



LOOKING TO DEVELOP YOUR FAITH?

Gather is a monthly resource from IPHC Women to help you connect women in your local church to Jesus Christ and each other.

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UNCERTAIN FAITH

by Keisha Gordon

In this world, it seems that we are finding more times of suffering than joy, more chaos than calm, more strife than peace. Since we are a vessel of faith, the suffering we are exposed to can create cracks and cause doubt to abound in our own walk with God. We can miss the opportunity to pray, praise, and ponder over the word of God.

The suffering that seems to shatter our faith structure seems to be through health and through relationships. When we are given an uncertain health prognosis, experience loss of a loved one, or watch the slow decline of a loved one's health, it can take a toll on our hearts. Relationships are another shot to the shelter of faith. When we see a marriage fail, a friendship fall apart, or family split, we hurt. And we find so much to complain and grumble about.

Because friendship, health, and family are so

important, they are a major catalyst in how we proceed in our faith with God. We either let the struggle spark dissent in our faith—or we use it as an opportunity to go to God for restoration. The Lord wants us to come to Him in agreement with these things.

Pope Francis says, “We have to pray to the Father! It is a powerful word, “father.” We have to pray to the one who has begotten us, the one who has given us life.”

(Our Father, 12)

But when we pray, does God hear?

Habakkuk was a prophet in the time of Judah who witnessed the longsuffering of his people, and he cried out to God. In Habakkuk 1:2, “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?” The Lord answers in Hab 1:5, “Look and be amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.”

The same God who heard Habakkuk hears us. When we become focused on our moment, we momentarily lose the focus on what God is doing in our lives. We are not immune to suffering, but God sees us and loves us through it. God created us and has a plan for us—one that includes us not perishing but having life eternal with Him.

You may be uncertain that God will step in—you may be thinking of all the reasons He won't heal, help, or lift us out of the suffering. Habakkuk had a comeback for each promise of God, but God loved and restored Habakkuk each time.

Habakkuk began to trust God again and to lean on God's presence and power. By the end of Habakkuk we see his prayer, "Lord, I have heard your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD, repeat them in our day, in our time make them known."

The prayer concludes with the request of the Lord to lift him from the suffering, and bring strength: "I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vine, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

The sovereign LORD is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights." (Hab. 3:16-19)

He enables us to rise above our circumstances, He wants us to run to Him. In times of uncertain faith, call to God, our Father, who has a plan for us. This doesn't mean that our circumstances aren't important, God sees them and hurts when we hurt—but there is a day coming when the pain you feel today won't be so present.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1. Talk about a season when God brought you through great suffering.
2. John MacArthur says that "Faith is not a one time act, but a way of life." What does this quote mean to you?
3. Who is someone you can go to when you are feeling the pressure of suffering dousing your faith?
4. Discuss how you can help others when they're in the middle of the struggle?

CALL TO ACTION:

1. Read Jeremiah 29:11. List three things that God is speaking to you through your suffering.
2. Ask a friend what is causing them suffering or a struggle they have in their faith. Pray with them and share your story.
3. Commit to memorizing Habakkuk 3:19, "The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights."
4. Commit to reading through Habakkuk and Ephesians this week.



