

“GOD. I’M HURTING!”
THE PLACE AND POWER OF LAMENTING
LIFEGROUP STUDY
Feb. 07, 2021
LEADER NOTES

Welcome to our two-part series, “God. I’m Hurting!” God has given us a book that doesn’t ignore the tough times, the dark times, the difficult times of life. Scattered throughout its pages you hear the heart-rending cries of hurting men and women as they stretch out their hands and hearts toward God, looking longingly and listening passionately to hear from him as they try to find answers to deep troubling questions or relief from searing ongoing pain or freedom from the overpowering oppression of their enemies. “God,” they cry, “Hear me, help me, I’m hurting!” In part 1 of our series, we’re exploring the place and power of lamenting. A lament is a passionate expression of sorrow or grief. It is a powerful way given to us by God to process the hurt in our lives. Our goal in this study is for your group to know the place and power of lamenting in their lives. As difficult as facing our hurts can be, God offers us hope on the other side.

ICEBREAKER: This is Us

Think back to your home growing up. How did your family members process emotions? Were you loud and expressive? Were you a more quiet bunch? What have you learned about processing emotions since?

STUDY:

LEADER NOTE: In your group you likely have people who are currently experiencing hurt, others who have hurt from the past which may not be fully resolved, some who are able to express their hurt, others who tend to stuff it inside. As you walk through this study with your group, as appropriate, be open about your own journey with hurt. As you model openness to your group, you will encourage others to be open as well. Talking about our hurt and how we handle it can be messy. It can be embarrassing. We’d rather not go there. But “going there” is the only way to move toward hope. As you study about the place and power of lamenting, encourage your group to talk about how to apply these truths to the reality of the hurt in our lives.

Ken defined lamenting as “a passionate expression of sorrow or grief.”

- **What do you think of his definition? Would you add or take away anything?**

LEADER NOTE: Some of your group members may struggle with the idea of “passionate expression.” All of us process hurt in different ways. Some of us cry, shout, talk a lot. Others of us are quiet. We don’t cry, ever. In our study, help your group members process what it looks like for them to lament. Regardless of our temperament or upbringing, we all have the ability to passionately express sorrow or grief.

In Ken’s teaching on Sunday, he mentioned that lamenting is found throughout the Bible. In fact, 1/3rd of the Psalms are laments.

- **Does it surprise you that so much of the Bible is about lamenting? Why or why not?**

LEADER NOTE: In his teaching, Ken said, “I love the fact that God has given us a book that doesn’t ignore the tough times, the dark times, the difficult times. Scattered throughout its pages you hear the heart-rending cries of hurting men and women as they stretch out their hands and hearts toward God, looking longingly and listening passionately to hear from him as they try to find answers to deep troubling questions or relief from searing ongoing pain or freedom from the overpowering oppression of their enemies. “God,” they cry, “Hear me, help me, I’m hurting!” The Bible doesn’t shirk the hard realities of life. God’s Word faces our hurt head on, and points us to hope on the other side.

In Our Hurt, God is Big Enough

READ: Isaiah 41:10

“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.” NLT

In times of hurt, it is normal to wonder if God hears, if my prayers make any difference. Isaiah 41:10 reminds us that God is big enough for us to voice our frustrations to Him.

- **How does this passage encourage you that God is big enough for you to voice your pain to Him?**

LEADER NOTE: On Sunday, Ken reminded us that God is large and in charge. He is sovereign. He is in control. God is big enough to hear about our hurt. He can take it. He says, “I am with you.” “I am your God.” He promises to strengthen and help us. Allow these amazing promises to remind you that your God is big enough, even in your time of hurt.

READ: Psalm 89:1-3

“O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out to you by day. I come to you at night. Now hear my prayer; listen to my cry. For my life is full of troubles and death draws near.” NLT

- **How do you feel about expressing your heart to God? What have you learned about being honest and real with Him about your hurt?**

LEADER NOTE: As we express our hurt to God, He doesn't expect us to come with just the right words at just the right time. It's OK to struggle to find the right words to say, or to say nothing at all but – “God. I'm hurting!” He wants to hear from you. He wants to hear your heart. Being honest and real with God about our hurt is crucial to moving toward hope.

Lament – the Pathway to Hope

Many times, in our hurt, we feel we are not hearing from God, that God is silent and things are hopeless. Lament is a discipline God can use in our lives as a pathway to hope. As you read Psalm 42, notice how the author uses his lament to lead him on a pathway to hope.

READ: Psalm 42

- In Ken's teaching on Sunday, he talked about four actions we can take when we lament. They are CRY OUT, POUR OUT, REACH UP and LIFT UP. **Where do you see each of these actions in Psalm 42?**

LEADER NOTE: Starting in verse 1 and 2, the author CRIES OUT to God. In verses 3 and 4 he POURS OUT his heart to God, acknowledging the hurt in his life and remembering how life used to be before the hurt. In verses 5-6 and again in vs. 11, he REACHES UP to God. In vs. 8, he LIFTS UP his God who has loved him continually.

- **What questions does the author ask himself?** (see vs. 5 and 11)

LEADER NOTE: In verses 5 and 11, the author counsels himself with questions. “Why am I discouraged?” “Why is my heart so sad?” In asking these questions, the author is not downplaying the reality of his hurt. He is looking at the reality of who God is. In his discouragement, he remembers God (vs. 6) and this remembering begins a pathway back to hope.

- In verse 8, the author says, “But each day the LORD pours out his unfailing love upon me.” NLT. **How can reminding ourselves of God's love help us through our valley of hurt?**

LEADER NOTE: In his time of hurt, the author reminds himself that God continues to pour His love into his life. God's love is constant. Even when we don't feel his love, it is there. When we doubt His love for us, it is there. He has said, "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself." Isaiah 31:3 NLT

- **What does this Psalm teach you about how lament can be a pathway to hope?**

LEADER NOTE: In your group, you may have people in the middle of deep hurt. They may be struggling to believe they will ever experience hope. Remember, lament is a pathway. It takes time. It is a journey we travel on. For some, the destination (hope) will take some time. That's OK. The point is to go on the journey. For others in your group who are not currently in a time of hurting, the lessons learned today are important ones to remember, because all of us will experience hurt. All of us need the discipline of lament to experience the pathway to hope.

Ways to Express Your Hurt

There are many ways we can express our hurt to God. As a group, take a look at the following ways to express our hurt. **What do you think of them? What other ways might be productive for you?**

- Write a poem to God.
- Go for walks and talk to Him out loud.
- Join a group like GriefShare, DivorceCare, Celebrate Recovery.
- Meet with a Grief Counselor
- Open up to your LifeGroup and ask them to pray for you.

NEXT STEPS:

Here are some websites and resources that can help you take a next step in processing hurt in your life.

Celebrate Recovery <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/celebrate-recovery/>
Creekside Cares <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/care/>
The Coping Centre <https://www.copingcentre.com/>

PRAYER:

This week let's pray for our youth and young adults ministry at Creekside.

- For youth to feel connected and loved during the lockdown
- For our youth to experience and know that God's love is real and that they grow closer to him.
- For our leaders to find creative ways to connect and love the students in their LifeGroups, and that they stay encouraged while leading during this difficult time.