

ENGAGE WITH GOD THROUGH PRAYER

An Abiding Practice Resource



EXPRESS YOURSELF TO GOD THROUGH LAMENT

Lament is a prayer of grief, sorrow, or distress expressed toward God. It's a biblical way to acknowledge our pain, express our honest emotions, seek comfort and hope from God, and renew our focus on God's faithfulness amid suffering.

"Christianity can handle real life and all its difficulties."

Why Practice Lament?

The Western Church has largely lost this vital aspect of prayer. It provides a biblical model for pouring out our hearts to God. It acknowledges that our circumstances may or may not change. It reminds us that to cry out is human, but to lament is distinctly Christian. It demonstrates our belief in a sovereign God.

Four-Part Structure of Biblical Lament

"To lament is to believe in a sovereign God."

1. TURN

- Turn away from your circumstances
- Turn away from worldly answers
- Turn toward God
- Take your eyes from the dangers and fix them on God

2. COMPLAIN

- Express your honest feelings to God
- Voice your questions and confusion
- Pour out your grief, fear, and anxiety
- Acknowledge when you don't understand God's ways
- Don't bottle up, suppress, or deny your pain

3. ASK

- Make your requests boldly to God
- Ask when He will step in
- Seek answers to your questions
- Present your desires for resolution

4. TRUST

- Wait for God's response
- Remember God's sovereignty
- Hold onto hope that God will accomplish His will
- Trust in God's character even when circumstances don't change

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: HABAKKUK'S LAMENT

TURN

"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear?" (Habakkuk 1:2).

- Habakkuk turns to God in his confusion.

COMPLAIN

"Why do you make me see iniquity and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me." (Habakkuk 1:3)

- Habakkuk honestly expresses his distress about the injustice around him.
- He questions why God seems silent and inactive.

ASK

- Habakkuk asks if the devastation will continue and when God will step in.

TRUST

"I will take my stand... and if it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. It will not delay." (Habakkuk 2:1, 3).

- Habakkuk chooses to wait for God's answer.
- He acknowledges God's sovereignty and timing.

PRACTICE: OUTLINING PSALM 13

13 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I take counsel in my soul

and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

4 lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love;

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the Lord,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

OUTLINE PSALM 13	
1. TURN	3. ASK
2. COMPLAIN	4. TRUST

PRACTICE: WRITING YOUR LAMENT

TURN

- Begin by addressing God directly.
- Write a simple statement turning your attention to Him.
- Example: "O Lord, I turn to you in my distress..."

COMPLAIN

- What struggles are you facing?
- What doesn't make sense to you?
- What pain are you experiencing? Be honest about your feelings.
- Example: "Why does this illness persist? Where are you in my suffering?"

ASK

- What do you need from God?
- What questions do you have?
- What resolution do you seek?
- Example: "How long must I endure this? Please bring healing and peace."

TRUST

- Express your decision to trust God despite circumstances.
- Recall God's character and past faithfulness.
- State your commitment to wait on Him.
- Example: "Yet I will wait for your answer. I trust in your unfailing love."

"We don't always know what the Lord is doing. We don't always understand it."

WRITE A PERSONAL LAMENT	
1. TURN	3. ASK
2. COMPLAIN	4. TRUST