

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are taken from *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour* by Gordon D. Fee, Douglas Stuart as well as commentaries on Lamentations by John Calvin and Phillip Ryken

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Lamentations 3:1-3 I have seen affliction

Notes (See back page for authors)
As Fee and Stuart note, *Lamentations consists of five laments written in response to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The laments, which correspond to the five chapters, are carefully composed pieces of literature, similar in form and content to Psalms 74 and 79 (cf. Ps 89). Together they express deep anguish over Zion's desolation and Israel's exile—recognized to be well deserved—and mourn the sorry plight of those who were left in the now desolate and dangerous city, while raising some larger questions about justice and the future. The whole is written basically from the perspective of those who have been left behind.*

The most striking literary feature of these poems is that they are a series of acrostics, where the first letter of each verse starts with a succeeding letter of the (22-letter) Hebrew alphabet. The first two poems thus have 22 stanzas...The third poem also has twenty-two stanzas, but in this case all three lines in each stanza begin with the same letter. The fourth poem returns to the form of the first two,...while the fifth, although not an acrostic, is nonetheless composed of 22 lines. ...throughout the whole, the lament form itself implicitly encourages hope—though nothing is guaranteed—in the midst of suffering.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is the form of Lamentations?
 2. What is the theme of Lamentations?
 3. Who is speaking in chapter 3?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 95a²
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to rejoice with hope in suffering, by God's help
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Lamentations 3:25-33 The Lord is good

Notes (See back page for authors)
Jeremiah continues, in the middle of destruction and lament, finding hope in God. Often when nice things happen to us we exclaim, "God is good!" The danger is that we might think God is good when things are going well, but when things are going pear-shaped we might not. A family member used to say, "God is good – all the time." That is a helpful way to remember what Jeremiah exclaims here. God is good. All the time.

God is good, Jeremiah says, even in calamity. How does Jeremiah know? How do we know?

God controls all things. V28 – see Jer 32:42. Everything is under His control Not one solitary molecule is not. Calamity might be due to my own sin. It clearly is in Lamentations, it often is in life. If you face trouble, if you face calamity, due to your own sin directly or to the direct sin of others, God is still in control.

God works all things for good. How could there be good from destruction of Jerusalem? Discipline for some Jews to the saving of their souls v40-42 5:21. God will bring about the exile v31. Ultimately, God will bring about the incarnation as the only true hope.

But is it good for everyone? Does God work all things for good for the entire human race? No. God is good to those who are His. And those who are His will hope in Him (v21,24,26). Those who are His will wait and look eagerly for Him v25. Those who are His will seek Him v25b. Are you His? He is good and will work good for you

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. When is God good?
 2. How does Jeremiah know/remember that God is good?
 3. For whom does God work good?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 95a
1. Pray that you and your family will hope in God always
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading Lamentations 3:19-24 I will put my hope in Him!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

We continue the statements of powerful hope in the middle of laments, woe, and distress. God’s mercies keep me from being consumed. God’s compassions are new every morning. And...

God’s faithfulness is great. It is great. It is abounding. It is exceeding. No matter what my circumstances, my God is faithful. Do you believe these three things? Do you remember them? If you haven’t, I urge you to memorise Lamentations 3:21-23 (or even 20-26) Verse 24 sums up the response to v22-23.

The Lord is my portion. I will hope in Him. Sometimes when being served food, especially at a large gathering with lots of people, we might wonder, “Will I get a big enough portion?” God gives himself to us – generously. He is our portion. (see Ps 16:5). Calvin reminds us that *we cannot stand firm in adversities, except we be content with God alone and his favour.* Is God enough for your soul? Are you fully persuaded that God alone is enough?

If not, you’ll have great difficulty weathering the storms of life. Whether trouble comes as a result of God’s discipline for particular sin, or as a general result of living in a fallen world, God must be your satisfying portion. He is enough.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Jeremiah remember about God’s faithfulness?
2. What does Jeremiah remember about God?
3. What happens when Jeremiah remembers these things?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 95a
1. Confess, with your family, that the Lord is enough. Pray you always remember that
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Lamentations 3:46-54 Our enemies are against us!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

We’ll not consider all the details of this long acrostic lament in chapter 3. But we do see clear details emerge. Jeremiah mourns, with Jerusalem, because “all our enemies are against us.” V46

This, of course, was the historical reality which Jeremiah witnessed. See 2 Ki 25. Fee and Stuart note that *the siege lasted for two years, as tens of thousands huddled in Jerusalem, hoping that Yahweh would intervene. Instead, the Babylonian troops finally breached her walls, raped her women, and slaughtered many of her inhabitants. In light of subsequent conditions in Jerusalem, our author wonders rhetorically whether death might not have been the better option.*

There was a severe famine promised to God’s disobedient in Deut 28 in which they would eat their own children. These “promised people” living in their “promised land” were being removed and their land was being destroyed.

The lamenter is certain that these enemies deserved worse judgment than God’s people! His hope, Judah’s hope, is that God would eventually judge them too. V64-66

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who is against Jerusalem?
2. Why is Jerusalem facing this horror?
3. Don’t the Babylonians deserve worse? How can this be just?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 95a
1. Ask God to deliver you from all His and your enemies
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Lamentations 3:1-9 The Lord is against us!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Even more difficult that knowing that their enemies were against them, for Jeremiah, was the hard reality that God Himself was against them. Listen to the evidence Jeremiah piles up.

- V1 Affliction by rod of His wrath
- V2 He made me walk in darkness
- V3 He turned His hand against me
- V4 He aged me
- V5 He surrounded me with woe
- V7 He has weighed me down with heavy chains
- V8 He ignores my prayer
- V9 He makes me walk in hard paths
- V11 He has torn me to pieces like a wild animal would
- V15 He filled me with bitterness, made me drink poison
- V16 He has broken my teeth – eating nothing but grit and gravel

- V17 He has taken peace from my soul
- V18 He caused my strength and hope to perish

For Judah, this was due to their sin. God was bringing judgment. We may face difficulties for the same reason. Or, we may face them because God is working for His own glory.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Judah facing this trouble?
2. What are some of the evidences God was against them?
3. Why might we face trouble??

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 95a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to seek God in times of trouble, with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Lamentations 3:19-24 His mercies never end!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

In the middle of this book, in the middle of this chapter, in the middle of this lament in a book of laments, Jeremiah turns to statements of powerful hope. This is not hope and joy just because things are going well. This is hope in the face of hopelessness. When he considers the reality of Jerusalem’s destruction, of God’s judgment, he gets depressed (V20).

Yet. Yet he remembers some truth about God. Yet he finds hope – the hope that he had lost (v18). He determines that he is going to remember 4 things that are true.

God’s mercies keep me from being consumed. It may be hard – VERY hard. Yet God’s mercies remain for His people. He will work it for good. Ultimately we are not consumed in the eternal fires of hell because God in His mercy poured that punishment out on Christ

God’s compassions are new every morning. The word is of the strong, tender care of a father for his children. Day after day after day of trouble. Yet, each morning new compassions. That, if nothing else, keeps me from being consumed. Why? Because God cares. Jesus told his disciples, “In this world you will have trouble. Be of good courage, I have overcome the world. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.” Find hope in God’s daily compassions.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Jeremiah remember about God’s mercies?
2. What does Jeremiah remember about God’s compassions?
3. What happens when he doesn’t remember these things?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 95a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer in God’s mercies and God’s compassions.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member