

The Advantage of Lament

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Your Grief Guide

Lamenting is natural, a passionate expression of sorrow. We express ourselves through praise; we can express ourselves through lament. When our hearts are filled with thankfulness, we give thanks. When our hearts are filled with pain, we can turn to God in lamentation.

There is no need to “pretty this up” for God, we can come before Him raw and with our real feelings.

The word Advantage means to put one in a favorable position. We believe is an advantage to Lament and can be a favorable position as opposed to a dreaded one.

Our approach: Hey God, you there? How do you personally address God? This is a deeply personal and intimate calling out to God.

Psalm 13:2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

In this verse we hear David honestly expressing lament to God. It is a healthy practice to express questions and wail out to God seeking deliverance

Journal prompts: What words do you use to address God when you pray? Has lament been a part of your grieving now or in the past?

Our Anguish: There are no words to explain the pain and hurt. Our anguish is often wordless prayers of crying out to God. God knows what is in our hearts and we do not need to, nor can we cover it up and keep it from Him. So, this is honest talk. This is the part that our culture is uncomfortable with, we want people to be “fine”. We tend to keep our anguish hidden.

Jonah 2:2 “in my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.”

In this passage we know that Jonah is deep in the sea, in the belly of a whale. We could think that his cries could not be heard.... But God heard! Our deep is not too far gone, our pain is not out of His reach.

Journal prompts: How did you feel about God when the pain occurred? What is your level of honesty with God when it comes to your pain?

Our Anger: Fear, protest, and anger are often forbidden emotions. They are the ugly ones, but are they not given by God just as our prettier emotions, like joy, happiness and gratitude? Yes, God says we will have the ugly ones too.

Eph. 4:26-27 “in your anger, do not sin”; do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

We learn here that anger is not bad, it is what we do with it that matters. Would not laying your anger right out before God be the answer? We can scream “WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME? WHAT

AM I GOING TO DO NOW?" Lament is a controlled avenue to give our anger to God and free our hearts from its hold on us.

Journal prompts: What do you want God to do? What posture have you taken before God? What parts of your pain make you angry? What fears have you been holding back from God?

Our Anchor: How has God been faithful? Where have you seen His power? How has His wisdom and love been revealed to you? Your answer to those questions, along with Scripture, is evidence that we can anchor ourselves in God. We can trust Him and take Him at His word.

Psalms 13:5 "But I trust in your unfailing love; My heart rejoices in your salvation."

Trusting is hard. But this is not trusting in us but trusting the One whose love never fails and trusting the work of the cross. Even when we hurt, even when we don't feel like it, we can trust God's faithfulness

Journal prompts: What part of trust is hard for you? Have you ever made a lament list and reviewed it? Begin one today, look back in 6 months and see how God acted and record that for future reference

Our Always present HOPE: Every lament ends with an "but", "even though", or "yet" statement. Where will we end? We can end with our fingers crossed and dream of the best ending...OR we can put our HOPE in Lord and know that our cries have been heard. We cannot erase the hurt, our pain, anger, but we can trust His faithfulness and wait on Him. He will heal us, free us, save us, comfort us and protect us. We call on the exact characteristics of God in times of need that we praise Him for in times of thanks.

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior, My God will hear me.

We too can express a firm commitment to watch for HOPE despite our circumstances. This final component can be the most difficult and the most precious part of our surrendering our pain....to trust and wait on our Savior, our HOPE.

Wherever you are in your lamenting, it is okay, stay as long as you need. May this lament advantage give you encouragement to know that we can cry out, be heard, be comforted, and confident that God will provide.

Journal prompts: How has God been faithful to you in the past? Where do you see HOPE? Can you identify any "yet" circumstances in your pain?