

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

“God’s Unpredictable Justice”

Questions written by Mark Collins

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Group Announcements – Aloha Rock Small group leaders! You are cordially invited to join us for a leadership luau on Friday, May 16, 2008 at 6:30pm at the Rock church in room 232. Come enjoy a delicious Hawaiian buffet, hula praise performance, live island music, free giveaways, some advanced leadership training and much more! This is a free event to celebrate your faithful service to the Small Group Ministry at the Rock. Email Danah at Danah.davis@therocksandiego.org for more details. Mahalo! (That means thank you!)

Small Group leaders are you encouraging your group members to join the Rock Army? Your group can catch the vision of becoming a part of a movement that encourages people to become World-Class Christians. To join, check out the ARMY requirements at www.therocksandiego.org/army/

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As “small groupies,” you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it’s up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Pray that all the small groups continue to develop relationships with those who are far from God, and invite them to their small groups.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray that all of our Small Groups take time to follow up on all the new people trying to get into small groups.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray that our current leaders continue to give their ministry away and develop future leaders to reach their full potential in Jesus.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God gives us the favor and wisdom to rebuild the Small Group team. Ask Him to order our steps in every decision we make.

The Rock Body: Pray that the Rock Army grows deeper and deeper in accountability to one another.

MEMORY VERSE

*“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”
(Habakkuk 2:14)*

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – GOD’S UNPREDICTABLE JUSTICE

Recently, I had a very strange experience that just maybe you can identify with. My wife Carrie and I were driving down the road looking for a place to fill up our gas tank. We kept driving and driving determined to find a place that offered their “liquid gold” for under four dollars a gallon. Finally, we cheered when we discovered an “oasis in the desert” who only charged \$ 3.96 to propel my car 25 miles or so. This search prompted a very unnerving conversation about the instability of the world around us. We first spoke of the housing crisis, with all the recent foreclosures, and how much less our own house is worth. Then the conversation turned to the subject global instability; the continuing war in Iraq; third world countries trying to create a nuclear weapon and global warming. What started out just to be a leisurely drive to run some errands on our day off turned into a somber reminder of how tenuous life can be on this “blue planet.” All this conversation led me to some pretty significant quiet times over the next couple of days.

Have you ever felt like arguing with God? Have you ever wanted to say, “If you’re in control, why do the bad guys seem to win and nice guys finish last?” If you have, then you and the Minor Prophet Habakkuk have something in common. Habakkuk, whose name means “wrestler” grappled with God about the questions we still ask: How can God just ignore justice? Why doesn’t He do more to prevent evil? And how can a good God use evil to accomplish His purposes? Habakkuk struggled to understand How God worked in the seventh century B.C. (roughly some 600 hundred years before Christ) when Israel was still prosperous but many circumstances threatened God’s people’s lofty position. In fact, less than thirty years later Jerusalem and the temple would lie in ruins, and it would be nearly five hundred years before Israel would rise again to world prominence. What angered Habakkuk the most was the fact that God revealed to the prophet that He was going to use the evil Babylonians to judge the sins of Judah, yet in the end the Habakkuk became convinced that he could trust God no matter how bleak or confusing circumstances appeared to be.

Getting Started

Have you ever argued with God? Over what?

Do you think arguing with God is a good idea? Why or why not?

Digging Deeper:

The prophets of the OT had two major jobs: foretelling and forthtelling. God would always warn His people of upcoming judgment many years beforehand. The second role of the prophets is what always got them in trouble. God commanded Habakkuk to call Judah to repentance. The people laughed at the prophet because the Hebrews believed that they were much more holy than the Babylonians.

1. Read Habakkuk 1:1-4. What contemporary events give you the same kind of feelings that Habakkuk was expressing? Do you think that God was ignoring Habakkuk’s prayers (1:2)?
2. Read Habakkuk 1:5-2:1. What was supervising about God’s answer to Habakkuk complaint?
3. Was Habakkuk accurate in his observation (1:13) that God was employing evil to do good? Explain why or why not.
4. Where does Habakkuk position himself (2:1) when it comes to his expectations of God?
5. In uncertain times, what does it mean for the righteous person to live by faith?

6. Read Habakkuk 3. The prophet remembers what he heard about God' deeds in the exodus. What new portrait of God emerges in the prophet's thinking?
7. Re-read 3:16-17. While he waits for "the day of calamity" and a ruined economy, how does Habakkuk find hope and joy in the Lord? How can knowing God is sovereign give you hope?

Bringing it Home

As a group, following Habakkuk's example in chapter 1, make your own list of "complaints." Be specific about the ways injustice and cruelty are seen in your world. What do you think God would say about those on your list doing evil? Finally, after considering both your complaints and god's character, describe your own response to God, as Habakkuk did in chapter 3.