



This is not to be thought of as homework. These exercises are simply to help facilitate space in your life for you to meet with God in your lament. If at any point, you need to pause or take more time on one question or exercise than you do on another, feel free to do so. The goal is not completion the goal is worship.

**Lament is worship**

**Lament is praise**

“Lament is not despair. It is not whining. It is not a cry into a void. Lament is a cry directed to God. It is the cry of those who see the truth of the world's deep wounds and the cost of seeking peace. It is the prayer of those who are deeply disturbed by the way things are... “ -Reconciling All Things, p. 78

“It seems to me that we do not need to be taught how to lament since we have so many models in Scripture. What we need is simply the assurance that it's okay to lament. We all carry deep within ourselves a pressurized reservoir of tears. It takes only the right key at the right time to unlock them. In God's perfect time, these tears can be released to form a healing flood. That's the beauty and the mystery of the prayer of lament.” - Michael Card

“If you are in mourning, you have the opportunity to worship in the most powerful way possible: lamentation. This worship isn't done in order to have God remove the pain. It simply recognizes that God stands in the moment with us. Lamentation elevates God in the presence of our enemies. It brings out a side of God that other forms of worship simply cannot touch.”  
- Graham Cooke

### Writing your own psalm of lament:

1. Taking the basic shape of a lament psalm as your pattern, write your own lament psalm. Complaint, Petition, Resolution.
2. Choose whether you wish to write an individual lament or a communal lament. Perhaps you have something in your life you need to lament, or perhaps you don't. Communal lament is for the pain and suffering we see in our world around us, it means lamenting on another's behalf. Perhaps you want to lament human trafficking, global warming/natural disasters, wars, famine, sin etc.
3. Keep your phrases/lines succinct; no long sentences, no wordy phrasings.
4. Be specific and concrete in your statements, rather than abstract and idiosyncratic.
5. Choose evocative imagery or metaphors that will help you see what you're praying.
6. Take advantage of the unique devices of Hebrew poetry such as the vav adversative.
7. Title your psalm.
8. Share it with a friend (if you feel comfortable). Please bring it with you to our study, if you feel comfortable, you will be welcome to share your psalm with us.

For those wanting more structure, guidance, examples. The following may help you churn some ideas for writing your own lament;

What ending(s)/death(s) or loss(es) do I need to grieve?

#### *Examples of endings/deaths and losses*

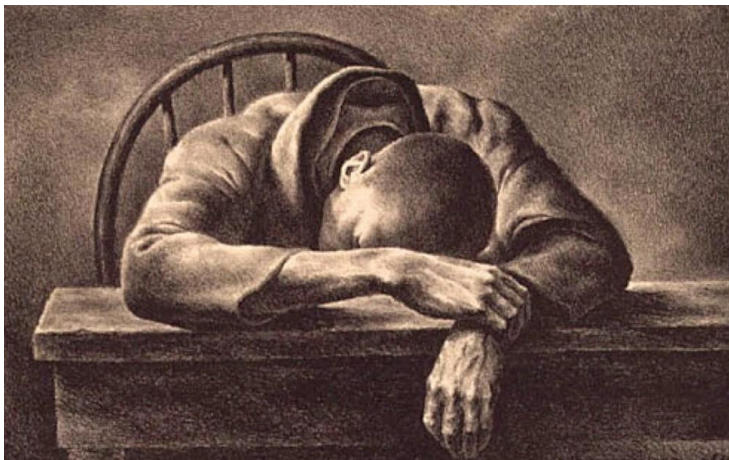
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a loved one</i>          | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Relationship status</i>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a pet</i>                | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>School grade - in a different class</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a dream</i>              | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a relationship</i>             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a season of life</i>     | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Romantic</i>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Role as a parent (empty nest)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Friendship</i>                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Caring actively for children</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Death of a plan</i>                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Employment (job/role/career)</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Loss of familiarity</i>                 |

- Failure*
- Financial reversals*
- Loss of innocence*
- Loss of identity*
- Not attaining the love or approval of a significant person*
- Not being the person one wishes he or she were (loss of ideal self)*

- Not getting what we want/need*
- Not being able to relate to your parents the way you want or wish you could*
- Loss of health due to illness*
- Loss of a home due to a move, or a disaster*
- Loss of safety & sense of security*

What emotions do I feel regarding each situation I need to grieve? Name them.

- Confused*  *Doubtful*  *Helpless*  *Powerless*  *Broken*  *Traumatized*  *Distance*
- Stressed*  *Anxious*  *Faithless*  *Discontent*  *Restless*  *Manipulated*
- Harmed*  *Tempted*  *Sorrow*  *Unsafe*  *Forgiveness*
- Against*  *Defiled*  *Fearful*  *Alone*  *Blue*  *Darkness*  *Angry*  *Overwhelmed*
- Tired*  *Exhausted*  *Annoyed*  *Shocked*  *Disgust*  *Distrust*  *Joy*



## Tears of Lament

I invite you to sit in quiet meditation and prayer. The following biblical verses talk about how God views our tears.

