



# The G.E.M.

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## WALK WITH PURPOSE

Summer is around the corner, and soon we will be facing the 2011 Christmas season. A time for being with our families and loved ones, but more than that, it is a time to remember the true reason for the season, the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This month we focus on one aspect of family life, that of marriage and the true purpose of marriage. See our main article on page 3.

In *Bible Study 101* we look at the final step in Bible study, application. This important step brings all of your study together and bridges the gap between understanding the text and putting it into practice.

*Bible Basics* continues with the next minor prophet by looking at the life and writings of Habakkuk. In *Lesser Known Heroes of the Bible* we look at the a few characters from the Bible named Gedaliah. Finally there are the usual *Bible Library Card* and the Crossword on the *Back Page*.

Sunday School teachers, as Christmas is fast approaching, now is the time to prepare for your year-end gifts. We are here to help you make it as simple as possible, so contact us today to find out what we have available for you. A few ideas appear alongside.

Until next time, enjoy the sun, the cricket (Go Proteas!), and this edition of *The G.E.M.*

Blessings,  
Glyn and Linda. †

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* (2 Peter 3:18)

### Sunday School Gifts 2011



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## BIBLE BASICS

### Habakkuk

#### *The Book of Faith Struggles*

The book of Habakkuk deals with some of the most painful questions believers face. Such as, why does God permit evil and how can God allow the evil people to triumph over the good.

**Author & Date:** Other than in verse 1 of chapter 1 where Habakkuk is identified, he is only referred to in the book as “the prophet.”

Two possible dates have been put forward for the book: during king Jehoiakim's reign (608-597BC) just after Babylon came to power and threatened Judah's freedom, and the second date sometime during Josiah's reign (639-609BC) when Babylon was still an emerging power. Traditionally it is the second date that scholars tend to agree with more.

**Theme:** The theme of the book is simply the search of Habakkuk for an answer to the moral and theological questions raised by the sin being present in the lives of God's people.

**Style and Structure:** The book of Habakkuk seems to be a dialogue between God and the prophet. Two conversations are recorded and then the book closes with a hymn and a doxology that shows all the questions had been answered and that Habakkuk has a renewed trust in God.

	Chapters
The Prophet's Lament	1
Principles of Judgement	2
Habakkuk's Prayer	3

**Did you Know?** One of the texts of the book of Habakkuk had a profound influence on the Reformation.

The young monk Martin Luther, while crawling up the steps of the Scala Scanta in Rome, remembered the words of Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith.” This caused the young monk to rise to his feet and started him on the great crusade of life by faith and not works, which gave rise to the Reformation.

**Value for Today:** The book of Habakkuk is just as relevant for us today as it was back in 600 BC. We too need some perspective on the deep theological questions that arise out of man's observation of the evil in the world.

And, like the prophet Habakkuk, we need to find the grace and apply the answers that he learned to our lives, putting our trust and faith on the God who knows best, even when life does not seem to make sense.

Nowhere in the Bible does God tell us that He will sort out every problem for us, but instead He assures us that we can wholeheartedly put our faith in Him. †

## BIBLE STUDY 101

### STEP 9: Application

The final step in basic Bible study is the application. If there is any negative aspect to Bible study, then this is it. Sometimes you come across a passage that seems to have no clear application for today, and sometimes one is tempted to apply things incorrectly due to one's personal experiences or the temptation of sin. That is why it is so important to just let the text speak for itself and not be tempted to read an application into the text that was never intended to be there by the author in the first place.

The basic process to applying the text begins by asking ourselves seven basic questions based on the research that we have already done, and is recorded in the charts.

**1. What truths does the passage teach?** Each passage will reveal different truths to you. You will be able to draw all of these truths from your previous charts. Keep digging until all truths seem to have been exhausted. Record your answers on a separate sheet.

**2. How does this truth apply into each area of my life?** Leave no aspect of your life out. Home, work, play, church, etc. Record how the truths of the previous question could change each aspect of your, or your family's, life.

**3. What changes should I make in my life?** Based on the truths the passage teaches and how they apply to the various areas of my life, what obvious changes should I now make in my life? Again, apply this to all areas of your life.

