

Known Ministries
Real Life Discipleship Counseling Class
Bonus Content Between Lesson 2 & 3: Lament

I. What is Lament?

A. Introduction

1. “Please, God, no more yelling, no more trips to the woodshed. Treat me nice for a change; I am so starved for affection.”
2. “Can't you see I'm black and blue, beat up badly in bones and soul? God, how long will it take for you to let up?”
3. “ God, are you avoiding me? Where are you when I need you? Long enough, God- you've ignored me long enough. I've looked at the back of your head long enough.”

B. Lament versus Complaint

1. “In a lament, you're talking *to* God, not *about* God—implying that you *still trust* God. God's response to grumbling in Numbers is opening the ground underneath the Israelites. Lament, to be safe, should be done in the context of worship. Theologian Tremper Longman.
2. Paul Miller says, “Lament connects two “hot” wires-God's promises and the problem.”

C. Why Lament?

1. **Life is Hard. Where do we go?**
 - a) We lament because we sin
 - b) We lament because we suffer
 - c) We lament because if we don't we go to other gods
 - d) Curt Thomspson says we begin to “collect an entire library of “small” emotional losses that we keep burying... yet have to burn energy to contain, and then wonder why we're so tired, irritable, and eventually even depressed, not wanting to get out of bed, unable to find the energy to create beauty and goodness in the places we are dwelling”
2. **Lament takes us to One True Savior.**
 - a) To connect our hearts to God
 - b) To make a place for gratitude

II. **How do I lament?** “You will never rebuild the broken down walls of your heart (or others), until you first weep and mourn over the ruins.”

A. Start with the Psalms

B. Choose a Psalm and rewrite it in your own words

1. Read the whole Psalm at one time and rewrite either a portion or the whole thing.
2. Put each thought into your own words and experiences
3. Personalize the psalm by using first person pronouns and by making the ideas relate to your life (You might not have literal armies surrounding you like David did, but what are your enemies: fear? anger? despair?)
4. Don't overthink this. Use the Psalm as a prompt to get you thinking. If you come to a part you don't understand, skip it.
5. Here is one that our friend struggling with an enslaving sin wrote from Psalm 130:

<p>Psalm 130 <i>1</i>Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; <i>2</i>Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. <i>3</i>If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? <i>4</i>But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. <i>5</i>I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. <i>6</i>I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. <i>7</i>Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. <i>8</i>He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.</p>	<p>Psalm 130 Rewrite From the dark, dry desert I look for you but cannot see you through the clouds. Can you see me even when I can't see you? Can you hear me even when I can't hear you? Will you offer me mercy even when I have no words to ask for it?</p> <p>Lord, if you held me accountable for all my wrongdoings, I would be nothing but dust. Although I don't deserve it nor do I accept it most of the time, I stand in awe that you grant forgiveness of sins to a person like me.</p> <p>In the darkness I wait for you, Lord. Through the long darkness, I wait and I put my hope in the Lord until the dawn will once again break through the clouds.</p> <p>I must trust that if I keep my hope in You, Your everlasting love will redeem me from the darkness and will redeem me from all my sins that cannot be redeemed otherwise.</p>
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C. Choose a Psalm using the Lament components. While psalms of lament share a number of common elements, but these three are the most common: ¹ Here is a pattern to write your lament:

1. **Cry out in Candor:** Address God intimately. Pour out your heart to God. Don't try to clean up your mess. Don't try to figure it out. Don't pretend it's better than it is. Go to Him in all the mess. Use adjectives, metaphors, and descriptions. "My tears are my food day and night."
2. **Ask for Help.** Tell Him what you desire. Ask for help with your unbelief.
3. **Respond in Trust and Praise**
 - a) Reorient to the truth. Remind yourself of God's character and His faithfulness to you
 - b) How will you give thanks? Who will you tell?
4. Here is an example of a friend of mine going through a contentious divorce and custody battle.

Psalm 13	
<p>Cry Out: <i>1How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?</i></p> <p>Ask For Help: <i>3Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, 4and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.</i></p>	<p>How long, O LORD? How long must I endure the lies of my husband and children and other people? How long will you allow him to brainwash our children into thinking I have abandoned them, that I am selfish and ungodly and unfit as a mother? How long will you allow a legal system to treat the important matters of life as just another job? How long do I have to live in fear, wondering what my husband's next move or lie will be? Wondering what others think of me? How long do I have to suffer the effects of living with an abusive man for 27 years – when will I be free of his condemning thoughts?</p> <p>O Lord, answer my pleas for mercy and justice. Vindicate me to others and reveal to them who my husband really is, lest people believe his lies and I die in shame. Rescue my children and show them the truth. Stop the gossip and slander. Bring my husband to repentance. Remind me</p>

