

***The Prayer of Lament: A Model for Praying through Our Troubles***  
*Psalm 56*

We all face struggles or difficulties in life at times. Sometimes these struggles can be so deep or enduring that they threaten to completely undo us. What do we do if we find ourselves in such a place? The temptation can be to try and stuff it or at least to put on a happy face and pretend that all is well. But there is a better way. Scripture invites us to pray through our troubles. In the Psalms there is a category of psalm called, lament, that presents a model for how we can pray through our troubles rather than trying to ignore or deny them. In this study we are looking at a prayer of David as a model for how we can pray through our own troubles.

**Opening Question:** Have you ever spent much time reading or praying through the psalms of lament? If so, what has that been like?

**Read Psalm 56**

1. How does David describe his situation? What is he facing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the repeated words, ideas or themes in the passage? What insights does this give you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What progression do you see in David as he prays through his situation?

Brian said:

If you find yourself in some kind of tough situation right now, David's example suggests a couple of things. First, the way forward is not by denying your feelings, but rather by acknowledging them. Talk to God about them. Your situation might be causing you to feel fear or anxiety or hopelessness or depression or inadequacy. Whatever you are feeling, David's model encourages us to be honest about what we are feeling and to take those feelings to God. Second, David's example suggests if we are going to get to a place of trusting God in our situation, our faith needs content. David put His faith in God who had spoken. He chose to cling to the promises of the covenant. His wasn't an empty faith; rather it was rooted in God and His word. When we are in desperate situations we need to cling to the truth of what God has spoken.

4. When you are in a difficult place, do you find it hard to express what you are feeling to God? Why or why not?

5. What does it look like to “cling to the truth of what God has spoken” in difficult times?

6. Read verse 8 again. What does this say about God’s attention to our suffering?

Brian said:

God is for you! No matter how difficult your situation Scripture says that God is for you (Rom. 8:31-32). That is revealed truth. And when we are in difficult situations, we need to let revealed truth overrule our feelings, because our feelings are so often going to say, “God is not for me. He doesn’t care.” It might be helpful to remember that when David says that he knows that God is for him, he is still on the run for his life. He may be sitting in a cave hiding as he comes to this conclusion about God. His situation hasn’t changed, but his perspective has, as he trusts God and what He has said. Revealed truth trumps his feelings.

7. What do you think Brian means when he says that “we need to let revealed truth overrule our feelings” when we are in difficult situations?

8. How might using the psalms of lament to guide you in your praying help you now or in the future when you face troubling life situations?

**Psalms of Lament:** 3-7, 9-14, 16-17, 22-23, 25-28, 31, 35-36, 38-40, 42-44, 51, 53-64, 69-71, 74, 77, 79-80, 82-83, 85-86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 106, 108-09, 120, 123, 126, 130-31, 137, 140-43.