**4. How am I going to make those changes?** There is no point in knowing what changes need to be made if you do not have some form of action plan to bring them about. Record practical steps that you can take to make the changes in all areas of your life that you need to.

**5. What verse (or verses) from the passage should I memorise in order to help me remember the main message of the passage?** Based on the research you have already done, one or two verses should now be clear that summarise the teaching of the passage. Commit them to memory and remind yourself of them often. This will help you to apply the truths in the future.

**6. What illustration can I draw from the passage that will not only help me to remember the truths, but possibly also to teach them to others?** Learning Scripture and Bible Study should never be just for yourself, but also to help others. Develop a poem, an acrostic, even a picture, that you can use to help you remember the passage. This will also make it easier to discuss the passage with other people at your Bible study group, or even to children.

I trust that the 9 steps that we have covered in Bible Study 101 will help you to better come to grips with the amazing truths that the Bible contains. Blessed studying! †

## LESSER KNOWN HEROES OF THE BIBLE

### GEDALIAH

Personal name meaning, “Yahweh has done great things.”

Five Gedaliah's are mentioned in the Bible :

1. The son of Ahikam who was appointed ruler of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 587BC (see 2 Kings 25:22). Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians, and many of the residents of Judah had been deported. Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, was an ally of the prophet Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 26:24 & 39:14), and Gedaliah may have been in sympathy with Jeremiah's political views. That could explain why Nebuchadnezzar selected Gedaliah to be governor.

Gedaliah's time in office was brief. After only two months he was murdered by a group of fanatical zealous nationalists under the leadership of Ishmael (see Jeremiah 40:1-41:18).

2. A royal official under King Zedekiah (597-586BC) who was with the group that got the king's permission to imprison Jeremiah in a cistern (see Jeremiah 38).

3. Temple singer and prophet who played the harp with his father Jeduthan and five brothers (see 1 Chronicles 25:3). He headed one of twenty-four divisions of Temple servants (see 1 Chronicles 25:9).

An abbreviated form of the Hebrew name is given a priest with a foreign wife under Ezra (see Ezra 10:18) and the grandfather of the prophet Zephaniah (see Zephaniah 1:1).

Next Month: Abiathar

Quoted from Butler, Trent C (Editor) (1991), *Holman Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers. †

## CUT OUT & COLLECT

### EZEKIEL

26

**Key Idea:** Plans for Temple

**Summary:** Plans for the future new, grand temple in Jerusalem.

**Key People:** Ezekiel

**Key Places:** Judah and Babylon.

**Strange but True:** Strange creatures being described as *wheels within wheels* (1:1-21).

A prophet who ate a book (2:9 7 3:3).

A sermon illustrated by a boiling pot of bones (24:3-6).

Two sticks becoming one in a valley of dry human bones (37:1-17).

A city called Cōg in the land of Magog (38:2)

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## WHY MARRIAGE?

There is one question that seems to be asked by every person on this earth. A question that many seem to never find the answer to. It is the age-old question, "Why am I here? What is my purpose?"

When one becomes a Christian, the answer becomes apparent, because of God and for God. Or as the Westminster Catechism puts it, "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

But today I do not want to address this question in the general sense, but more specifically in terms of marriage. I am speaking to those of you who are married, engaged, or merely desiring to marry. I want to ask you all the question, what is the purpose of your marriage?

### A God-Given Gift

"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).

This verse is one of the first verses in the Bible that speaks of the sacrament of marriage. In it we learn that it was God who decided that it was good for Adam to have a partner. Someone to be his helper, to stand beside him as a companion. Eve was God's gift to Adam.

This principle is seen a number of times in Scripture. Through couples like Isaac and Rebekah, Solomon and the Shulamite woman, we see God bringing couples together as gifts to one another.

The same is true today. Your partner is one of God's gifts to you. You are not together because of a choice your parents made, or just because you happen to bump into each other at the altar, but rather you are together because God joined you together.

Therefore, because your partner is God's gift to you, you need to respond to God with a thankful heart. How often do you thank God for your partner? And I do not mean just a quick "thank you" whenever you remember to during your prayer time, but a sincere, heart-felt appreciation to God. Giving Him the glory for His gift and His guidance in bringing you together in the first place.

