

# things we grieve

the loss of a loved one

the loss of a pet

a breakup or a divorce

# things we might also grieve

major life transitions

being unable to achieve a goal or fulfill a dream

a diagnosis

not living the life we hoped we would live

the effects of big decisions (even when those decisions are ultimately good for us)

losing a job or switching careers

a friendship breakup

the person we were before something traumatic or life-altering occurred

moving to a new location

a faith transition or a shift in our other beliefs

## WHAT IS LAMENT AND WHY SHOULD WE LEAVE SPACE FOR IT?

Sean Nemecek, *The Weary Leader's Guide to Burnout*:

- *Learning to lament is an essential step in our spiritual development.*
- *Lament requires space to allow our emotions to come to the surface. We need to feel the pain and express it honestly.*

## WHEN IS LAMENT APPROPRIATE?

Choices we made, sins we committed

Someone sinned against us

Consequences of the Fall

## WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T LAMENT?

Often, instead of bringing these things to God, we've been trained to cover them up.

What do we do to try to avoid?

- Addictions
- Busyness

Result: We don't have to be alone with ourselves, we don't have to stop and think and feel. We can keep avoiding the uncomfortable things in our lives.

## HOW DID IT GO?

What choices did you make that were life-changing...things you wish you could go back and change?

What have people done to you that have altered your life?

What are the losses in your life, the ways life just didn't turn out the way you thought it would?

## HOW DO WE LAMENT?

Nemecek, Sean. *The Weary Leader's Guide to Burnout: A Journey from Exhaustion to Wholeness* (pp. 186-188)

### 1. Lament Is Directed toward God

- Because lament is directed toward God, it is an expression of faith in God.
- *<sup>1</sup>How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*

### 2. Lament Is Honest

- Every lament contains a complaint. That doesn't mean whining about the situation but honestly expressing the raw emotion of the moment.
- A complaint is a cry to God that things are not the way they should be.
- *<sup>2</sup>How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

### 3. Lament States That God Hears or Will Hear

- Lament is an expression of trust in God. Not only does God hear, but he listens deeply and understands the heart of our cry.
- *<sup>3</sup>Consider and answer me, O LORD my God!*

### 4. Lament Moves to a Specific Petition or Request

- Here we have an opportunity to strongly request—almost demand—that God do something.
- *<sup>3</sup>Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death <sup>4</sup>and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.*

### 5. Lament Recalls That God Is Indeed Good

- God is big enough to take all our rage. He knows we are groaning over the brokenness caused by sin.
- *<sup>5</sup>But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. <sup>6</sup>I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

## FOR US TODAY

Here are some things Sean Nemecek suggested as ways to lament:

- Create space for your emotions to surface by entering silence and solitude.
- Turn your attention to the reality of God's presence and become aware of his fatherly love. (This is where the Father's Love Letter can come in handy.)
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you lament and let the Spirit do his work in his time.
- When the time is right, be emotionally honest. God already knows how you feel better than you do. Speak the raw truth of what you feel to God.
- Hold on to God in faith. Don't let your grief or sorrow cause you to forget God's character.
- Worship God, knowing that he will be faithful to all his promises.