



LEARNING TO LAMENT

Biblical lament is a fruitful way of expressing our emotions to God. Think of it as a "language"—one that helps us to approach God's throne of grace with honesty and humility. Honesty, because lament offers a pathway for speaking openly to God about the emotions we're feeling or the problems we're facing; humility, because lament is intended by God to lead us to a deeper trust in his character and promises.

Why is this language important to learn (and use) when we've been diagnosed with a mental disorder? For starters, it's important because God invites us to speak to him in his language—and he knows we'll be helped by his grace when we do. Therefore, part of getting equipped for your post-diagnosis journey means growing in your understanding of what biblical lament is (and isn't), and then making it a point to practice speaking this language daily so that your fluency increases.

As we explore the language of lament as revealed in the Scriptures, we observe that God doesn't expect us to ignore our emotions. And yet, we also see that the Lord doesn't desire for us to be ruled by them either. Instead, part of God's design for our emotions is that they would serve as occasions for us to *EVACuate* to him for refuge through prayer. The acronym "EVAC" gives us a helpful model for structuring these kinds of prayers, and is based on patterns we can identify in the Bible's Songs of Lament. These include (but aren't limited to) Psalm 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, and 142. Explore some of these Psalms for yourself and see if you can trace the pattern:

Ⓔ = Engage God Ⓥ = Voice your complaint Ⓐ = Ask for help ⓒ = Choose to trust

After reading some of the laments found in the book of Psalms, take your next step in practicing this "prayer language" by using the EVAC grid provided on the next page. You can choose to deconstruct and study a particular lament Psalm that resonates with you today, or try building your own lament based on what you've read. Feel free to use the words of the Psalmists as you practice—God has given them to you as a gift, especially for when you don't know what to say or how to say it.

For a more detailed exploration and explanation of biblical lament, I highly recommend the book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament* by Mark Vroegop. My *EVACuate* acronym is a slight modification to the lament structure he offers in this incredibly helpful resource.

"Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust." -Mark Vroegop



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WAITING ON GOD

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. (Psalm 25:4-5)

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! (Psalm 27:13-14)

Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. (Psalm 33:20-22)

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. (Psalm 40:1-2)

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. (Psalm 62:5)

It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isaiah 25:9)

O Lord, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble. (Isaiah 33:2)

But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:25-26)

But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. (Micah 7:7)

Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. (Psalm 33:20)