

What is the **Better Way** when things get hard? How do I respond when I want to quit? There's a tough course in AZ where I ran an 8 miler. It begins the wind is at my back. The birds sing. Cowboys will win a SB and Taylor Swift belts it out. Uphill, time slows down. Birds squawk. An apocalyptic death wind blows. Cowboys siphon & Taylor makes dumb political statements.

This is the ABCs of life (reference is [The Second Happy](#)). In life, every endeavor, project, job, team, family, and relationship travels through 3 phases or zones. Grads are in the A Zone where everything you look forward to begins. It's the starting line, full of hope, energy, and expectation. Most important, its free of baggage and losses. **It's full of promise**. There's nothing more exciting than a startup, a honeymoon. The B Zone, in contrast, is **full of problems**. You hit a wall with questions asking how do I continue? Infertility. Infidelity. Insecurity. Disability. Fragility. Timidity. You want to enter the Q Zone. Quit! The B Zone in life and faith is uphill. **Everything worthwhile is uphill**. You need to embrace the hard. The B-Zone is where I build muscle & faith. I put in the effort even when I don't see results. I do the reps in my walk with God. I do the small things in my job when there's little fruit. It's bone weary.

There is a C Zone. **It's the payoff. We move from promise to problems to payoff**. It could be a promotion, graduation, a degree, or an anniversary. It might be your faith deepens and wisdom develops. The payoff may not be discernible or obvious. (**Kim's story**). **Life isn't a sitcom**: little humor, some tension in the plot, & w/in 30 minutes, including commercials, everything is neatly tied up in a bow. This isn't the message of **Habakkuk**. It's real life: tension, drama, and plenty of unanswered questions. It begins around 600 BC as King Josiah dies on the battlefield of Megiddo, his religious reforms are ignored, public life breaks down, and cooperation disappears. In addition, God makes the incredible claim he will use the brutish Babylonians to ensure justice.

Habakkuk, a prophet, crashes head-on into crisis, **when the things that Habakkuk sees doesn't line up with the things that he believes** (reference is [Hope in the Dark by Craig Groeschel](#).) Habakkuk is one of the 12 Minor Prophets: the books are smaller not minor league. Of the 12, we know less about Habakkuk than any other. He seems to be a temple musician, and then at some point, a priest, and a prophet. Habakkuk is different. He doesn't speak to the people on behalf of God, instead, he emotes to God on behalf of the people. What he expresses to God is raw, real, and full of emotion. When God gives a new beginning, and it bogs down in the dead-zone, how do you make it through? **Faith motivates (2:4)**. **Even though, I wonder, even though I wait, through it all I worship. Never stop your praise**. Chapters 1-3 is all uphill from promise to problems.

1. When I Wonder - **1:1-4** The basic questions are: **2 How long?** (Kids do this) **3 Why?** How long God will you remain silent, while I cry out for help? Why do you make me look at injustice and iniquity? Why do you idly tolerate wrongdoing? “God, if I were in Your shoes, I’d do things different.” Anybody thought that? Habakkuk says God, I don’t like what you’re doing, I wish you were doing something else. **It isn’t fair and I’m not sure you care.** You may not verbalize or vocalize such toxic language, but we all face the challenge. It’s when I wonder why **what I see with my eyes is so often so different than what I believe in my heart.** Why is it so often we believe that God can do something, we think that He will, and He doesn’t? Habakkuk finds himself wondering w/all of us.

How much longer God? How much longer will children be abused, and you stand idly by? How much longer God will babies be aborted, and you not intervene? How much longer will faithful believers in the Ukraine face constant chaos in war? (Reference [Jud Wilhite Nothing Can Stop my Praise](#))

Why don’t you answer my prayer when I ask for help? Why do my constant prayers not change my relationship or restore my health? Why does evil prosper and the righteous suffer? It’s part and parcel of his second complaint **1:12-13**. Henry Blackaby calls this a **crisis of belief. It requires an adjustment.** It measures with our move to seminary. We surrendered to serve, took a leap of faith, and it wasn’t long until we were saying “Huh? God, I am trusting You, but I thought when we stepped out on faith, I thought when we surrendered in obedience, I thought when we followed faithfully, you’d bless us. It doesn’t feel like you are blessing us. It feels like you are messing with us. My car blew up, wife got sick, kids need surgery, taxes are due, the church is struggling, and I asking How much longer. It’s a crisis of belief and you adjust. Typically, when this happens, people go in one of two directions.

You either deny reality (act like nothing is wrong) or make snap conclusions, “If this is how it’s going to be, and You’re not doing what I thought you would do, then You must not be who I thought you were, so forget it, God. There’s a 3rd path in disillusionment & discouragement. It’s wrestling. Habakkuk’s name means embrace, or wrestle. **Jm 2:1-4. A deeply committed believer can express simultaneous questions and faith.** You can believe God and yet, be still unsure. It could be that you work through your doubts. **Don’t deny your doubts. Let your doubts drive you to God.** What if doubts build a deeper faith? What if embracing questions develops perseverance? Even though, I wonder, I come to a point, I worship God – not because of what I see with my eyes, but because of who I know Him to be. I wonder, but I worship. I ponder & praise. Don’t quit in the question.

2. While I Wait. We wonder in Ch. 1. In Ch 2 we wait. Habakkuk doesn't quit or walk away. Instead, He positions himself in the most strategic place to see the hand of God and to hear the voice of God. **2:1** Instead of telling God what to do, I listen to him. Our God is a God who speaks. God can speak through his word, people, circumstances, a message, or a song. He will speak to you. If he doesn't, don't panic. Just because he's silent does not mean he is absent. He is always there. Listen for the voice of God. He may say something you don't want to hear. (**ex**) Habakkuk writes it down. He knows the coming catastrophe of the Babylonian onslaught is unstoppable, and He **cannot remove himself from the weight of the wait**, but He is encouraged to wait in faith (**2:4**). God sees the Babylonians are puffed up. He spends Ch 2 on the 5 woes of Babylon. Justice is coming! Don't mistake patience for weakness. God's not talking to Babylon, He's talking to believers. We live by faith as we wait. We walk by faith not by sight. Not what I see. Not a desired outcome. Not what I want. Faith is in Him!

