WRITING A PSALM OF LAMENT

LAMENT – A LITURGY FOR PAIN & GRIEF

To lament is to *sit with our grief, examine it, cry out because of it, and give it a voice.* Biblical lament is a holy liturgy for processing our pain and grief so that we can rejoice again.

More than one-third of the Psalms are laments. Through them, the psalmists meet God at their lowest points, pouring out their raw emotions and difficult circumstances. Laments are honest and vulnerable expressions of grief that can deepen and strengthen our faith and trust in God, moving us from pain to praise.

Lament is about staying present in our grief, wrapping words around our wounds, and sharing them honestly with God.

LEARNING TO WRITE A PSALM OF LAMENT

1. **TURN TO GOD** – *Hear my prayer, Lord...*(Psalm 102:1) It takes faith to lament. Grief and pain can tempt us to withdraw or turn away from God, but choosing to lament reorients us, turning us back toward God.
2. **NAME AND DESCRIBE GRIEF & PAIN** – *...my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.* (Psalm 102:3) Grief can be a cascade of little losses that pile on top of each other, or it can be a single, devastating, traumatic, and life-altering event. God wants us to be specific about what or who is causing us pain and why. He is ready for our piercing questions and fractious emotions.
3. **ASK BOLDLY** – *Do not take me away, my God, in the midst of my days...* (Psalm 102:24) God longs for us to call on Him, spend time with Him, and ask Him for what need. He already knows our hearts, but He is waiting for us to ask. Bravely and vulnerably asking strengthens our resolve to keep asking, even when God's answer is delayed.
4. **CHOOSE TO TRUST & PRAISE** – *But you remain the same, and your years will never end.* (Psalm 102:27) Lament helps us process our pain and grief by choosing (*often daily*) to trust in God's presence with us, His purpose in our pain, and His steadfast goodness. Lament is a journey toward deeper trust and wholehearted praise.

PSALM 13 - A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

STEP	PSALM 13
Address God	How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
Lament	How long will you hide your face from me?
Lament	How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?
Lament	How long will my enemy triumph over me?
Request	Look on me and answer, O Lord my God.
Request	Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
Trust	But I trust in your unfailing love;
Praise	my heart rejoices in your salvation.
Praise	I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.

TIPS TO HELP YOU WRITE A PSALM OF LAMENT

1. **Lament is a language for loss.** Pour out the pain, anguish, outrage, fear, numbness, or overwhelming sorrow you are feeling, how it is affecting you, and the difficulties it is causing.
2. **ASK GOD QUESTIONS** (like David did in Psalm 13).
   - How long must I endure this?
   - How will this be resolved?
   - How long do I have to be brave?
   - Why did You let this happen?
   - Why didn't You stop it?
   - Where is the miracle?
   - What if there's no healing?
3. **LAMENT IS A JOURNEY.** Lament is how we walk by faith, processing our pain and grief as God's Spirit works in us.
4. **DO YOU TRUST GOD?** How have you experienced His presence in your grief? How have you seen Him at work in your pain? Can you trust God if His answer is *no*, if the miracle doesn't come, if healing waits just beyond the veil?
5. **LAMENT LEADS TO WORSHIP.** How will you praise God in the pain, worship Him in the grief, and witness His grace along the way?