Fill a bowl with water and place it in front of you. This is a symbolic “bowls of tears.” It is to symbolize the special way in which scripture tells us that God bottles our tears.

Read the following verses as you hold the bowl.

Psalms 56:8

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

Luke 6:21

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Revelation 7:17

for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 21:4

and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Psalms 116:7-9

Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For You have rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the LORD In the land of the living.

John 11:35

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Psalms 6:6-10

I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries. Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication, The Lord receives my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.

Lamentations 2:11

My eyes fail because of tears, my spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is poured out on the earth Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, When little ones and infants faint in the streets of the city.

Luke 23:26&27

As the soldiers led Jesus away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.

## **Burdens of Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Go for a walk and find a stone. As you hold it name something in your life that requires forgiveness and reconciliation. Whether you need to forgive or be forgiven these situations can be like heavy stones in our lives.

In quiet meditation and prayer read the following scriptures. These scriptures tell us how God forgives and reconciles us. You may receive God's forgiveness if you ask Him for it and then lay the stone back where you found it and symbolically walk away from it, knowing that it is no more in the eyes of God.

It has been removed. It has been forgiven and Jesus' death reconciles it with God.

Isaiah 43:25

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

2 Corinthians 5: 17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ephesians 1:7

In Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Hebrews 10:17

Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

Daniel 9:9

The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;

Colossians 1:13&14

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 103:12

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

**Turn the page over.**

The following scriptures tell us how we are to forgive and reconcile with one another. If there is someone you feel you would like to reconcile with, pick up a rock and name the situation.

Jesus is the God of reconciliation and we are His ministers of reconciliation. We are commanded to forgive, but we are not commanded to reconcile. Reconciliation takes willingness and forgiveness from both sides. Forgiveness should free you from the weight.

Symbolically leave the rock where you found it and walk away from it as a way of leaving the weight of forgiveness in God's hands.

Ephesians 4:31 & 32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Luke 17: 3 & 4

So watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them.

## Lighting a Candle

I invite you to sit in quiet meditation and prayer. Use a lit candle to light a smaller candle for someone as you pray for them. Or light a candle for a part of the world/a situation in our world and pray for it.

The lit candle is a symbol of God's light in the world. When we light the smaller candle, we say a prayer and invite God's love to shine in the person's life or situation. We leave the candle burning for a time as we sit quietly. Let it burn as a testament to our prayer for another person.

May the candles serve as a reminder to all who look upon that you have prayed for those that are in need and the Lord has heard your prayer and His light is shining.



## Remembering the Lament of our Savior

Gather bread and juice or wine.

I invite you to sit in quiet meditation and prayer. Read through the following verses from Isaiah and partake of communion in your lament. Dip the bread into the juice and partake in your own timing in quiet meditation and prayer.

He was despised and rejected<sup>[b]</sup> by men,  
a man of sorrows<sup>[c]</sup> and acquainted with<sup>[d]</sup> grief;<sup>[e]</sup>  
and as one from whom men hide their faces<sup>[f]</sup>  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.



## **Lament of what you cannot control**

Find a pen and piece of paper.

I invite you to sit in quiet meditation and prayer.

Here's an activity to help you meditatively pray in silence.

The key here is to allow your judgements to rest.

Put whatever comes to you onto the paper and let the paper "hold" it.

Make it easy on yourself!

Create 2 circles:

Draw one larger circle, and put a smaller circle on the inside. On the outside circle put in lines, shapes, images, representations of what you could not control today. On the inside circle, put in what you could or did control. Pray through these items as you draw, giving them prayerfully to Jesus.

Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Luke 12:22-26 "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

## **Express your lament**

Find any creative tools you can.

I invite you to sit in quiet meditation and prayer.

Here's an activity to help you meditatively pray in silence.

The key here is to allow your judgements to rest.

Put whatever comes to you onto the paper/canvas/etc and let the paper "hold" it.

Make it easy on yourself!

Make some ugly art:

Yes, there is something so incredibly freeing about making ugly art! Especially if you have had a rough day, and just need to not worry about what it looks like. Go ahead, make it as ugly as you can! How did it feel? Realize that with God there is nothing we need do to earn His acceptance. Realize that with God, He takes you as you are.

Luke 5:32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

1 John 1:8-9 "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

## Listening to a lament song

Find a quiet spot. Light a candle.

If you can, play the song "It is well with my soul"

Take some time to listen to this lament or read it below

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well, with my soul  
It is well  
With my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

**Are there words that resonated with you? Parts that you found difficult to express to God?**