Our marriages are meant to give glory to God. Not only through our thankfulness already mentioned, but also through other aspects that I will deal with shortly. This then is the first purpose we have in our marriages, to bring glory to God.

### A Profound Mystery

"For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

We have all heard these words before, but there is more to it than that which is generally taught – leaving and cleaving.

It is not until Paul in the New Testament, when God's saving purposes for man have been fully revealed, that the true mystery behind these words is fully understood.

"For this reason, a man shall leave his

father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31-32).

To begin with, we first need to understand by what Paul means by the word "mystery." He uses it a number of times in his letters, but never does it mean something that can not be understood. Instead, he uses it to refer to a particular truth that for a time was hidden from man, but has now its meaning has been revealed.

Therefore, in light of the text above, we understand that Paul here is explaining the mystery that human marriage, which he has been discussing since verse 22, is meant to be a reflection of the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church.

Think about that for a few minutes. God is wanting us, in our marriages, to reflect the relationship that Christ has with His church.

That is truly a profound purpose. It seems rather daunting to us in a way, for no human being, because of their sinful nature, could ever match the standard of Christ's relationship to the church, yet that is the standard we are called to work towards in our marriages.

How about your marriage? Are you striving to have a relationship that is a testimony to others about how Christ loves the church? Is your desire as husband and wife to be the best representation that you can be?

### Other Purposes

There are a few other purposes for marriage taught in Scripture. Purposes that you will hear about in seminars and read about in marriage books. They are all common knowledge so I will not go into great detail on them, but give you a brief overview and reminder of each.

Firstly, we learn from Genesis 2:18 that marriage is about companionship. God does not desire men to be alone, but to be in relationship to a woman. Though there are men out there who do not desire to be married, it is an exception. In fact, as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 7:7, it is a rather unique gift from God. One which most men will never receive.

But companionship is not just about having someone by your side to be with you, but it carries with it some responsibilities. For example, involving your partner in as many activities as possible, developing common interests, understanding each other, caring for each others' needs, sharing burdens and treating each other differently to what you would anybody else.

Also from verse 18 we see that the woman was created to be a "helper" to the man. As you read on in the text, you see God bringing all the animals to Adam for him to find a suitable partner, but none was found. Therefore God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. Eve was unique from all the animals. None of them were right to be

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Adam's true helper. Each had their own unique purpose that could of helped Adam in one way or the other, but none could offer true companionship and assistance to him.

In Genesis 1:27-28 we learn of another purpose of marriage, procreation. Here God commands Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply." They are to fill the earth. It is here and in Genesis 2:24 that we learn about the physical union between man and woman that is part of the purpose of marriage. I am sure nothing more needs to be mentioned here.

**Marriage is meant to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church**

When you look at each of these three purposes, there is a common thread that binds them all; each one is unique to marriage. No other person on earth is able to provide for you in a way that marriage does. No other person can truly be the companion that a marriage partner can be. No other can truly be your helper. And certainly no other can be as physically satisfying as your mate.

### Two Pivotal Purposes

After looking at all of the purposes mentioned above, I believe that if you get the first two right, glorifying God and reflecting Christ's relationship with the church, the rest will fall naturally into place.

When those two are your focus, you will automatically want to express love to your partner like Christ did the church. You will want to be with them, communicate with them, share their burdens, even die for them.

Though all that I have mentioned here may seem like a daunting task, it is certainly not impossible. When Jesus went back to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen the church with their relationship to Him. That same Holy Spirit is here to help you in terms of your relationship with your spouse.

Seek God's help today that through your marriage, you will bring glory to Him and be the best picture you possibly can be of Christ's relationship with the church! †

## REVIVE YOUR MARRIAGE

### *The Love Dare* by Stephen & Alex Kendrick

Divorce rates around the world are on the increase. Even within the church. But there is hope.

Designed to bring your focus within your marriage back on to your spouse, *The Love Dare* is a 40-day devotional that challenges and teaches couples about the nature of true love.

Each day's challenge includes Scripture, space to make notes and a progress chart.

Featured in the popular movie, *Fireproof*.



