



## Discussion Guide for “Shadow Self” *Good Grief* Week 5

We build our lives around all kinds of things that make us feel secure, in control or valuable. But these things cannot give us the meaning and purpose we crave. In Lamentations 4, we see God strip these things away from the people of Jerusalem that they might return to worshipping God alone. How can we return to God before our own idolatry ruins us?

### Scriptures for Further Reading

[Lamentations 4](#)

[Psalm 139:23-24](#)

[Luke 13:1-5](#)

[Romans 1:18-25](#)

[Hebrews 12:7-11](#)

### Passage for Sacred Reading:

A sacred reading is a method of reading Scripture that invites God to speak to us through the text. If you have never done a sacred reading, here is [a simple step-by-step guide](#). This week’s passage is [Lamentations 4](#).

### Questions for Discussion

1. Review the concept of the ‘shadow self’. Why does Merton say it doesn’t exist? What kinds of things do you see people clothing their shadow selves in?
2. Reread Lamentations 4. Make a list of the things the people of Jerusalem have had stripped away from them. What parallel values do you see in our world?
3. Read Hebrews 12:7-11. How can Lamentations 4 be seen as divine discipline?
4. Our shadow selves are driven by fear, anger or shame. Which tends to drive you? What does God say to each of these emotions?
5. What is Christian meditation? How does it combat our shadow selves?