

The Power of Lament

Opener: What's the shortest time you've had to wait for a prayer to be answered?

Scripture: How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 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 13

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." ²⁵ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; ²⁶ it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. Lamentations 3:22-26

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Romans 8:24-25

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Discussion Questions

1. Has God ever seemed far away, even when you were walking by faith and weren't harboring any known sin? You sought God, but it seemed like He was hiding. David certainly experienced that, and he described it in Psalm 13. Four times he repeated the haunting cry, "how long?!" Have you ever felt that way? What happened? Psalm 13:1-2
2. One-third of the Psalms are lamentations. Lament is going to God with our questions in a way that turns us back to Him in genuine praise. How do the questions David asks here do that?
3. If it feels like some emotional whiplash is happening here, that's because it is. We're getting a real-time view of David's emotional and spiritual journey. It ultimately comes down to trusting God. How does trusting that God is with us even when He doesn't answer our prayers the way we want Him to make a difference in how we handle disappointment? Psalm 13:5-6; Lamentations 3:22-26
4. How does trusting that God will use suffering for our good and His glory make a difference in how we cope with disappointment? Romans 8:28
5. How does trusting that our suffering will end someday, if not here in heaven, change our perspective on what we're dealing with? Romans 8:24-25
6. How would you answer a critic who says, "You're denying reality to believe in God's love when terrible things happen to you"?

Wrap Up: Expressing our frustration and grief to God is one of the most spiritual things we can do. It doesn't feel that way—it feels like venting. It feels like blasphemy, almost, to tell God what we really think and feel. But God isn't afraid of those feelings. After all, He created them and Jesus felt them too. He wants to help us reboot and restart, to work through the dreams and traumas, the ups and downs and ins and outs of this complex human experience we call life. So let's learn to process our feelings in prayer during the tough times. That's what lamenting is all about. From *Worried about Everything Because I Pray about Nothing* by Chad Veach