**How often do you thank God for your partner?**

# THE BACK PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Complete the verses below from the book of Habakkuk. All verses are from the NIV.

### ACROSS

- 1 "I will be joyful in God my \_\_\_\_" (3:18)
- 6 "How long, O Lord, must I \_\_\_\_ for help?" (1:2)
- 8 "I am \_\_\_\_ up the Babylonians" (1:6)
- 9 "His \_\_\_\_ covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth" (3:3)
- 10 "Why do You tolerate \_\_\_\_?" (1:3)
- 12 "You have made men like \_\_\_\_ in the sea" (1:14)
- 15 "Yet I will \_\_\_\_ in the Lord" (3:18)
- 16 "I stand in \_\_\_\_ of Your deeds" (3:2)
- 17 "Therefore the \_\_\_\_ is paralysed" (1:4)
- 18 "I will \_\_\_\_ at my watch" (2:1)
- 20 "His splendour was like the \_\_\_\_" (3:4)
- 21 "My God, my \_\_\_\_ One, we will not die" (1:12)
- 23 "Woe to him who \_\_\_\_ a city with bloodshed" (2:12)
- 25 "They promote their own \_\_\_\_" (1:7)
- 27 "Woe to him who piles up \_\_\_\_ goods" (2:6)
- 30 Their \_\_\_\_ are swifter than leopards" (1:8)
- 32 "A \_\_\_\_ of Habakkuk the prophet" (3:1)
- 33 "His ways are \_\_\_\_" (3:6)

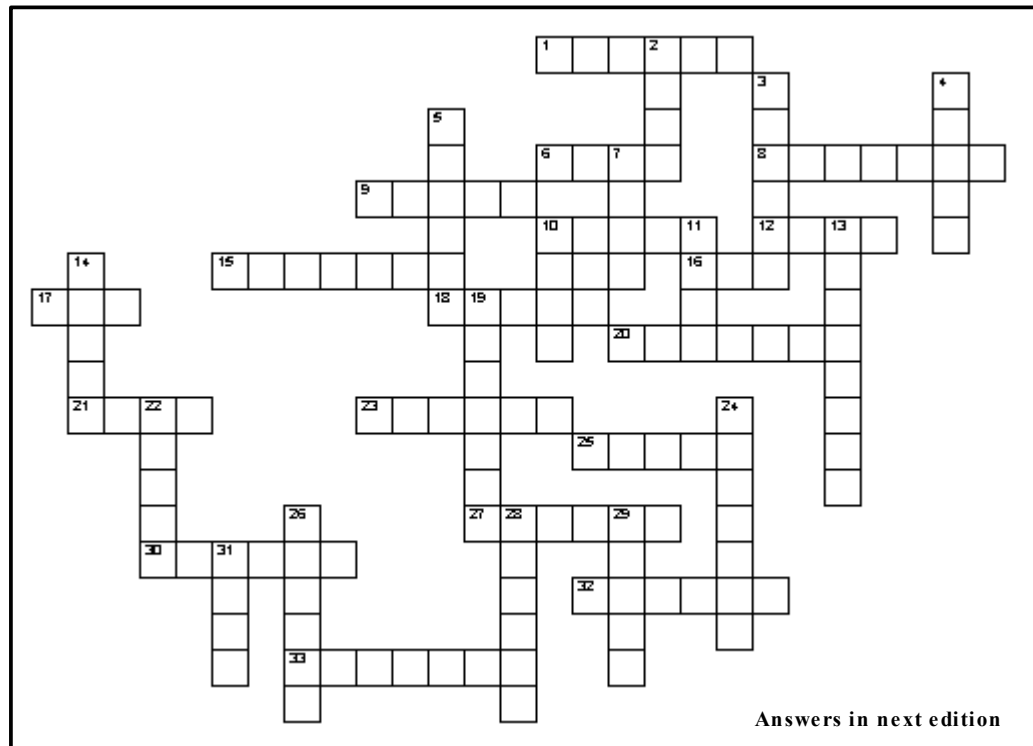
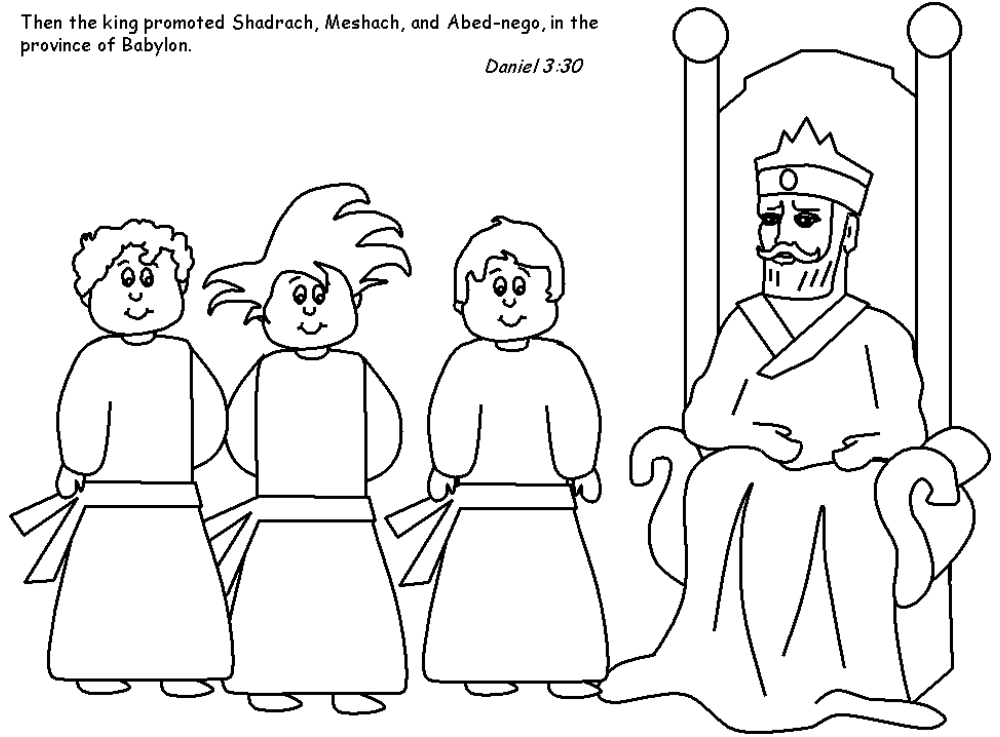
### DOWN

