

Life Group Discussion Guide: The Lament of God (Week 4)

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 3:6-4:26

Ice Breakers: Breaking the Ice

Goal: To explore the concepts of homecoming, second chances, and restoration.

1. What is the longest journey you've ever taken to get back home?
2. Have you ever lost something valuable (like keys or a phone) and refused to stop looking until you found it?
3. When you were a kid, what was your "running away from home" story (even if you only made it to the end of the driveway)?
4. What is a "second chance" story from a movie or book that always moves you?
5. If you could restore one old, broken thing to its original condition (a car, a house, a photo), what would it be?

UP: Connecting with God

Goal: To focus on God's mercy, His role as a Father, and the requirement of true repentance.

1. In **Jeremiah 3:12**, God says, "I am merciful... I will not be angry forever." How does this promise of God's character encourage you to "return" when you've drifted?
2. God calls Himself a "Father" to Israel in **v. 19**. How does viewing God as a Pursuing Father change your perspective on repentance compared to viewing Him only as a Judge?
3. In **Jeremiah 4:1-2**, God lists conditions for returning: putting away detestable things and swearing "in truth, in justice, and in righteousness." Why does God demand "truth" rather than just "sorry"?
4. **Jeremiah 4:3** uses the metaphor of "plowing up fallow ground." What does this tell us about the condition of our hearts before God can plant something new?
5. Looking at **Jeremiah 3:22**, God says, "I will heal your faithlessness." Why is it important to realize that even our ability to stay faithful is something God has to "heal" in us?

Supporting Scriptures:

- **Luke 15:11-32:** The Parable of the Prodigal Son (The ultimate picture of the Pursuing Father).
- **Hosea 6:1:** "Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us."

IN: Connecting with the Life Group

Goal: To practice corporate confession and encourage one another to "plow the hard soil" of the heart.

1. **Jeremiah 3:10** mentions that Judah returned "only in pretense" and not with a whole heart. How can we as a group help each other move past "pretend" spirituality into "whole-hearted" faith?
2. In **v. 22**, the people respond together, "Behold, we come to you." What are the benefits of "returning to God" as a community rather than just as individuals?
3. **Jeremiah 4:4** speaks of "circumcising the heart." What are the "hard places" in our group's shared life (e.g., gossip, lack of prayer, busyness) that need to be cut away?
4. How can we better "shepherd" one another with "knowledge and understanding," as God promises to provide in **Jeremiah 3:15**?
5. When a member of our group is struggling to return to God, how do we represent His "pursuit" without being overbearing or judgmental?

Supporting Scriptures:

- **Joel 2:12-13:** "Rend your hearts and not your garments."
- **1 John 1:7:** Walking in the light together.

OUT: Connecting with the World

Goal: To see how our repentance and God's pursuit of us becomes a blessing to the nations.

1. **Jeremiah 4:2** says that if Israel returns in truth, then "the nations shall bless themselves in him." How does our personal/church health affect our witness to the non-Christian world?
2. Verse 14 asks, "How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?" What are some "cultural thoughts" or "idols" in our city that we need to stop "lodging" with so we can be a clearer light?
3. God's pursuit of His people is meant to be a testimony. How can you share your own "return to God" story with someone this week who thinks God is finished with them?
4. In **Jeremiah 4:19-26**, the prophet laments the coming "waste" of the land. How can we practically care for our city and its people to prevent the "waste" caused by spiritual lostness?
5. God uses "shepherds" to lead people back to Him. In your specific "OUT" context (work, school, gym), who is God asking you to "shepherd" toward His mercy this week?

Supporting Scriptures:

- **2 Corinthians 5:20:** We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us.
- **1 Peter 2:9:** Being a "royal priesthood" called out of darkness to tell of His excellencies.