



An Experiment in Lament

Step 1: Examine your life

What prevents you from engaging the spiritual practice of lament?

- What false ideas might you hold?
- What fears or concerns do you have?
- What obstacles stand in your way?

Step 2: Explore patterns & root causes

In what ways have you distracted yourself from, suppressed, or numbed your painful emotions rather than bringing them to God?

- Is your tendency to avoid or suppress painful emotions? If so, what activities or thought processes do you use to distract yourself?
- Is your tendency to numb painful emotions? If so, what activities or thought processes do you use to make yourself feel better?

Step 3: Imagine the life that is possible

What might it look like to walk with God in your sorrow, to experience God's presence in the midst of your lament? How might you grow closer to God? How might it transform you?

Step 4: Design your experiment

Looking at your responses to step 2, what might you fast from to make room to experience God's presence in the practice of lament?

Writing a psalm of lament

There is a general pattern of lament in the book of Psalms. While individual psalms of lament may include different elements, the majority include the four movements below. As we practice lament in this season, let's follow the pattern of the Psalms. You may choose language that is formal or casual. As you write, do not censor your emotions. Trust that God is good enough and loving enough to hear and hold your pain.

Address to God

To you, O Lord, I call; My rock, do not be deaf to me. (Psalm 28)

How long, O Lord (Psalm 13)

O Lord, God of vengeance, let your glorious justice shine forth! (Psalm 94)

Cry out to God. Name the one to whom you pray. To which characteristic of God are you appealing?

Complaint

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? (Psalm 22)

Arrogant men have risen up against me. A band of violent men have sought my life. (Psalm 86)

I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears. I drench my couch with my weeping. (Psalm 6)

Name your complaint. Pour out the pain, anger, or heartache you need to express.

Petition/Request

Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love (Psalm 6)

Lead me and guide me. Pull me from the net which they have secretly laid for me. (Psalm 31)

Bring me out of my distress. Look upon my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25)

What do you desire most from God? What do you need or want to see happen?

Assurance of being heard

The Lord has heard my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea, the Lord will answer my prayer. (Psalm 6)

I have trusted in your lovingkindness. My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. (Psalm 13)

May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. (Psalm 25)

Express your trust in God. If trust is hard, acknowledge that God is listening.