- 2 "Of what value is an \_\_\_\_" (2:18)
- 3 "There is \_\_\_\_, and conflict abounds" (1:3)
- 4 "They deride \_\_\_\_" (1:10)
- 5 "The \_\_\_\_ of the wall will cry out" (2:11)
- 7 "Why do you make me \_\_\_\_ at injustice?" (1:3)
- 10 "Their hordes advance like a desert \_\_\_\_" (1:9)
- 11 "Woe to him who build his realm by unjust \_\_\_\_" (2:9)
- 13 "The Sovereign Lord is my \_\_\_\_" (3:19)
- 14 "But the righteous will live by his \_\_\_\_" (2:4)
- 19 "Write down the revelation and make it plain on \_\_\_\_" (2:2)
- 22 "They \_\_\_\_ at all fortified cities" (1:10)
- 24 "The oracle that Habakkuk the \_\_\_\_ received" (1:1)
- 26 "They are a \_\_\_\_ and dreaded people" (1:7)
- 28 "But the Lord is in His holy \_\_\_\_" (2:20)
- 29 "For the \_\_\_\_ will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (2:14)
- 31 "O \_\_\_\_, You have ordained them to punish" (1:12)

## COLOUR US IN

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:30



Answers in next edition

Last Month's Answers  
 Across: 1. Scarlet 4. Women 5. Assyria 9. Good 11. River 13. You 15. Anger 17. Nobles 20. Jealous 21. Water 22. Knees  
 Down: 2. Command 3. Chariot 6. Dries 7. Den 8. Thebes 9. Gold 10. Oracle 12. Locusts 14. Fortresses 16. Guards 18. Quake 19. Sword 20. Jacob 21. Woe 23. Skirts 25. Pelt 27. Idols  
 24. Strip 26. Fire 28. Flee 29. Pool 30. Drunk 31. Festivals

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