

# Lament.

An 8-step guided practice for crying out to God  
over racial violence against Black Americans.

## Read this Summary:

*The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering."*

**Exodus 3v7**

The murder of George Floyd is a condensed symbol of racial inequality against Black Americans – 155 years after the end of the Civil War. Jesus hates this injustice. Jesus' death and resurrection gives us hope that corrupt evil power structures are being torn down, and the dignity of all humans made in the image of God are being restored.

But, evil persists in our culture. And in us. So, tragically, people are still being victimized by racism.

Lament prayer is a form of protest against this injustice, a way to process emotion, and a way to voice confusion to God. In lamenting prayer, God sees and hears the cries of the oppressed and restores their human dignity.

## Fast and Pray:

Set aside adequate time (2-3 hours, broken up if you need to) to pray, journal, and contend for reconciliation, using these steps as a guide.

### 1. Prepare

Begin by noticing, "how are you feeling about George Floyd's death and the subsequent public outcry?" What are your top three emotions? (i.e. Anger, hurt, frustration, fear, confusion, etc.)  
*Write them down.*

Ask God, "What do you want me to know about how I'm feeling?" For example, if you're angry, who are you angry with? (i.e. the government, a political figure, a police officer, a people group, the Church?)

Ask God, "What do you want me to do about this?" (i.e. confess, speak out, listen, take action?)  
*Write it down.*

### 2. Cry Out

*"Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises."*

**Psalms 10v1-2**

Take a few minutes to listen to the voices of those who are hurting most from George Floyd's death. Cry out to God against racist violence. Cry out to God against the psychological trauma that it causes Black Americans.

*Ask for God's presence to come and comfort victims of racist violence.*

### 3. Confess

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

**Psalm 139v23-24**

If you are not a part of an oppressed group, take time to examine your heart before God. Have you intentionally or unintentionally been complicit in the discrimination of Black Americans? Have you been blind to the oppressed around you? Have you failed to listen? Have you been silent for too long? Have you harbored resentment? *Write it down.*

If you need to: confess and ask God’s forgiveness. Is there anyone else you need to confess to?

Repentance is not about shame. It’s about receiving forgiveness and joining God’s plan of redemption to bring peace. How is God inviting you to bring reconciliation? *Write it down.*

### 4. Declare the Promise of God

*“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”*

**Lamentations 3v21-23**

In the midst of injustice and suffering, we hope in what Jesus has promised (Rom. 4v18-21). Take some time to call to mind the promises of God as it relates to his future reign of peace and vindication of the oppressed. Imagine, “what does this peace look like?”

*Write it down.*

Pray those promises by declaring them back to God. Say something like, “God, you have said...” and “God, I trust that you will do what you promise.”

*Write down any impressions you have.*

### 5. Protest the Gap

*“How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.”*

**Psalm 82v2-3**

We don’t accuse God of injustice. We know God is wise and just (Isaiah 55v1-13). But, Lament prayer in the Bible demonstrates how God can handle our confusion and frustration about human suffering.

What gaps are there between the promise of God for peace and justice, and the reality of our black brothers and sisters lived experience in the United States right now? Write it down. Acknowledge the pain and the hurt that is causing.

Protest those gaps in prayer. Say something like, “God, I know this is not your heart!” “God, this is evil!” *Be specific.*

Ask God, “where are you in the midst of all this suffering and injustice?”  
*Write down what the Spirit brings to your mind.*

## 6. Plead for Reconciliation

*“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”*

**Amos 5v24**

As we notice God is with those who are suffering, we know he hasn't abandoned them/us.

His heart is for complete and total reconciliation (Gal. 3v28).

Notice how your heart is responding to injustice.

Ask God, “What barriers are there to racial reconciliation?” (i.e. ignorance, more senseless violence, toxic systems, polarizing figures, etc.)

*Write them down. Pray for God to tear down those barriers by his power and make room for reconciliation.*

Ask God, “How are you calling me to be a part of the solution?” Keep pressing into specifics.

“What are you inviting me to say?” “What are you asking me to do?” “Who do you want me to love?”

“Who am I supposed to listen to?” *Write it all down.*

How are you feeling about your role in racial reconciliation? Are you excited or afraid?

Ask Holy Spirit to give you his strength and courage to obey.

## 7. Rejoice in our Future Hope

*“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*

**Philippians 3v20-21**

Fixing our hope on the imminent return of Jesus is a critical aspect of lament. We may be hurting now (or hurting for our marginalized brothers and sisters), but: evil does not get the final word!

Resurrection is coming.

This may be difficult or feel improper given this cultural moment. But, cultivate the attitude of joy for a moment. Imagine the perfect reign of Jesus on earth as in heaven. Thank God ahead of time for making all things perfect in the new creation, including restoring dignity and equality to the oppressed. *Write down any impressions you have.*

## 8. Grieve the Unresolved

This story is incomplete. There is a long road to full healing. *Take several minutes to sit in the tension of this moment, and grieve the unresolved pain in our world.*

As you prepare yourself to re-engage with the pressing needs of this cultural moment, read back over what you've written, and:

Notice, how have your emotions changed?

Ask God, “How are you already working to bring reconciliation?”

“What are you asking me to let go of?”

“How are you reforming me through this?”

“What are you asking me to do about racial inequality?” Write down how you plan to obey him.

“What's next?”

*Share your experience with someone whose willing to help you obey.*

**Amen.**