

EXERCISE: WRITING OUR PSALM

As we begin this psalm-writing exercise, remember that God invites us to come as we are, bringing both our pain and our hope into His loving presence. Writing a psalm is not something to be rushed. It may take time—perhaps several days, or even longer—to fully express what's stirring in your heart. Allow yourself to move through this exercise at your own pace, honoring what God is doing in you.

- Step 1: Begin with Lament

Let's start by giving voice to what feels heavy within us, to the places in our lives where we feel sorrow, loss, or confusion. The psalmist often begins by crying out to God, expressing their deepest pain or frustration.

Take a few moments in silence. Ask yourself, What am I lamenting right now? What feels broken, unresolved, or painful in my life?

Now, begin your psalm by writing your own cry to God. You might use words like:

- "O God, where are You when..."
- "Lord, my heart is heavy because..."
- "I feel lost, and I don't understand why..."

Let your lament flow freely, trusting that God hears and holds every word you write. If you find this part of the process difficult, allow yourself to stay here for as long as you need before moving on.

- Step 2: Naming Your Struggle

The psalms often name the specific pain or struggle the writer is facing. In this next part of your psalm, I invite you to name your specific struggles. What are the circumstances or situations that feel hard right now?

You might write:

- "I am overwhelmed by..."
- "I feel abandoned because..."
- "This loss has left me..."

Allow yourself to be honest. In this space, you are free to name what feels difficult or broken in your life. Take time with this part, and don't feel pressured to rush ahead—linger here as long as it feels right.

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- Step 3: A Turn Toward Trust

In many psalms, after the lament is poured out, there's a shift—a turning toward God in trust, even if the pain is still present. It's a declaration that, despite the circumstances, we will trust in God's steadfast love.

Take a moment to reflect: Where might I still trust God, even in the middle of this pain? What would it look like to lean into that trust, even if it feels small?

Now, write your words of trust. You might say:

- "Yet I know You are with me, even now..."
- "I believe that You will not abandon me..."
- "Your love is my shelter, even in the storm..."

Even if it's hard to feel that trust, simply naming it is an act of faith. If trust feels distant, give yourself time to sit with this step and let God gently draw you into it.

- Step 4: A Word of Rejoicing and Hope

Finally, many psalms end with a note of hope or even rejoicing, trusting that God's goodness will appear, even if it's not fully visible yet. What hope do you sense stirring in your heart? Where might you rejoice in God's presence, even in the midst of your lament?

Take a moment to pause. Ask yourself, How can I rejoice in God, trusting that He is at work even now? What hope am I holding onto?

Now, write your closing words of rejoicing and hope. You might say:

- "I will rejoice in Your unfailing love..."
- "I trust that my heart will rejoice again in Your goodness..."
- "Even now, I rejoice because You are with me..."

This rejoicing doesn't have to deny your pain; it's an act of faith, declaring that God's goodness remains true even in difficulty. Let this step come naturally, whether in a day or over time.

- Step 5: Rest in God's Presence

Once you've finished writing, simply sit with your psalm. Offer it to God in silence, trusting that He has heard your prayer. Rest in the knowledge that God welcomes both your lament and your hope, holding it all in His tender care.