

Family TableTalk

Conversation 86

Lament

read

Psalm 13

think

The Psalms are like an ancient hymn book or prayer book. In them, we see saints expressing their praise, struggles, and pleas to God. They are God-given words we may pray and sing. God invites us to use the psalms to enrich our prayer lives and our relationship with him.

The majority of the psalms are what we would call lament psalms. They are prayers made in pain; if put to music, they would be written in the minor key. For many of us, this seems odd, because we're used to Christian music being upbeat, encouraging, and triumphant. In the psalms, though, God gives us permission to struggle with the questions that life in a fallen world presents. They help us to see that we are not alone in our struggles or a "bad Christian" when we have questions and unpleasant feelings.

Psalm 13 is one such lament psalm. All the lament psalms follow the basic pattern we see here: "This is how I feel (v. 1-2). This is what I'm asking you to do, God (v. 3-4). And this is why I trust you (v. 5-6)."

Be encouraged by this: God invites you to honestly lament your pain to him, no matter how messy your feelings are. It is safe to be this honest with him, because in Christ he has made us his children. He will not turn us away, just as any good earthly father would not turn away his child who is wailing in pain.

apply

- Laments have three elements: expressing honest feelings, pleading with God, and expressing trust in God. Which part is easiest for you? Which is the hardest?
- How do laments like Psalm 13 impact the way you think about your prayer life?
- What do you need to lament to the Lord currently?

pray

Father, you have steadfast love and generosity toward your people. You invite us to be boldly vulnerable and honest with you, yet we confess we often fail to do that. Thank you for giving us the psalms to enrich our prayer lives. Thank you for Christ, who secures our relationship with you so that we can feel safe expressing our struggles to you. Help us to learn to lament better and to grow in faith as we do so.

by Linda Oliver

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