¹ <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/way-lament/>

<p>Respond in Trust and Praise: <i>5But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. 6I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.</i></p>	<p>that my hope is not in man or man's ways – but in You alone.</p> <p>Your Word says you hear the voice of the afflicted, you listen to the cries of the oppressed, you incline your heart to those who fear you and put their trust in You. Once again I will CHOOSE to trust you....to meditate on your unfailing love and your faithfulness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 churches and two pastors who have stood behind me and other godly counselors. • A forgiving and generous family who love me and want to support me. • A good job that is allowing me to take care of myself financially. • A competent attorney and judge who seems to understand coercive control and parental alienation. • THAT because of Jesus, my suffering is momentary compared to the eternal blessing I will experience when this life is over. • ETC. (She had 15 items on this list!)
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D. Write your own psalm

1. Here is one that Brenda wrote: *“Lord, there is no one like you to help me and my family so I am crying out to you. My heart is extraordinarily heavy for my son. I’m sad and scared for him. You know his horrible circumstances right now. They didn’t catch you off guard or by surprise. This seems impossible and hopeless but both of those words are not in your vocabulary. My God is able! You are my son’s Advocate! You are my Advocate! You are my Comforter and Counselor! You are a way maker. Send your heavenly warriors to my son. I have no strength and I need your help with my son. He’s your son too. I love you, Lord.”*

E. Use Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

Psalms by Topic

When you feel....

Afraid: 3; 4; 46; 49; 56; 91; 118
 Alone: 9; 10; 12; 13; 27; 40; 43

Overwhelmed: 25; 69; 142
 Penitent/Sorry: 32; 51; 66

“Burned out”: 6; 63
Cheated: 41
Confused: 10; 12; 73
Depressed: 27; 34; 42; 43; 88; 143
Distressed: 13; 25; 31; 40; 107
Elated: 19; 96
Guilty: 19; 32; 38; 51
Hateful: 11
Impatient: 13; 27; 37; 40
Insecure: 3; 5; 12; 91
Insulted: 41; 70
Jealous: 37
Like Quitting: 29; 43; 145
Lost: 23; 139

When you're facing....

Atheists: 10; 14; 19; 52; 53; 115
Competition: 133
Criticism: 35; 56; 120
Danger: 11
Death: 6; 71; 90
Decisions: 1; 119
Discrimination: 54
Doubts: 34; 37; 94
Evil People: 10; 35; 36; 49; 52; 109; 140
Enemies: 3; 25; 35; 41; 56; 59
Heresy: 14
Hypocrisy: 26; 28; 40; 50
Illness: 6; 139

When you want....

Acceptance: 139
Answers: 4; 17
Confidence: 46; 71
Courage: 11; 42
Fellowship with God: 5; 16; 25; 27; 37; 133
Forgiveness: 32; 38; 40; 51; 69; 86; 103; 130
Friendship: 16
Godliness: 15; 25
Guidance: 1; 5; 15; 19; 25; 32; 48

Healing: 6; 41
Hope: 16; 17; 18; 23; 27
Humility: 19; 147
Illumination: 19
Integrity: 24; 25
Joy: 9; 16; 28; 126

Proud: 14; 30; 49
Purposeless: 14; 25; 39; 49; 90
Sad: 13
Self-confident: 24
Tense: 4
Thankful: 118; 136; 138
Threatened: 3; 11; 17
Tired/Weak: 6; 13; 18; 28; 29; 40; 86
Trapped: 7; 17; 42; 88; 142
Unimportant: 8; 90; 139
Vengeful: 3; 7; 109
Worried: 37
Worshipful: 8; 19; 27; 29; 150

Lies: 5; 12; 120

Old Age: 71; 92
Persecution: 1; 3; 7; 56
Poverty: 9; 10; 12
Punishment: 6; 38; 39
Slander/Insults: 7; 15; 35; 43; 120
Slaughter: 6; 46; 83
Sorrow: 23; 34
Success: 18; 112; 127; 128
Temptation: 38; 141
Troubles: 34; 55; 86; 102; 142; 145
Verbal Cruelty: 35; 120

Justice: 2; 7; 14; 26; 37; 29; 58; 82
Knowledge: 2; 8; 18; 19; 25; 29; 97; 103
Leadership: 72
Miracles: 60; 11
Money: 15; 16; 17; 49
Peace: 3; 4
Perspective: 2; 11
Prayer: 5; 17; 27; 61
Protection: 3; 4; 7; 16; 17; 18; 23; 27; 31; 91;
121; 125
Provision: 23
Rest: 23; 27
Salvation: 26; 37; 49; 126
Stability: 11; 33; 46
Vindication: 9; 14; 28; 35; 109
Wisdom: 1; 16; 19; 64; 111

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