

# LAMENT la·ment /lə'ment/

Sometimes it feels like the world is tearing apart at the seams. Other times, the pain is more isolated: like a storm cloud over your household or just your head. What option is there for the person to whom God seems blind, disengaged or otherwise impotent. What can you do when testimonies sound empty?

The bible offers (and teaches) a solution: It's called Lament.

Lament is one of the most overlooked and underutilized gifts that God has given his people to draw close to him, experience his presence and enter into the victory that has overcome the world - our faith, even when the storms continue to rage.

I'd like to invite you to explore what lament is, examine a psalm of lament from scripture and join me in writing a lament of your own in the same model of King David's lament in Psalm 13.

## SECTION 1: WHAT IS LAMENT?

**Lament is the expression of sorrow or regret in response to what troubles us—whether caused by others or by ourselves. Biblical lament shares this same essence, but it brings that pain honestly before God, and is grounded in trust in His covenantal faithfulness.**

**Lament is the language of worship when God's people ache.** When life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's an acknowledgement to God that our soul is troubled by what [not] has been, what is [not], and about what things might become [or may never be].

**Lament is a sound of faith.** Not ignorant or untried faith- but a faith that has been filtered through the pain of life and the disappointment of unrealized expectations - but enduring, powerful and transformational faith.

**Lament is a method of worship.** Where so much of our liturgy (service of worship) can be about how we have experienced the goodness of God - lament worships God simply because he is Good, regardless of our experience with Him in a moment or season.

Where complaint talks ABOUT God and the things that trouble your soul, lament talks TO God about the things that trouble your soul.

**Lament is the product of living in a fallen world.** It's a stubborn refusal to numb our pain, deny reality, or walk away from God, His plans or His people. Instead we bring our grief, confusion, anger, and longing directly to Him.

**Lament is a bridge.** Lament is a relational tool, a bridge, to close the relational gap between man and God.

**Lament is a priestly duty.** Even as Jesus wept over us, so we may be compelled to weep over the condition of the world when we consider the condition of God's creation, and the chaos that sin has unleashed in the world.

## **SECTION 2: THE SCRIPTURAL MODEL OF LAMENT**

More than one-third of the Psalms are laments. These individual and communal songs of worship were written to God and recorded in scripture. They are cries of pain and petition TO God and simultaneously an expression of trust IN God.

That so much of the Psalms express lament means that God does not just allow for lament, but he wants to teach us HOW TO lament. One such example is found in Psalm 13.

Psalm 13 is a real man wrestling with real pain about real circumstances - it was not written as a guess at human brokenness or longing, a case study, or a fable. It was not written to us - it was written TO God as an act of worship. God has given us a sneak peak into David's prayer closet in order to build our faith through David's testimony, and also to provide a model that we can follow in our own worship.

Here, we see a heart laid bare to a God who seems far off and a man who - like the woman with the issue of blood in \_\_\_\_\_ - is determined to draw close to God: His rescuer, His healer.

Let's get to it.

In **Psalm 13:1-2** David cries out:

O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever?  
How long will you look the other way?  
2 How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,  
with sorrow in my heart every day?  
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

David does not begin with polite language; he wastes no time with religious platitudes. He begins with *pain*. He names what feels absent (God's nearness), what feels heavy (his sorrow), and what feels threatening (his enemies).

Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.

Verse 3 continues with a plea for God to turn toward Him in a way that David can understand as being God's attention, affection and blessing. He pleads that God would breath life back into his soul that desperately fading from him.

4 Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, "We have defeated him!" Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.

For as much pain is present, David does not end in despair. He ends with trust and hope:

"But I have trusted in your faithful love; my heart will rejoice in your deliverance."

He declares that most of what is, won't always be - except for the enduring love of God and God's power to deliver.

From this Psalm and the many like it, a pattern emerges - one that stands faithfully in what many call the "now and not yet" of the kingdom of God - where we are certain that full victory has been purchased, but we have yet to experience it without the present troubles of this world.

This is the pattern I would like to submit to you in order to aid you in writing your own psalm of lament:

- Name what hurts.
- Describe how it feels and acknowledge the indicator lights on the dashboard of your soul.
- Anchor your hope in God so that you can withstand the confusion turbulent space that we inhabit.
- Make a declaration of trust so your ears can hear your mouth declare what your spirit knows to be true.

## SECTION 3: WRITING YOUR OWN PSALM OF LAMENT

**This section is dedicated to helping you write your own Psalm of Lament. It breaks down the lament into its different parts and then encourages you to put it all together into a single song of worship and petition to God.**

## **PART 1: NAME WHAT HURTS**

Lament begins by telling the truth. Before God changes anything, He invites us to *name* what hurts. I've provided some categories to explore - don't feel obligated to these categories, but use them as a starting point.

Take time. Write patiently. Don't filter for appropriateness. Don't scramble for solutions.

### **Family & Relationships**

- Where do you feel relational loss, strain, betrayal, or distance?
- Are there relationships marked by unresolved conflict or grief?
- Is there loneliness you've learned to carry quietly?

**Write honestly:**

### **Finances & Work**

- Where do you feel anxiety, pressure, disappointment, or instability?
- Are you carrying fear about provision or resentment about effort vs. reward?
- Is your work draining your soul or misaligned with your values?

