

JUST BE HONEST

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Chapter 1: Strong Faith Struggles

1. Why do you think it's tempting for Christians to hide or downplay their stories of struggle?
2. "We typically have a difficult time with difficult emotions ... And in many parts of Christian culture there's an imbalance towards positivity, progress, and praise." Where have you experienced this personally or seen it culturally?
3. How did it impact you to read so many biblical stories of strong faith struggling with God?
4. What might hold you back from being honest with God? How can you take a step toward weeping and wrestling with him?

Chapter 2: Jesus Wept and Wrestled

1. Of all the different scenes in this chapter, which portrait of Jesus stood out to you the most?
2. Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb even though he was about to raise him from the dead. How does this impact your view on the value of tears?
3. What are your initial reactions when reading about Jesus struggling with the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross?

4. How does Jesus' example of weeping and wrestling broaden your understanding of becoming more Christ-like?
5. How does it help you to know that Jesus knows and feels your pain?

Chapter 3: Learning to Lament

1. How do the four rhythms of lament compare with the way you typically pray?
2. Which aspect of lament comes most naturally? Which feels most difficult?
3. Explained pain and expressed protest tend to be less common components of prayer today. Why do you think that is?
4. Lament “enables you to engage the Lord—to weep, to wrestle, to worship—even when praise feels far away.” Why might that be helpful to someone in the midst of suffering?
5. Think about your personal suffering or the pain you see in the world. Take some time to work through each rhythm of lament in response to one of these situations. Consider writing out your prayer to help yourself in the process.

Chapter 4: Groaning without Grumbling

1. How are lament and grumbling similar? What key differences set them apart?
2. What might the consequences be if, while trying to avoid grumbling, we also avoid lamenting?
3. Compared to responses like finding the silver lining, counting your blessings, or playing the thankful game, what unique benefits does lament offer?
4. How does it help you to know that God covers your groans in grace?

Chapter 5: Sorrowful yet Rejoicing

1. How does it impact you to see that biblical faith can hold joy and sorrow simultaneously?
2. Why might it be hard to be both sorrowful and joyful? Why is it valuable to be both, instead of having to choose one or the other?
3. What stood out to you about Habakkuk's story?
4. Habakkuk wrestled with the Lord, remembered God's redemption, and rejoiced in his salvation. How can you imitate Habakkuk's faith?

Chapter 6: Weep Together

1. Over a third of the Psalms are laments—yet lament is rare in many churches today. Why do you think it has faded from corporate worship?
2. Consider the places where you worship with other believers. Where could there be more space for shared sorrow (through song, prayer, conversation, etc.) when you gather?
3. Listen to a song or two listed in Appendix B. How might it benefit the church to regularly sing songs like this?
4. What steps can you take to help bring lament into the places where you gather with believers?

Chapter 7: Let Others In

1. When you're struggling, how do you speak to others about it? Do you tend toward sugarcoating things, unfiltered sharing, or not speaking about it at all?
2. As Jesus suffered, he relied on a few friends and included them in his pain. Why is it hard to do that?
3. Why is it significant to know that David—a fierce soldier, decorated general, and powerful ruler—also wrote many public songs that were honest about his pain?

4. Sharing your difficulties honestly, wisely, and hopefully can help others in their suffering. How can you do that with people in your life now?

Chapter 8: Bear Their Burdens

1. Many biblical and personal examples were mentioned where lament led to compassionate action. Which example stood out to you the most?
2. Who do you know who is struggling right now? Consider writing a lament prayer on their behalf.
3. Why can it be difficult to just listen to someone as they share their burdens? How does the framework of lament help you?
4. As you think of people who are suffering now, how can you serve them practically or find ways to keep them on your mind?