

Journey CHURCH

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How to Get Through What You're Going Through Leader Guide Session 3: Struggle – When Life Makes No Sense

Key Verse: Genesis 3:17B (NLT)

“[Because you sinned]... all your life you will struggle.

3 Ways We Struggle

1. We struggle with other people.
2. We struggle with ourselves.

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate... when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind.

Romans 7:15, 21b-23a (NLT)

3. But our real struggle is with God.

2 Reasons we struggle with God

- We doubt his wisdom.
- We want to be in control.

Life is a Struggle

Jacob's Example

As a man he (Jacob) struggled with God.

Hosea 12:3a (NIV)

After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

Genesis 32:23-24 (NIV)

When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Genesis 32:25-26 (NIV)

"What is your name?" the man asked. "Jacob," he answered. The man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have struggled with God and with men, and you have won; so your name will be Israel.

Genesis 32:27-28 (GNT)

God does his deepest work in your life in your identity.

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Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”

Genesis 32:29b-30 (NIV)

casting all your cares...on Him, for He cares about you

1 Peter 5:7 (AMP)

The Biblical Pattern of Lament

C – Complain

A – Appeal

R – Remind

E – Express

What to Do When I Am in a Struggle with God

1. Tell God what I think is un fair or painful.

I've lost all hope, so what if God kills me? I am going to state my case to him...listen to my words of explanation. I am ready to state my case, because I know I am in the right. Are you coming to accuse me, God?... Speak first, O God, and I will answer. Or let me speak, and you answer me. What are my sins? What wrongs have I done? What crimes am I charged with? Why do you avoid me? Why do you treat me like an enemy? Are you trying to frighten me? I'm nothing but a leaf; you are attacking a piece of dry straw.

Job 13:15, 17-19a, 22-25 (GNT)

2 Keys to Lamenting

- Complain to God, Not about God
 - Complain in Faith

2. Appeal to God's Nature.

3. Remind God of what He said.

Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac—O Lord, you told me, ‘Return to your own land and to your relatives.’ And you promised me, ‘I will treat you kindly.’¹⁰ I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness...O Lord, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me... But you promised me, ‘I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants.

Genesis 32:9-12a (NLT)

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4. Express My Total Trust in God

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty,¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

The Sovereign Lord is my strength!

Habakkuk 3:17-19a (NLT)

Discussion Question:

1. Even though we struggle with other people and ourselves, our real struggle is with God. We doubt his wisdom and want to be in control. Why does God love it when we wrestle with him like Jacob did?
2. God does his deepest work in your life in your *identity*. When he can change the way you see yourself, it changes you. In what way has God helped you see yourself differently? How has that impacted your life?
3. Is “lamenting” a familiar concept to you? Which step in *The Biblical Pattern of Lament* is the most difficult for you to do? Which one is the easiest? Why?
4. You can lament out of anger, frustration, fatigue, disappointment, or even fear. What are you tired of tolerating in your life that you need to turn into a lament?
5. When beginning a lament with something that is painful, it’s important to complain to God, not about God. You actually leverage your faith and tell God that you know he will listen. Are you ready to take this brave step?
6. God makes many promises in the Bible. Share some of your favorites with the group. What promises has God made in the Bible that are important to you, and why?

Putting it into Practice:

In this coming week, reserve some private time with God and lament using the elements of CARE acrostic. Accept God’s blessing as you surrender the things you don’t understand or can’t control.

Prayer Direction:

Express thanks for learning the prayer of lament. Thank God that he cares. Tell him you are grateful that you can cast your cares on him, and release the burden of worrying about the things you can’t control. Boldly confess that you want him to be the Lord and manager of every area of your life.