ESTHER FLEECE

LAMENT GUIDE

NO MORE faking fine
WRITE YOUR OWN
LAMENT GUIDE

Lament is expressing honest emotions to God when life isn’t going as we planned.

Whether we’re hurt, frustrated, confused, betrayed, overwhelmed, sad, or disappointed, lament is the language God has given us to talk to him right in the middle of life’s messes. It’s real talk with God when we’re hurting, when all we can do is cry out for his help.

It’s a prayer that says, “God, I’m hurting. Will you meet me here?”

No More Faking Fine is a look into my journey of learning to lament. I found comfort in reading Scripture when I was in hard seasons, because the people in the Bible didn’t have everything together before they went to God. When I sometimes felt out of place in the church or in Christian community, I always felt at home with the Bible.

Here are some examples of different types of laments. This is not to create a formula for you, but to give you examples of the different ways we can go to God in the midst of grief.

Individual Laments—Laments to pour out your personal pain before God

Examples: Psalm 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
Community Laments—Laments experienced or expressed in a community or a family

**Examples:** Psalm 60, 79, 80, 83, 85

Confessional Laments—Prayers for forgiveness for sins committed

**Examples:** Psalm 38, 51, 102, 130

Imprecatory Laments—Prayers against evil

**Examples:** Psalm 35, 69, 83, 109

Not every lament in the Bible ends in praise (Psalm 44, 88), though it is a good goal to have! When I’m unable to end my prayer with thankfulness toward God, I try to make a vow of praise, as seen in Psalm 27:13: “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living” (NIV).

The whole point of lamentation is you don’t use your pain as an excuse not to worship; you actually take your pain and you bring it with you before the altar, and you stand there with your pain and you say, “Though all this is true, yet I will rejoice in You!” It is the highest form of worship that exists! — Graham Cooke, from “The Power of Lamentation,” Seeing in the Spirit album

*No More Faking Fine* has prayers at the end of each
chapter to help you facilitate a lamenting prayer language. But the final chapter, “Hope Beyond Lament,” does not have a prayer, in hopes that you, the reader, will by then be comfortable in going to God with your laments. Here’s how I recommend getting started!

**LAMENT STRUCTURE**

1. **Address God**—How do you address God? What do you know about his nature or character that could bring you help in your situation?

   (Tip: I look to the Psalms to affirm the truth about who God is when I don’t know what to think or feel. The book of Psalms is a great prayer guide and lament guide.)

2. **Complaint**—What is your struggle, disappointment, crisis, or situation that requires God’s attention? The Israelites were rebuked for complaining about God to one another, but a lament takes our complaint directly to God. God welcomes our honest cries.

3. **Ask Him**—What do you desire to see God do on your behalf? Tell him where you are, and explain to him where you need his help.

4. **Affirm God**—What can you affirm about God? Where has he helped you in the past? What do you know to be true about him? Can you remember a time God has been good to you?

5. **Close**—Can your lament end in praise? Is there anything you can be thankful for? How about a vow of praise that you will not give up on God or yourself until you come through
this difficult season? Make an agreement of trust with God to wait on his provision, timing, deliverance, and justice.

6. **Tell Somebody**—A lament always kept to yourself can lead to despair or isolation. Who can you share your lament or grief with, so you can be sure to walk in the light and have fellowship with others, even in the midst of your pain?

Finally, I want to be sensitive to readers who don’t have a history with God. You’ve got to start somewhere, and God will meet you right where you are. There is no correct formula for coming before God. Becoming comfortable with prayer takes time! And just as with learning any new language, be kind to yourself in the process. God will help you along the way.

**Recommended Books on Prayer**
