LAMENT

Lament isn't merely expressing our pain. It's bringing our pain into our relationship with God.

Why Lament?

Lament is a vital part of our prayer, worship, and relationship with God. Biblical lament provides a pathway for drawing near to God as we work through the brokenness of this world.

Grief often begins in the gap between what I long for and what is.

WHAT I LONG FOR	THE GAP	WHAT IS
What I desire things to be		What I am experiencing
What I hoped would happen		What has actually happened
What I believe could or should be		What is reality
		When life circumstances feel like an assault on God's goodness

What do we do with the gap?

As humans we have a tendency to suppress our pain or to focus on our disappointment in a way that fuels bitterness, grumbling, and discontent. Biblical lament takes the brokenness seriously, but acknowledges God's character and invites God to work in us and in our circumstances.

STUFF IT / DENY IT

"I'm a Christian. I should feel joyful. I shouldn't feel this way."

Ignore, minimize, or suppress the grief instead of bringing it honestly to God.

VENT HORIZONTALLY

Talk about my pain with others, essentially complaining about God, but never bringing God into it.

I listen to my own thoughts on the matter, create a narrative to explain it, and leave God out of the conversation.

BIBLICAL LAMENT

Invite Jesus into my pain. Bring Him my unedited feelings, questions, needs, and desires.

Lament invites God into the conversation and makes room for Him to speak into what I am experiencing.

We often want to jump straight from our grief to experiencing hope—without going through the necessary process of lament. But lamenting helps us address the brokenness in and around us honestly with the Lord as we move towards hope. Lament does not necessarily make grief disappear. It keeps our grief in relationship with God rather than allowing pain to quietly form false conclusions about Him. Jesus does not simply lead us out of grief. He meets us in it.



Features of biblical lament

POUR OUT

Bring God what is actually there: your feelings, fears, questions, needs, desires, and disappointment.

"Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge." Psalm 62:8 NLT

Not because everything I feel is true, but because I am telling the truth about what I am thinking and feeling.

Ask "why?" with a seeking heart, not a clenched fist.

REMEMBER

How has God shown Himself to be faithful to me in the past? What does God's Word say about who He is? What truths is He reminding me of right now?

"But then I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago." Psalm 77:11 NLT

I let what I know to be true speak into what I currently feel.

RESPOND

If I were confident this is true, how would I respond?

Trust.

Praise.

Obey.

Wait.

"But I trust in your unfailing love." Psalm 13:5 NLT

Lament is a practice, not a formula.

These movements do not always happen neatly or all at once. Sometimes, like Psalm 88, faith simply keeps talking to God in the dark.

Take note of the patterns we see in these laments.

PSALM 13 · PSALM 22 · PSALM 42 · PSALM 43 · PSALM 77 · LAMENTATIONS 3

Notice when the author is pouring out his feelings, remembering who God is and what is true, and responding in praise or trust.

For more resources on Lament, visit grace.sc/lamentresource