

# Lament

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**Lament:** the honest expression of our sorrows to God. It is more than just the expression of sorrow or the venting of emotion. Lament talks to God about pain. And it has a unique purpose: *trust*. It is a divinely-given invitation to pour out our fears, frustrations, and sorrows for the purpose of helping us to renew our confidence in God.

## 1. Turn to God

(Psalm 13:1; 22:1; 88:1) Not crying, grumbling, or complaining, but can be acknowledgement of God or questioning God.

## 2. Cry Out Your Complaint, Describing Your Pain and Suffering

(Psalm 13:1-2; 22:1-2; 88:6-9) This involves naming the problem being seen or experienced and expressing it vividly before God. It's a refusal to wish away suffering, stiffen our upper lip or "be strong" in the face of sin and suffering.

Psalms of lament show us that crying out our complaints with heart-wrenching honesty is not only okay—but godly. Even in the depths of the pit, the loss of a loved one, or a moment of despair—God anticipates and hears each of our cries.

## 3. Appeal for God to Hear and Respond, Asking God Boldly for Help, Dwelling on God's Faithfulness and Goodness

(Psalm 13:3-4; 88:2) The third movement is an appeal for God to hear and respond.

The grounds for this appeal is God's word; his character and his promises. As we lament, we not only express our difficulties to God, but we call upon him to hear us in our moment of need—knowing that he alone is our source of comfort, hope and help. Lament invites us to dare to hope in God's promises as we ask for his help.

## 4. Confess Your Trust and Dependence on God as Your Help and Your Hope

(Psalm 13:5; 22:22) This is the destination for our laments. All roads lead here. More than the stages of grief, this prayer language moves us to renew our commitment to trust in God as we navigate the brokenness of life.

It is a confession of trust in God acknowledges that, even if the answer to our prayer is unknown, God is trustworthy, whatever the circumstances. I say 'often' because of the three lament psalms, only two make it this far.

**Lament is the prayer language for God's people as they live in a world marred by sin. It is how we talk to God about our sorrows as we renew our hope in his sovereign care.**

*To cry is human, but to lament is Christian.*

## Psalm 13

1 How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me?  
3 Look on me and answer, LORD my God.  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.  
5 But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
6 I will sing the LORD'S praise,  
for he has been good to me.

## Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.  
3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
4 In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
5 To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.  
6 But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.  
7 All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
8 "He trusts in the LORD," they say,  
"let the LORD rescue him."  
Let him deliver him,

since he delights in him.”

9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.

10 From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

13 Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.

14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.

15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.

17 All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.

18 They divide my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garment.

19 But you, LORD, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

20 Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.

21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

22 I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.

23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

24 For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.

25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.

26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the LORD will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,

28 for dominion belongs to the LORD  
and he rules over the nations.

29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.

30 Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.

31 They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

## **Psalm 88**

1 LORD, you are the God who saves me;  
day and night I cry out to you.

2 May my prayer come before you;  
turn your ear to my cry.

3 I am overwhelmed with troubles  
and my life draws near to death.

4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit;  
I am like one without strength.

5 I am set apart with the dead,  
like the slain who lie in the grave,  
whom you remember no more,  
who are cut off from your care.

6 You have put me in the lowest pit,  
in the darkest depths.

7 Your wrath lies heavily on me;  
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.

8 You have taken from me my closest friends  
and have made me repulsive to them.  
I am confined and cannot escape;

9 my eyes are dim with grief.  
I call to you, LORD, every day;  
I spread out my hands to you.

10 Do you show your wonders to the dead?  
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?

11 Is your love declared in the grave,  
your faithfulness in Destruction?

12 Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,  
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?

13 But I cry to you for help, LORD;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

14 Why, LORD, do you reject me  
and hide your face from me?

15 From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;  
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.

16 Your wrath has swept over me;  
your terrors have destroyed me.

17 All day long they surround me like a flood;  
they have completely engulfed me.

18 You have taken from me friend and neighbor—  
darkness is my closest friend.

## Psalm 12

1 Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;  
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.

2 Everyone lies to their neighbor;  
they flatter with their lips  
but harbor deception in their hearts.

3 May the LORD silence all flattering lips  
and every boastful tongue—

4 those who say,

“By our tongues we will prevail;

our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”

5 “Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,  
I will now arise,” says the LORD.

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

6 And the words of the LORD are flawless,  
like silver purified in a crucible,  
like gold refined seven times.

7 You, LORD, will keep the needy safe  
and will protect us forever from the wicked,

8 who freely strut about  
when what is vile is honored by the human race.