

A Lament

Write to God, not about Him. Say the unsaid thing. Anger is allowed. Write toward trust.

The same nine steps as the page, on paper. A lament is a prayer spoken in pain that ends in trust. Nine steps walk you through that shape. It does not have to be good. It has to be true.

Write it by hand here if that suits you better. Fill it in over a week at the kitchen table if you like, then type it in at ancientpathcoaching.com/write-a-lament when it is finished, and it saves to your page.

Scripture on this sheet is quoted from the ESV.

THE NINE STEPS

1. Address to God

Start by naming who you are talking to. It establishes that this is a relationship, not a complaint into the air.

“O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you.” — Psalm 88:1

One line is enough.

O God—

2. The complaint

The raw thing. Do not censor it and do not make it fair. Be specific about what hurts — and it can point outward, at God or at what happened, or inward, at what you did or what you have decided you are. Both are in the Psalms.

“How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” — Psalm 13:1

“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.” — Psalm 51:3 · the complaint that points inward

Three to five lines.

How long...

3. Affirmation of trust

A breath. Not a retraction — a pause to remember a time He was there. If you cannot find a big one, a small one counts.

“But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.” — Psalm 13:5

One or two lines.

But you were there when...

4. The petition

Ask for something. Directly. Not what you think you should want — what you want.

“Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.” — Psalm 13:3

Two or three lines.

Do this:...

5. Go further down

The first complaint is rarely the whole thing. Unfold the layer underneath it — the grief, the anger, the part that feels like abandonment.

“O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.” — Psalm 22:2

Three to five lines.

And underneath that...

6. Name what is against you

What or who did this. A person, a system, an illness, evil itself, death, the silence. Name it plainly — the Psalms do.

“Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me!” — Psalm 35:1

“You have seen, O LORD; be not silent!” — Psalm 35:22

Two or three lines.

It was...

7. The turn

The movement toward trust — however small, however tentative. This is the pivot the whole form is built around.

“But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more.” — Psalm 71:14

“You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.” — Psalm 88:18 · the other ending, also in the book

One to three lines.

And yet...

8. Assurance of being heard

Say that He hears you. You do not have to feel it. Saying it is the act.

“The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer.” — Psalm 6:9

One or two lines.

You heard me.

9. Praise

Say who He is, with nothing resolved. Not what you will do — who He is. This is not pretending it is fine. It is defiance.

“Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” — Psalm 22:3

One to three lines.

You are...

NOW PUT IT IN ORDER

The Shape

Copy your lines from the pages before into the blanks, in order. Read it aloud when you are finished.

1 • ADDRESS TO GOD

O God—

2 • THE COMPLAINT

How long...

3 • AFFIRMATION OF TRUST

But you were there when...

4 • THE PETITION

Do this:...

5 • GO FURTHER DOWN

And underneath that...

6 • NAME WHAT IS AGAINST YOU

It was...

7 • THE TURN

And yet...

8 • ASSURANCE OF BEING HEARD

You heard me.

9 • PRAISE

You are...
