

Lamenting like David
Presented by Lauren Stibgen
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Day One

How do we lament? I guess we should start with understanding what lamenting truly is. Lament is expressing sorrow, mourning, or regret—crying out in grief. As followers of Jesus, we are called to lament! We are made in the image of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And, throughout the Bible we see examples of the trinity lamenting.

Early in the Bible, God lamented the wickedness of man.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him to his heart (Genesis 6:5-6).

Immediately following this regret and grief, God sent the flood. He blotted out everyone but Noah and his family.

In Isaiah 63:10, the word says, but *they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit*. This verse is referencing Israel's rebellion after being led by Moses out of Egypt.

And we see examples of Jesus lamenting. It's an often quoted and the shortest verse in the Bible found in John 11:35, *Jesus wept*. His dear friend Lazarus had died, and he was overcome with grief.

Jesus not only expressed this sorrow, but he gave us a true picture of lament in the Garden of Gethsemane. His lament to the Father was so deep his sweat was as drops of blood falling from his body. Jesus tells his disciples his soul is very sorrowful, even to death (Matthew 26:38). He then fell on his face, and prayed, *"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will"* (Matthew 26:39).

Taking these examples from the Father, Holy Spirit, and Jesus, how do we lament? We will look at the life of David and how he modeled lament. And we will consider why this is so important within the context of work.

Day Two

Are you afraid God doesn't want to hear your complaints? Do you ever have a feeling you are enduring things that shouldn't be happening to you? How about waiting for something good to happen? Why me or why not me? David's life was full of waiting, enemies, and strife! And he knew his direct line to God was the best way for him to cry out!

If you read the books of first and second Samuel, you see the long and arduous road David endures to becoming King. Even though he is anointed as King early on by the prophet Samuel, he spends years fleeing from a jealous and hateful Saul. And David was just being himself! First, David was a skilled warrior, and he had a lot of success! He was also a skilled musician who played the harp for Saul when he was feeling mentally unwell. Saul was deeply jealous of David—jealous of his skill, jealous of the

favor God showed to David, and jealous of the relationship David had with his son Jonathan. Not only did Saul throw a spear at David, but he charged his entire army to kill him.

Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days (1 Samuel 18:29).

Sometimes we are confronted with things, and we really don't know why. We are truly being ourselves, giving our best and our all. Are we like David, seeking feedback? In 1 Samuel 20:1, David asks Johnathan, "*What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father that he seeks my life?*"

David never received a good worldly answer from his dear friend Jonathan. In the Psalms, David's laments to the Lord during this time are many, but Psalm 142:1-2 highlights his desperation.

With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him (Psalm 142:1-2).

David goes on to talk about how traps have been set for him and that no one cares for his soul. Have you ever felt this? You ask for help and it seems there is none in sight? Have you ever felt like no one cares for your soul?

David knew God cared for him, and he poured his complaint to God when he had no one else in the world to ask: why me?!

God wants to hear your complaints. He wants to be there to remind you he is for you in this deep time of lament.

Day Three

Who are you the most vulnerable with? This word describes a state of being easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally, or emotionally. Is there a person you trust the most? Maybe you are blessed to have more than one person to talk to about your most private matters. But who are you vulnerable with about your sin?

Let's face the fact. Even those of us who have the beautiful gift of grace of salvation in Jesus Christ still sin. We all do. Even when we are trying to live a life holy and honorable before the Lord.

The word is clear about confession.

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

James tells us to *confess our sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed (James 5:16).*

What does this have to do with lament? David's life was not all glory. He also sinned and gave us a good example of how to cry out to the Lord in lament for our sin. The story of David and Bathsheba found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12 tells of David's sins resulting from his lust for Bathsheba.

In Psalm 51 we see David's vulnerability with God as he laments about his sins.

Have mercy on me, O' God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:1-2).

Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:11).

Remember the definition of vulnerable? A state of being easily hurt physically, emotionally, or mentally. David lamented to God and did not want to be removed from all the goodness of his presence and filling of the Holy Spirit.

Even David recalls I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave all my iniquity and sin (Psalm 32:5).

David's lament also reminds us again of what happens when sin goes unconfessed.

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long (Psalm 32:3).

In his deepest sin, David turned to the Lord. God wants us to do this too. Sin can make its way into any part of our life, including at work! Take some time to examine your heart and lament to God!

Day Four

Sometimes God seems far away. Many women I speak with have said this very thing from time to time. Despite their prayers, reading the Bible, and going to church, God seemed distant. They feel like there are no answers coming in their distress, and some have even thrown in the towel with long time prayers. This isn't what God has planned for us.

I like to remind myself about God's view on time when I feel like he hasn't answered me in a while.

To the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day (2 Peter 3:8).

In the context of my view on time, it may not feel like very long to God at all!

It's likely that David ran from Saul between four and thirteen years. I am sure David's laments to God were very difficult at times. Like, "Hello, Lord? It's your anointed King David. What are we doing? How long?"

I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of my foes (Psalm 6:6-7).

Not only was David weary, but he was also worn down to the point of tears! God saw every one of these tears David shed. He sees yours too.

And David wasn't shy about crying out to God!

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night but I find no rest (Psalm 22:1-2).

Ultimately, God was with David every step of the way—even when David felt alone, chased, weary, and deep in sorrow.

God wants to hear from you. Lament to God about your weariness, tears, and unanswered prayers. Lament to God when he feels distant and like he isn't answering you.

Have you been in a season like this with work? Our adversary may look different than David's, but it could come in the form of being out of work for an extended period, waiting for a promotion, or feeling like you have an adversary at work challenging your every move.

Jesus has promised we will have trouble in this world (John 16:33) but also gives us the hope that he has overcome the world!

Turn to the Lord in lament today. Be honest. He wants to hear from you.

Day Five

We have discovered that we were made to lament and examined the examples we have in Scripture through the life of David. What hits the most for me as I read about lament is the deep trust that God's will is always best, and he alone deserves the glory!

We have heard parts of Psalm 6 this week, from David's most honest cries to God through his tears that flooded his bed. The ending of this Psalm turns to David's trust,

Depart from me all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer (Psalm 6:8-9).

There is not an ounce of doubt coming from David. God heard me crying. He heard me pleading and he accepts my prayer.

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid (Psalm 56:3-4).

In you, Lord my God, I put my trust...I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame (Psalm 25:1-2).

God, I trust you. I trust you. I trust you! David's lament was never absent of his trust in God. A deep and abiding love for his Father that he knew would carry him through in battles and in loss, in highs and in lows.

When was the last time you uttered the profound, but simple words, God, I trust you?

God, I trust you with my work. God, I trust you with this job search. God, I trust you with this very hard conversation. God, I trust you with this difficult colleague. God, I trust you to care for my needs. God, I trust you when I am afraid I might lose my job. God, I trust you when I don't know how to complete a task. God, I trust you when I feel alone.

Did you know this is prayer? Simple, short, and sweet, but it flows from your heart right to God. And it glorifies how he made you to be in a constant and dependent relationship with him!

David gave us this example of the pattern of lament and deep trust that he then turned to praise.

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name O Most High (Psalm 9:1-2).

Lament. Trust. Praise! How can you use this simple three-word phrase as a reminder in the week ahead?