

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, January 23, 2025

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Today is Thursday, January 23. This week we continue our study on the Practice of Prayer and explore what it means to talk with God.

OPENING PRAYER

In the quiet stillness of a bright January morning, I settle into the special space I have set aside to talk with God. I pause my thoughts and silence my mind. I breathe deeply and slowly and focus my whole being on the God who loves me. Holy Lord, teach me what it means to talk with You, express my innermost thoughts and share my deepest feelings. Today I bring You my prayers of gratitude, lament, petition and intercession. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. Psalm 139:1-4

REFLECTION

Keep your prayer life simple. Just talk with God. He loves you. We are learning how talking with God can be broken down into four categories that provide an accessible model for prayer - gratitude, lament, petition and intercession. Today we will focus on prayers of lament. Prayers of lament are talking with God about what is going badly in life and where of the evil in the world.

Our life and world are full of things that are not good or beautiful but are ugly and evil. We live in a broken world and bad things happen, things that are not part of God's will. These are real occurrences and we need to be open to talking with God about them. What are we to do with all the pain and suffering we carry in our heart? What are we to do with the remorse we have when we see wrongdoing, injustice, senseless acts of violence, human suffering and heart ache? We need to talk with God.

Learning to pray is about learning to bring all of ourselves to God. He already knows all that we are thinking about anyway. He already knows what is on our hearts. The psalmist who wrote Psalm 139 tells us that God knows our thoughts, is familiar with all our ways and before a word is on our tongue He already knows it completely. So, sharing our pain with God is not only appropriate, but expected and necessary.

Talking with God about our sorrow, remorse and regret is a type of prayer called "lament." When we lament, we share our deepest feelings. The Bible is filled with prayers of lament. The Psalms are full of expressions of the full range of human emotions - anger, outrage, jealousy, envy, doubt, depression, sadness, grief and regret.

God wants us to share whatever is in our hearts and on our minds. He already knows the thoughts we are thinking and the words that are lying on the tip of our tongues, so why not pour it out to Him in prayers of lament?

Prayer Prompts:

- Consider the places where you see evil or tragedy happening in the world and pray a prayer of lament.
- Consider the places in your heart and life that bear sadness, grief, regret, worry, sorrow or pain and pray a prayer of lament.
- Go ahead and pour out your heart to God. He knows you and He loves you.

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Resources utilized: John Mark Comer, Practicing the Way - The Prayer Practice, Session 02, Talking with God, practicingtheway.org.