It isn't what Habakkuk wants to hear. The apostle Paul in **2 Cor 12**, who is faithful, asks God to remove the thorn in His side three times. Take it away. God says no. My grace is enough. If I'm Paul, I want your power. Peter needs your grace. Thomas needs grace. Do you remember what I did for you? **2 Cor 11:23-30** **What I give you is myself. We praise through the problems.**

We have this tendency to do the what ifs. I'm struggling with diverticulosis: colon pus pockets. At the wedding last week, my buddy filled me in on the tumors he discovered. The what if's ambush your future with fear, pain, and misfortune. I've learned to stand on my tiptoes and look to the future and live with hope. When I stand on my tiptoes, I see God's help, strength, and grace. If Satan can focus you on the what if's you will live in the never minds. God will speak and you will say never mind. **2:2-3. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place it will not be delayed.**

Just be patient. I know some of you say easy for you to say. My child is making foolish choices. My marriage is failing. My health is spiraling. God is never overdue a single day. **For the revelation awaits an appointed time (mo-aid)**, NIV. It's like pregnancy. Wait. Wait. Wait. Not now. Not now. Push. Push. At the appointed time, God will do his perfect will., Mo-aid is the perfect, unstoppable timing of God. If **it's not God's time, you can't force it. When it is God's time, you can't stop it.** **2:20** is the point of connection between waiting and worship. **But the Lord is in his holy temple.** He isn't silent. You be silent. No matter what I see, I choose faith. I can worship him before I see him move. He hides himself in silence

3. Through it all, I will worship. Don't quit in chapter 1 while wondering. Don't walk away while waiting in chapter 2.

3:1 *on shigionoth*. Shigionoth is the plural of shigion. Our best guess is it is a musical term instructing a congregation how to sing with strong emotion and high-spirited praise, vigorous enthusiasm. One article said, "it is praise punctuated w/exclamation marks." We are told that this psalm is "**For the choir director. On my stringed instruments**" (v.19). It's an individual's response to God, and it ends up expressing the response of every believer.

Even though, I wonder (Ch 1), even though I wait (Ch 2), through it all I worship. Never stop your praise. This is praise before the provision. Sometimes the most passionate, authentic praise is praise simply based on faith. It's praising God not for the what but for the who. It's not for what you have done, or for what I think you will do, this is just praise for who you are. **3:2-4. In your wrath remember mercy.** He recalls how God moves His people from Egyptian bondage to real refuge in Taman (Edom) and Mount Param. You moved the heart of Pharaoh. You split the Red Sea. You destroyed our enemies. I remember when you were faithful. I've seen your goodness. This is meaningful. God do it again, God, I've seen you do it before now do it again. **Worship brings us to His will if we ask for wisdom and then commit to His way.**

It's amazing how this minor prophet brings this complaint to an end. **3:16-18.** Habakkuk says this, he says, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in the God of my salvation.** There are dozens of reasons to abstain, but it is shigionoth, everything within me, declaring the praise and the goodness and the glory of God. Even though I do not see what I want to see. I will give God praise. This is a cry from the depths of our heart believing in the goodness of God in the middle of pain. Praise in the problems & in the pain.

In Ch 1 you don't quit because of questions, in Ch 2 you don't walk out as you wait. In chapter 3, **even if He doesn't change the circumstances, He changes your perspective.** Habakkuk offers a response to what is the worst news. It's awful news. His body reacts, but still, he has a choice about what he believes. He cannot trust his emotions or his current view of the situation. Instead, He trusts that God somehow brings good out of an inconceivable scenario—Babylonians invade their land.

In your life, it feels like the Babylonians ravaged your heart. You may be grieving losses. **3:17 Even though** "Even though my spouse said till death do us part and didn't live up to their word, I will still rejoice in the Lord my God." "Even though I raised my kids better they're making very scary decisions, yet will I trust in the Lord my God." "Even though we've prayed for someone's health to get better, and they've gotten worse, yet I will trust in the Lord my God." "Even though our house will not sell, and we are on the line, I will yet trust in the Lord my God." "Even though finances are tough and it's going to cost \$2,000 to repair my AC, yet I will trust

in the Lord my God.” Even Though. Even Though. Even Though. **Make your what if’s into even though.** In chapter 1 you don’t quit because of Questions, in chapter 2 you don’t walk away from God, in chapter 3, even if He doesn’t change the circumstances, He changes your perspective.

Notice how it ends! **3:19** *The Sovereign Lord is my strength,* He enables me to tread on the heights, He takes me to a more intimate place, to a place of greater faith. He takes me to a new place. What do I know about God? I know this, **I enjoy God on the mountain tops, but I get to know Him in the valleys.** I love to praise Him for what He does, but in the valleys, I simply praise Him for who He is. I like to brag on Him on the mountain tops, but I get to know Him intimately in the valley. **Even though, I wonder, even though I wait, through it all I worship. Never stop your praise.** There’s someone here, it’s time to praise God even when you don’t see it, it’s time to praise God even when you don’t feel it. It’s time to cry out and praise Him, not just for what you see or what you don’t but for who He. What I want you to understand is you cannot have chapter 3 type of intimacy without chapter 1 type of wondering and without chapter 2 type of waiting!

There is a better way. Come to Jesus. **Matthew 11:28-30**
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