

Enlighten Seminar Handout:

Engaging Trauma and It's Silence

As you consider what you have gone through and move from silence to giving voice to your experience, which statements do you relate to and why?

Engaging Scripture and the Voice of Suffering

Which verses do you identify with most and why? How does this relate to your story? List the emotions you are experiencing that are represented in these verses.

Confronting Critical Voices and Honoring Faith in Suffering

Which critical voices have you encountered in your journey of suffering, whether externally or internally? As you identify that voice, or voices, take a moment to honor your pain. Acknowledge it as your pain and that God considers it is important.

Defining Lament and Honoring It's Path

As you read through the verses in this lesson, which ones do you relate to or describe your experience? Reflect on how these key verses minister to you? Which emotions arise that you need to express? Pray these verses to God? How does it feel to say these things to God.

Practicing Lament

1) Enter With Honor and Kindness:

The space of lament is a place of honor. A place where you do not minimize your pain but feel and express the weight of your experience to a God who hears, honors and responds. In the verse below, Job committed to weighing his suffering with honor and I invite you to do the same.

If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! (Job 6:2, NIV)

Job goes on to show the importance of kindness in suffering in the following verse. Showing kindness is in fact practicing wisdom in the fear of God. Commit to showing kindness to yourself as you express your suffering.

Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. (Job 6:14, NIV)

Inviting yourself into kindness and honor expressing the following truths.

- My suffering is my suffering and it is unique to my experience.
- I have experienced evil and it is good to tell the truth about it.
- My experience of negative emotions (anger, sadness, abandonment, grief) are valid and honored by God. They are appropriate reactions to my suffering.
- I reject voices that minimize, shame, and blame my suffering and response.
- I acknowledge that God is a God who witnesses my suffering, honors it, and desires to act in kindness.

2) Express your Lament in Writing:

Following this outline in creating your own lament:

- 1. Address to God (“O God”)**
2. Review of God’s Faithfulness in the past
- 3. A complaint**
4. A confession of sin or a claim of innocence.
- 5. A request for help**
6. God’s response (often not stated)
7. A vow to praise, statement of trust in God

Here is an example lament:

O God, you listened to the prophets in the bible but why not me. My sorrow is upon me like a heavy weight ever getting heavier. What did I do to ever deserve this? Why me? Help me, for you are stronger, lift the weight off my back. So I may be relieved of this sorrow and pain. I will

do all your commands for you, O Lord, are more wonderful than I can ever imagine.

A Psalm of Isaac