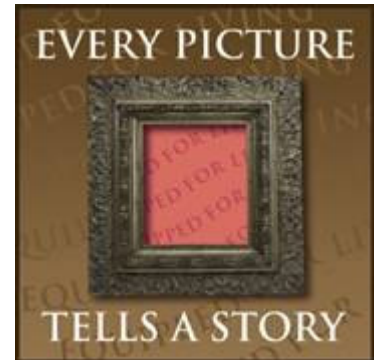




... when you need a break from the daily grind



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

#4 of 8: *Habakkuk: a picture of confidence*

➤ **READY TO GO**

When you think of a confident person, what image comes to mind? Perhaps it's someone who is sure of their abilities, sets goals, expects to achieve something and often does. On the other hand what do you think it means to lack confidence? Perhaps someone who reacts defensively to criticism, uses problems as an excuse not to try, expects the worst and often gets it. But these are really examples of people who have, or lack confidence, in themselves. In the big issues of life, self-confidence is not going to make it. It's God-confidence we need. In the Old Testament we have an outstanding example of someone whose confidence was not in himself but in God. This person's name is Habakkuk.

➤ **READ**

- Read Habakkuk 1:1-13. What was Habakkuk's complaint to God (verses 1-4) and to what extent can you echo his sentiment as you pray?
- What surprised Habakkuk about God's response to his prayer (verses 5-7)? How do you respond to this?
- What challenge or encouragement do you derive from Habakkuk's prayer, prompted by God's surprising answer (verses 12-13)?
- Read Habakkuk 2:1 and 3:1, 2. What do you learn from Habakkuk's attitude that you can apply to your own prayers?
- Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. To what extent can you identify with some of the scenarios contemplated by Habakkuk?
- What practical lesson do you learn from the conclusion of Habakkuk's prayer?

➤ **REFLECT**

God's answer to Habakkuk's complaint about the wickedness of his land certainly shocked him. God was going to use an even worse nation – Babylon – to punish Israel. After much prayer and soul-searching, Habakkuk eventually came to realise that God is control and can do exactly as He pleases. Although the answer shook his neat little ideas of how God should or should not run His world, Habakkuk's experience of God solidified his confidence in God. At the end of his prayer Habakkuk came to a position of complete confidence in God, no matter what. And his confidence results in a deliberate personal choice to rejoice – not in the dreadful circumstances – but in God.

Rejoicing FOR dreadful circumstances is unnatural, but rejoicing IN dreadful circumstances is supernatural and comes from a deep confidence that God works even bad things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). This confidence only comes from doing what Habakkuk did – waiting on God. Only then can we make a choice to rejoice.