

# HOW TO WRITE A PSALM OF LAMENT

This chart will help you write your own lament using a psalm of your choosing as a baseline. It is important to learn how to cry out to God when you do not understand and are seeking answers or direction. The word lament means to mourn; to grieve; to weep or wail; to express sorrow, or cry out. It is an effective tool to use when we are in times of questioning and confusion. The beauty of writing a lament instead of just journaling is that we are using a biblical process of expressing, confessing, and often repenting over our raw, honest emotions in the light of a loving Father, a forgiving Savior, and a comforting Spirit. We all have times in our lives where we have to wrestle with God.

If one third of the psalms in the Bible are written as laments by the mind of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are not engaging in anything unbiblical. In fact, we are right in line with the heart of God. Even Jesus on the cross cried out the first verse of Psalm 22 which is a psalm of lament! Jesus wants us to bring everything to Him, and He wants us to trust Him with the outcome because He loves us. The six steps you will follow are:

- Address God by turning to Him
- State your complaint, confusion, or circumstances and naming emotions in very specific terms
- Ask God boldly to act in accordance with His character and the promises in Scripture
- Choose to trust Him by reaffirming your belief in His ability to act
- Praise Him for the answer or the change in your own heart/mind even if you don't see it yet
- Bonus step! Find a safe, mature Christian to share your lament that will honor you by listening without commenting and support you as you seek the Lord for His wisdom

If you are not sure where to start, find a psalm you can relate to and see if you can modify it in your own words to express your heart.

## **Personal**

An individual vocalizing pain, grief, fear, or some other strong emotion

3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 39, 42, 43, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 70, 71, 77, 86, 120, 141, 142

## **Corporate**

A group or nation vocalizing pain, grief, fear, or some other strong emotion

12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 123, 126

## **Repentant**

An individual or group expressing regret or sorrow for sin

6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

## **Imprecatory**

An individual or group expressing outrage and a strong desire for justice

35, 69, 83, 88, 109, 137, 140

## **Partial**

Sections of lament within other psalms

9L13-20, 27:7-14, 40:11-17

## **Debatable**

Psalms that some consider to be lament in total or in part

14, 36, 41, 52, 53, 63, 78, 81, 89, 106, 125, 129, 139

