replaced the Word and the cross.

They find themselves able to quote and expound the latest Christian bestsellers, but not the Word of God.

They acknowledge that without the plumb line of God's Word, they could not perceive how far out of alignment they were from truth.

Thinking they were in touch with themselves, they realize they have been out of touch with God and His truth. They see how they have been deceived and how they have reaped the consequences of that deceit.

All of this happened because the Word of God had lost its proper place in their lives.

Take a few minutes and prayerfully read the following words from Colossians 2. Mark every "in Him" and "with Him" and list what the Colossians were to do in respect to Jesus Christ.

Then at the end of the passage list Paul's concerns for the Colossians in this passage. What had deluded them? Where were they out of line with truth? What were Paul's warnings? Be specific.

▶ COLOSSIANS 2:1-23

¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument.

⁵ For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

⁷ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

⁹ For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

¹⁰ and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world,

why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

²¹ “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”

²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?

²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Now read Paul's prayer for the Colossians in 1:9-12. Personalize these truths by praying the verses back to the Lord. Pray for yourself and for those whom the Lord lays on your heart. You might want to write out your prayer in the space below.

I cannot bring you to this point in our study without telling you what I believe can be a viable solution. Many are told to study God's Word, but they are not told *how* nor given the tools to do so. There is a tool which I believe can be revolutionary, one which will help you discover for yourself the teachings of every book of the Bible. It's the *New Inductive Study Bible*.² This study Bible is unique. In other study Bibles, you study the notes, conclusions, and observations of *others*. This Bible will show *you* how to discover the content of each individual book of the Bible, make your own study notes, and open the way for you to apply the truths you encounter to your life. It can be used by children and adults. Those who do so will never lose the Word of God again, for it will be at home in the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19). His Word will dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16).

MEMORY VERSE

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from
Thy law.

PSALM 119:18

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Are you ever so burdened with your circumstances that it seems as though God does not care? Do you look at the sin in your nation and wonder, God, where are you?

1. The historical background of the book of Habakkuk is key to understanding the message of this book. When Habakkuk wrote it, what had happened to the nation of Israel?
 - a. What had happened to the northern kingdom of Israel? When did the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah take place?

- b. When was the book of Habakkuk written? What was the situation in the southern kingdom at the time Habakkuk wrote this book?
Which other prophet also prophesied during the time of Habakkuk?
 - c. According to the chart on page 11 regarding Jeremiah and his contemporary prophets, when did Habakkuk live...during the reign of which king? What kind of king was he? How was he described?
What amazing event took place during his reign (2 Kings 22)?
 - d. When the book of the Law was read in the presence of the king, what was the king's response? What did Josiah know to be true about the Kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 22)?
 - e. When Josiah sent to inquire of the Lord from Huldah the prophetess, what message did he receive from God about the people of Judah and himself (2 Kings 22)?
 - f. When Josiah read the book of the Law to the people, what was their response? What kind of things were the people of Judah involved in? What did Josiah do to stop these things? What did Josiah do to restore the land of Judah (2 Kings 23)?
 - g. What was God's response to the people (2 Kings 23)?
2. The book of Habakkuk records a dialogue between Habakkuk and God. How does chapter 1 begin? Who is speaking?
 - a. What was Habakkuk's burden? What were Habakkuk's questions to God? What was the problem that caused Habakkuk to cry to God? (Remember the times in which Habakkuk lived.)
 - b. What was God's answer to Habakkuk? What did God say that He was doing?
 - c. How did God describe the Chaldeans? What did God say about the Chaldeans' responsibility for their sin?
 - d. How did Habakkuk respond to God? Where was his focus? What did Habakkuk say to us about the Lord's character?
 - e. What questions did Habakkuk still have? Why do you think he asked these questions?
 3. In chapter 2, the dialogue between Habakkuk and God continues. What did Habakkuk say he would do?

- a. What was God's answer? What did He command Habakkuk to do?
 - b. Who are the proud ones? What was the first woe that would come upon the proud one? What is God's judgment going to be on them?
 - c. What was the second woe? What did He say that they have done? What does He say will happen?
 - d. What was the third woe? What did God say would happen one day?
 - e. What was the fourth woe that God pronounced? What will happen to the proud one?
 - f. What was the fifth woe? What contrast does God give?
4. In the third chapter Habakkuk prayed. How did he begin? What did this show about Habakkuk?
- a. What was Habakkuk's plea to God?
 - b. How did he describe God? What did God do to the nations? What did He do for His people? When do you think these events take place?
 - c. How did the book of Habakkuk end? Had Habakkuk's circumstances changed from the beginning of the book to the end? What *had* changed?
5. What is the danger that God's people face today?
- a. What are Paul's concerns for the Colossians in chapter 2? What do the Colossians and all believers have in Jesus?
 - b. What happens when the Word of God is left out of the Church? What happens when you do not spend time in the Word of God?
 - c. What place, priority, and preeminence does the Word of God have in your life?



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