

# The Position of Strength

## Part I

### Habakkuk 3

Most, if not all of us, undergo the rollercoaster-like experiences of the highs and lows of life. Like it or not, admit it or not, we each have that internal barometer that measures our reactions and responses to circumstances we often have little or no control over. Our sense of well-being, security, and strength are usually aroused when the events of the day seem to fit our expectations and plans. In contrast, when we encounter a tragedy, loss of job, the critical illness of a friend or family member, the rejection of a mate, a feeling of disconnectedness from a parent, or the isolation from a group of friends, that sense of well-being turns to loneliness; security drops us into insecurity, and strength dissolves into weakness and often hopelessness.

In our present downturn in the economy, facing an alarming number of questions regarding healthcare, and with increasing tensions and conflict in a shrinking world, the rollercoaster of experience seems to have more downs than ups. The effects are more than predicable; they are real. They are as real as a heavy cloud with the potential of producing a devastating storm.

As expected, our culture has developed a way to cope with these times. 40 years ago it was called the “Power of Positive Thinking.” Then there were the catch phrases, “Pull yourself up by your bootstraps,” “Get with it!” “Get over it,” and more recently “Suck it up.” Even in Christian circles we have our own terminology, “You just need to trust Jesus,” “All things work together for good,” “God’s got a plan,” “It’s just a test,” and of course we all know we just have to have “an Eternal Perspective.”

All these phrases have their place. The Christian phrases are biblical and vital in the context in which they are written, but are we missing something?

There is a more contemporary term that may have more significance than we would first think. It’s very secular and cultural, yet has more depth than these other phrases. It’s called “The Position of Strength.” As one would expect, it focuses on personal attributes to overpower the challenge of the circumstances in war, economics, professional choices, athletics, and so on.

From a biblical and very practical perspective, “The Position of Strength” has as its core something much different and unimaginably more powerful. It is a mindset and a choice that flies in the face of reason, natural response, and culture itself. This *conviction* and act of the will stands in stark contrast to the teaching and magnetism of most churches today. But—it is a biblical truth that must be taught. A truth (which if applied) takes us off the emotional rollercoaster and positions us to experience the joy, peace, and exultation that come only from the omnipotent strength of God Himself.

### Life Response

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on Psalm 73:25-26, “*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*”
  - (a) What does this passage reflect regarding humility and dependence?
  - (b) To what extent do you truly believe “. . . besides You, I desire nothing on earth” and the what extent is “God (*alone*). . . the strength of my heart and my portion forever”?
  - (c) Upon what do you depend for your security and well-being beyond God and to what extent?
2. What is your concept of fear? How does it parallel that of Habakkuk’s? What impact does a biblical understanding of fear have in your humility, prayer life, and sense of security?
3. Through the use of your concordance, trace words like fear, awe, wrath, etc. and write out the references of each passage found. How do these references define “fear” and what effect does it have on your life?

4. What step(s) can you take now to position yourself through personal conviction to depend solely upon the faithfulness and power of God to *rejoice* and *exult* in the midst of your conflicted world?

*... for we cannot from the heart seek pardon, unless we first be made humble. When a sinner is not displeased with himself, and confesses not his guilt, he is not deserving of mercy.” - John Calvin*

### **What Happens When Our World Begins to Fall Apart?**

Chapter 1 Does God know or even care about what is going on in my conflicted world?

Chapter 2 What is my basis for confidence/security/stability as I face my conflicted world?

Chapter 3 How do I position myself to rejoice or exult in the midst of my conflicted world?

### **The Atmosphere of Chapter 3**

A culmination of frustration, exhaustion, feeling overwhelmed in circumstances beyond ones control.

#### **Must be from a position of personal conviction:**

Recognition of disintegration caused by complacency.

Principle: When I become complacent and careless in my walk – there are consequences.

#### **Must be from a position of personal humility:**

Habakkuk – *“I have heard the report”*

*“Lord I get it”*

What did Habakkuk hear?

The consequences of sin.

What was the effect of what Habakkuk heard?

Fear

Wrath    Consequences

Awe     Grace

#### **Must be from a position of personal responsibility:**

Two Requests –

- Revive Your work.
- Remember Your mercy.

#### **Must be based upon the faithfulness of God:**

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

1 Thess. 5:24

