

Lesson 5—“How can I relate to God in this situation?”

For leaders—This lesson discusses what a lament is. Members will be given the opportunity to write their own lament to God.

Looking back—From the last lesson’s assignment, practicing the listening questions,

- Ask members how they felt as they were sharing their story.
- Ask members how they felt as they were listening and asking the questions.
- Was there anything difficult about the exercise?
- Did the exercise help you to clarify any of your feelings?

Leading the lesson

Say—Besides talking and doing artwork, we can express our feelings to God through writing a lament. It can be written by one person or by a community. More than sixty of the psalms in the Bible are considered laments. In a lament, people pour out their complaints to God and beg him to help them.

- Choose different members to read the first part of the chapter.
- Make sure everyone knows the three main parts of a lament—address God, complaint, request.
- **Say**—God already knows our hearts and knows what we are thinking, so it does not surprise him when we cry out to him. It may seem awkward, but if David wrote so many laments and they are recorded in the Scriptures, we also can write them without fear that it will make God angry. He wants us to come to him with all of our emotions and feelings.
- *Read Psalm 13 in unison together*—have members decide what the three main parts are.
- Discuss the “For Reflection” questions.

Individual assignment

- Invite members to write their own lament. This can be done in prose, a picture, or in any way that they choose.
- Remind members that it must contain the complaint part; the other parts are optional.
- Members who are willing will be invited to share their laments with the group at the next meeting

Closing—Prayer and song

5. How can I relate to God in this situation?

Tell God how you feel

Be honest with God! Tell him exactly how you feel. He already knows, so talk about it with him. Do you feel God broke his promise to protect you from evil? Do you feel abandoned by him? Angry? Pour out your pain to God.

There are many examples of people expressing their feelings to God in the Bible. These are called “laments.” Did you know that there are more lament psalms in the Bible than praise psalms?

In a lament, people call out to God and tell him their complaint. “Why didn’t you protect me? Where were you? How long will this suffering last?” They tell God what they want him to do—sometimes just that he look at what has happened. Sometimes they remind themselves of how God helped them in the past, or how God helped his people in the Bible. This can spark hope. Lament is often what faith looks like in hard situations. It is a sign of faith that God is listening, cares, and has power to help.

While a lament can do more, it has three basic parts:

- Address God
- Complaint
- Request

Of these three parts, the complaint is what makes it a lament.

Even Jesus lamented on the cross when he cried out a verse from Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (NIV). If Jesus told God about his feeling of abandonment, you can, too.

Read the psalm of lament on the following page. Do you see the three parts?

Find a time and place when you can get quiet inside and compose your own lament to God in writing or song. Pour out your pain to him, like the writer of the psalm did.



*How much longer will you forget me,
LORD? Forever?
How much longer will you hide yourself from me?
How long must I endure trouble?
How long will sorrow
fill my heart day and night?
How long will my enemies triumph over me?*

*Look at me, O LORD my God,
and answer me.
Restore my strength; don't let me die.
Don't let my enemies say,
"We have defeated him."
Don't let them gloat over my downfall.*

*I rely on your constant love;
I will be glad,
because you will rescue me.
I will sing to you, O LORD,
because you have been good to me.*

PSALM 13

For Reflection

What might keep you from lamenting to God?

How do you think lamenting could help you?