**Write honestly:**

### **Health (Physical, Emotional, Mental)**

- Where do you feel tired, limited, frustrated, afraid, or unsafe?
- Are there diagnoses, patterns, or declines you haven't grieved?
- Are you exhausted in ways rest hasn't fixed?

**Write honestly:**

### **Society & Culture**

- What about the current cultural moment troubles or angers you?
- Where do you feel disillusioned, afraid, overwhelmed, or unsafe??

- Are there injustices, divisions, or moral confusion weighing on you?

**Write honestly:**

### **Community & Church**

- Where do you feel disconnected, disappointed, unsure, or unsafe?
- Are there unmet expectations or wounds you haven't named?
- Where do you long for deeper belonging or clarity?

**Write honestly:**

## **PART 2: ACKNOWLEDGE HOW THIS MAKES YOU FEEL**

Now move from circumstances to the heart. Lament does not stop at "what happened." It asks, "*What is this doing inside me?*" The work here is not to create something that is not there, but it IS to acknowledge the discomfort that you may be tempted to overlook or hide from.

**Complete these prompts honestly:**

When I think about these things, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.  
I am tempted to believe that \_\_\_\_\_.  
I feel angry about \_\_\_\_\_.  
I feel afraid that \_\_\_\_\_.  
I feel weary because \_\_\_\_\_.  
I feel numb toward \_\_\_\_\_.

**If your thoughts need room to breathe, use the rest of this page.**

## PART 3: DECLARE HOPE IN GOD

Biblical hope is not optimism—it is confidence in God's character. Hope does not deny pain; it speaks *through* it.

Write a statement that begins with “**Yet...**” or “**But...**”

Examples:

- “Yet I believe God sees what is happening.”
- “But I believe God is still at work, even when I cannot see it.”

**Your statement of hope:**

Even in this, I believe that God \_\_\_\_\_ because He is \_\_\_\_\_.

If your thoughts need room to breathe, use the rest of this page.

## PART 4: EXPRESS TRUST IN GOD

This can be difficult to wrestle through.

Hope is partly established by our thoughts about God. Trust is established on the basis of who God is. Hope says: “I look forward to...” Trust says: “I place this in Your hands. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done as it is in heaven.” This is not passive resignation—it is active surrender.

### Complete this prayer:

God, I choose to trust You with \_\_\_\_\_.

I release my need to control \_\_\_\_\_.

I entrust myself to You because You are \_\_\_\_\_.

Take a moment of silence after writing. Let the words settle.

## PART 5: WRITE YOUR OWN PSALM

Now gather what you have written into your own psalm of lament.

You may follow this simple structure:

1. **Address God** – “O Lord...”
2. **Name the pain** – “I am troubled by...”
3. **Express how you feel** – “My heart feels...”
4. **Declare hope** – “Yet I remember...”
5. **Affirm trust** – “I will trust You...”

**Write your Psalm of Lament here.**

## SECTION 4: REFLECTION & NEXT STEPS

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

*Ephesians 2:10*

Lament is not the end. God has good work for you to do in the world - work that can only be done by people whose hearts have yielded to the goodness of God. Work that can only be done by you. To understand what this work is, please prayerfully and humbly (*without assumption*) ask God to reveal if there is an action that he wants for you to take.

What follows are some of the kinds of work that God may invite you into. It's not a complete list, just a statement of the kinds of things that God may inspire as you live out your faith in Christ.

### **Repent.**

Whether from hurt, fear, insecurity or otherwise, you may find that your heart has strayed from God. Repentance is a gift that closes the gap.

*“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.”*  
*Acts 3:19*

*“Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.” (Joel 2:13)*

### **Forgive.**

*Many issues of the heart must be released before they will be resolved.*

*“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” (Colossians 3:13)*

*“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”*  
*(Mark 11:25)*

*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)*

### **Make Distance.**

*Sometimes you will need to create distance from people - sometimes it's the who are hurting you, sometimes it's the people who might (on purpose or on accident) lead you away from the kingdom of God. Sometimes it's a need to distance yourself from media and other sources that stoke the wrong fires in your soul. God will help you understand.*

*“Stay away from fools, for you won’t find knowledge on their lips.” (Proverbs 14:7)*

*“Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.” (Proverbs 13:20)*

### **Draw Close**

If you draw away from anything - the goal is not to be isolated, but to fill the space in your life with God’s presence and helpful/wise people who can help you grow.

*“The Lord is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)*

*“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)*

*“The one who walks with the wise will become wise.” (Proverbs 13:20)*

### **Reconcile**

Are there any conversations you need to have? Is there a person or community God is inspiring you to reach out to? (Don’t make assumptions, don’t feel pressure to over-function sometimes the smallest actions carry immense value and meaning)

*“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)*

### **Love.**

As a child of God - adopted and loved by the Father through Christ, you are uniquely able to express love to other christians and to a world that aches for the sons (and daughters) of God to be revealed.

*“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35)*

*“Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.” (1 John 3:18)*

### **Stand in faith.**

When you have done everything you can... STAND.

*“Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.” (Ephesians 6:13)*