

Discussion Guide: Bad Medicine

February 16, 2003: “Bad Medicine” is a message on Habakkuk from Pastor Rich Vincent of College Park Church, Indianapolis, Indiana. The bad medicine motif largely stems from the lament and questioning of the prophet Habakkuk toward God. Habakkuk saw his countrymen full of wickedness and a nation more wicked than they about to close in and attack them. So he cried out to the Lord for understanding...what he heard from the Lord perplexed him even more. The Lord revealed that His medicine would cause serious side effects...including the destruction of Jerusalem and the death and captivity of the people. It would get worse before it got better. Though Habakkuk shuddered at the news, he learned to trust God and praise Him even amidst very unpleasant and painful circumstances.

The following questions should serve as a guide for a small group discussion and facilitate the application of this Word from God to our everyday lives...here and now, today.

Read Habakkuk aloud together to re-familiarize yourselves with the flow of the text.

1. In Chapter 1, Habakkuk cries out with a question and a lament concerning his perception of the way things were. (Hab. 1:1-4) Things seemed very wrong. Have you ever been perplexed in a similar way? Are you now? Explain briefly what perplexed you?
2. When God answered Habakkuk, it even perplexed him more so. (Hab. 1:12-2:1) What was so confusing about God’s answer? What made the answer seem inconsistent with what Habakkuk knew about God and His ways?
3. Similarly, have you ever been perplexed by God’s answers? Have God’s ways of working in your life not fit with how you previously understood Him to work? Please explain these situations.
4. It’s said that the Babylonians’ wickedness largely was due to the fact that they “were a law unto themselves” (1:7) and their “god was their strength” (1:11). How do these two fatal character flaws show up in your lives today? How do these forms of arrogance (2:4-5) erode pure trust in God alone?
5. What is so wise about God’s plan? (Hab. 2:2-20) Clearly the wicked don’t win in the end. In the long run, how do the ways of wickedness fail to have “staying power”? (for a prompter, ask everyone to look at the “woes”) Relate this demonstration of God’s wisdom with the wisdom of the Cross. (Acts 13:41)
6. Finally, Habakkuk resigned himself to the Father’s will, much like Jesus Christ did in Gethsemane and on the Cross. Habakkuk also formed a song of praise while he waited. (Hab. 3) How does this psalm help you to handle perplexing situations you’re facing? What’s so hard about trusting? What are the rewards if you do so?