

The Blessing of Lament Week 5
When We Feel Discouraged or Without Hope
John Goodale

“To lament is to take suffering seriously. To look it in the face and allow yourself to mourn because of it. And then, you take the broken pieces of your heart and lift them up to God, saying ‘Here, Lord take these pieces and make them whole again.’ Lament is an act of trust. Lament trusts that God does indeed see our suffering and will do something about it.”

Matthew Goodale

Psalm 44:9-26: A psalm without resolution—discouragement and lack of hope remain

“Sometimes we must be broken before we can return to the God we need, the God who all along has been waiting for us.”

Robert Davidson

A blueprint for lament when we’re discouraged or without hope

1. We _____ in our _____

“Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her.” Lam. 1:2b

“No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit.” Lam. 1:16b

“Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her.” Lam. 1:17a

“People have heard my groaning, but there is no one to comfort me.” Lam. 1:21a

2. We _____ what _____

“How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.” Lam. 1:1b

“All the splendor has departed from Daughter Zion.” Lam. 1:6a

“In the days of her affliction and wandering Jerusalem remembers all the treasures that were hers in days of old.” Lam. 1:7a

3. We _____ our _____

"Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are on her cheeks." Lam. 1:2a

"All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan., her young women grieve, and she is in bitter anguish." Lam. 1:4b

"All her people groan as they search for bread;" Lam. 1:11a

"My groans are many and my heart is faint." Lam. 1:22b

"I discovered . . . that I had the power to choose the direction life would head . . . I decided from that point on to walk into the darkness rather than try to outrun it, to let my experience of loss take me on a journey wherever it would lead, and to allow myself to be transformed by my suffering rather than to think I could somehow avoid it." Jerry Sittser

4. We _____ for _____

"Look, Lord, and consider: Whom have you ever treated like this? Should women eat their offspring, the children they have cared for? Should priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord?" Lam. 2:20

"Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long?" Lam. 5:20

"When you and I hurt deeply, what we really need is not an explanation from God but a revelation of God." Warren Wiersbe

5. We _____ to _____

"Look, Lord, on my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed." Lam. 1:9c

"Look, Lord, and consider, for I am despised." Lam 1:11c

"See, Lord, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart I am disturbed," Lam. 1:20a

"May you bring the day you have announced so they may become like me. Let all their wickedness come before you; deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my sins." Lam. 1:21b-22a

6. We _____ our _____

"Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean." Lam. 1:8a

"Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future." Lam. 1:9a

"My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together." Lam. 1:14a

"The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command." Lam. 1:18a

7. We _____ to a _____

"After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile." Lam. 1:3a

"Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe." Lam. 1:5a

"He has given me into the hands of those I cannot withstand." Lam. 1:14c

"The Lord has decreed for Jacob that his neighbors become his foes;" Lam. 1:17b

Reflection and Discussion

1. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being good), how has your week been, and why that score?

2. Which of these 7 steps did you find yourself resonating with the most? Why do you sense that's the case? Were any of these hard for you to relate to?

3. What conditions tend to be present in moments when you feel discouraged or without hope? What has helped you work through these difficult moments of your life, and what part—if any—has communicating with God played in this process?

Put Into Practice

1. Listen

a) Take time to listen to your heart; when have you felt inclined toward discouragement and lack of hope during this season of COVID-19?

b) What losses and limitations have you experienced, that's prompted sadness within?

c) What's been hard for you lately, that makes your heart ache today?

2. Lament

a) Tell God about the losses you find yourself grieving during this current season.

b) Share with the Lord why this has been such a difficult season for you.

c) Allow yourself to grieve these things with the Lord, through your expression of lament.

3. Lean

a) Reflect upon a time in the past when God held you up during pain and difficulty.

b) Invite the Lord to do the same during these current and future moments.

c) Identify one way you can intentionally seek to lean upon God in the week ahead.

[Outline answers]

1. We **feel alone** in our **pain**

2. We **remember** what **once was**

3. We **feel** our **emotions**

4. We **cry out** for **answers**

5. We **talk** to **God**

6. We **own** our **situation**

7. We **adjust** to a **new reality**