

Psalms 31:9-10, NIV – “Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.”

4. Lamenting Releases Me From Acting On My Feelings

- The fact that I feel a certain way, does not give me permission to go out and dump my negativity wherever and on whomever I want.
- In Lamenting, we say, “God, this is the way I feel; but now I leave it to You, for You to do what You want to do.”

Psalms 55:23, NIV – “But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.”

Psalms 52:5-8, NIV – “(5) Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. ... (8) But I.... trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever.”

5. Lamenting Invokes The Healing Presence Of God

Psalms 22:13-16; 23-25, NIV – (13) Roaring lions tearing 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 away within me. (15) My strength 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 have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. ... (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 disdained 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 will I fulfill my vows.”

- a) Lamenting Brings Healing
 - Rick Warren – “Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing”
 - Only by facing and going through the death of hopes and dreams and expectations, can we come to new life, to resurrection, to new hopes and dreams and expectations
 - The structure of Laments tells us that it is possible to praise too soon
 - Lamenting allows the pain to leave, so that the healing can come, and praise is always a proper response to healing
- b) Lamenting Is “Raw” Prayer That Invokes God’s Presence
 - In Lamenting, we are praying, we are opening ourselves up to God, and He comes to us, with comfort, and healing, and revelation, and life

THE ART OF LAMENTING

1 - Crying To The Lord

David Hibbert – March 24, 2004

CRYING OUT TO GOD

Exodus 2:23-24, NIV – “... The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.”

Numbers 14:1-3, NIV – “That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?’”

Joshua 7:7, NIV – “And Joshua said, ‘Ah, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!’”

2 Samuel 18:33, NIV – “The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: ‘O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you – O Absalom, my son, my son!’”

- The language of lamentation: Groaning, sighing, crying out, saying “if only”, weeping aloud, asking “why”, feeling shaken to the core

WHAT IS LAMENTING?

- Vocally expressing grief or sorrow; being sorrowful, wailing
- Verbalized prayers to God for help, that come out of pain and need and loss and confusion

Mark 10:47, NIV – “And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

Mark 14:36, NIV – “‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Psalms 22:1, NIV – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? ...”

- When we hurt physically, we cry out in pain
- When we hurt spiritually, we cry out in lament
- Lamentation has been described as a loud, religious “Ouch!”

HOW TO LAMENT IN A HEALTHY WAY

1. Laments Should Be Directed To God

Dangers Of Lamenting To Others:

- Sensitive Information May Be Shared
- We May Say Things That We Really Don't Mean
- We Involve Others Who Are Not Part Of The Solution

Psalm 130:1-2, NIV – “*Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; O LORD, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.*”

Psalm 6:4, NIV – “*Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love.*”

2. Laments Involve Sharing Heartfelt Questions

Psalm 13:1, NIV – “*How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*”

Psalm 10:1, NIV – “*Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?*”

3. Laments Involve Sharing Heartfelt Emotions And Thoughts

Jeremiah 18:21-22, NIV – “*So give their children over to famine; hand them over to the power of the sword. Let their wives be made childless and widows; let their men be put to death, their young men slain by the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses when you suddenly bring invaders against them.*”

Psalm 137:8-9, NIV – “*O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.*”

4. Laments Involve Admitting Who We Are Angry At

Psalm 79:1, NIV – “*O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.*”

Psalm 31:11, NIV – “*Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends – those who see me on the street flee from me.*”

5. Laments Involve Perseverance

Psalm 22:2, NIV – “*O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.*”

- In lamenting, we continue to cry out to God, as long as it takes, until the frustration is fully described, the pain is fully released, the tears

are fully shed, the dagger is fully removed from our heart, and God's presence comes to us, and we receive our revelation, and our healing from God

Psalm 22:3, NIV – “*Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel.*”

THE BENEFITS OF LAMENTING

1. Lamenting Corrects A False Understanding Of Faith

- Faith is trusting our entire self to God, in the midst of how we feel
- Doubt is not opposed to faith; only despair is

Mark 9:24, NIV – “*... I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*”

2 Corinthians 4:8, NIV – “*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair.*”

- Doubt is a sign that our faith is alive and kicking!
- Lament is not a failure of faith, but an act of faith
- We cry out directly to God, because deep down we know that our relationship with God counts; it counts to us, and it counts to God
- Even if God seems not to hear, we believe that God is always within shouting distance

Isaiah 41:10, NIV – “*Do not fear, for I am with you ...*”

- Perhaps it is not lamenting, but the failure to lament, that expresses a lack of faith

2. Lamenting Teaches Us That We Can't Have An Answer To Everything

- In our search for meaning, we are tempted to look for cheap and easy answers
- Lament teaches us that there are things we cannot understand

Psalm 73:16, NIV – “*When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me.*”

3. Lamenting Gets Us In Touch With Our True Emotions And Thoughts

- In lamenting, God offers us a chance to express our uncensored feelings to Him
- In the flow of dumping on God, we often get in touch with feelings that we never realized that we had