

Week of March 11, 2012
I Call on You, Lord

Passage Outline:

1. **Hear Me** - Psalm 86:1-7
2. **Teach Me** - Psalm 86:8-13a
3. **Help Me** - Psalm 86:15-16

What This Lesson Is About:

Because God is both merciful and powerful, we can humbly approach Him with confidence. He will hear and respond to our prayers according to His loving character.

How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

This lesson can help you improve the quality and depth of your prayer life.

1. Hear Me - Psalm 86:1-7

Psalm 86:1-7

¹Hear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. ²Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you. ³Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. ⁴Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ⁵You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. ⁶Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my cry for mercy. ⁷In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.

- A. Note the pattern David uses in this Psalm: a request is made followed by a reason.
 - i. Verse 1: Petition – the LORD listen and answer; Reason - David was poor and needy.
 - ii. Verse 2: Petitions - to protect his life and to save His servant; Reasons – David was faithful and trusted in the Lord.
 - iii. Verse 3: Petition - the Lord to be gracious; Reason – David called on God all day long.
 - iv. Verse 4: Petition - God to bring joy to His servant’s life; Reason – David turned to the Lord in hope.
- B. Does David sound a little self-righteousness here? None of us should feel we are entitled to God’s blessings of listening to or answering our prayers, protecting us, saving us, being gracious to us, or bringing us joy. The truth is we do not deserve any of these.
- C. David did not pray out of a sense of self-righteousness but rather self-awareness. He based his personal prayers on the relationship God had established with him.
- D. In verse 5, he revealed his heart’s gratitude toward God because he realized the Lord is good. For us “good” is just okay. But in Hebrew, “Good” is absolutely spectacular!
- E. Because of God’s spectacular goodness, God also stood ready to forgive, which by the way ONLY God can truly do. People can and should forgive one another and seek to restore broken relationships. However, only God can forgive us in a way that expunges our misconduct from the divine record, creates in us a clean heart, and empowers us to restore relationships with others.
- F. Not only will the Lord hear, literally to give ear to prayer, but He will also listen, literally pay attention

to his prayer. What is the difference between “hear” and “listen?” _____

- G. The confidence we have in prayer is that the Lord will answer. As David prayed to the Lord in his time of distress, he was convinced God would not only hear his prayer but would answer in a meaningful and beneficial way.

How to improve the depth and quality of my Prayer Time?

Several habits have helped me in prayer over the years. First, I read my Bible before I pray. I discover wonderful insights about God upon which to base my prayers. Second, I discovered that prayer is more *talking with God* (a dialogue) than *talking to God* (a monologue). Finally, I have found it helpful to quiet myself before I pray; too many external or internal distractions prevent me from sensing God’s presence.

Take a reading on your prayer time:

	Most Times	Sometimes	Almost Never
I read my Bible before I pray.....	_____	_____	_____
I talk <u>WITH</u> God rather than <u>TO</u> God.....	_____	_____	_____
I quiet myself before I pray.....	_____	_____	_____

If you have not already done so, read the article “Prayer: A Word Study” contained in your preparation package you picked up last Sunday.

2. Teach Me - Psalm 86:8-13a

Psalm 86:8-13a

⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. ⁹ All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. ¹⁰ For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. ¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. ¹² I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. ¹³ For great is your love toward me.

- A. David continued his prayer by acknowledging the uniqueness of the Lord.
- B. There is no god like our God. All the so-called gods simply don’t compare to the True God.
- C. David then extended his praise to the uniqueness of God’s works, a reference to His creative and redemptive activities.
- D. Since God made all the nations, one day they will all join before Him in worship to praise and honor His name. Interestingly, the word *honor* comes from a Hebrew word meaning to be heavy. Pray to the Lord for the day when His name weighs heavily upon the hearts and minds of people all over the world.
- E. When such honor comes, heartfelt worship will not be far behind.
- F. David continued to focus his prayer on God’s uniqueness, saying “For You are great.” This was both a sincere expression of his faith in God as well as a reminder to himself that the Lord was greater than any problem he faced.
- G. In light of God’s greatness and repeated wonders, David confessed to the Lord, You alone are God.
- H. David asked God, “Teach me Your way.” To be taught requires two attitudes:

- i. A teachable attitude: If one is not willing to learn or to be taught, what can one really learn?
 - ii. Once taught, a willing attitude to live by that truth, otherwise the lesson was NOT really learned.
- I. David asked the Lord to give him “an undivided heart.” The idea here is to have a heart and mind so concentrated and focused on pleasing God that nothing divides my attention and direction.

How Well Do I Know God? Do I Desire to Know Him Better?

Sometimes I can rely on what I have already learned of God. And that’s okay, but... Do I have a desire to grow and improve in my knowledge of God? I am constantly growing in other areas of knowledge, why not in my knowledge of God? So, where am I in the balance of “knowing God” and “desiring to know Him better?”

Knowing God

- I know very little about God and His ways.
- I have a general knowledge of God.
- After years of walking with God, I feel I know Him pretty well.

Desiring to Know God Better

- I need to work on what I already know.
- God can teach me more if He wants to.
- I long for God to teach me more.

3. Help Me - Psalm 86:15-16

Psalm 86:15-16

¹⁵ But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. ¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant.

- A. When David said “the Lord was slow to anger” he used an illustrative phrase in Hebrew. Literally he said “the Lord has long nostrils.” The idea was that God’s anger against sin was kindled in His mind and then took the form of a fiery blast from his nostrils. Thankfully God had long nostrils, meaning the wrath took time to develop into the fiery blast. How much time? Time enough for the sinner to repent!
- B. God was rich in love and faithfulness. We have encountered God’s faithful love already and it is a key expression in Hebrew meaning that we can really count on God. He is dependable in His loving nature.
- C. David wanted God to turn to him and grant him mercy. Justice is to get what we deserve. Mercy is to get what we don’t deserve. In mercy, God would turn and acknowledge David.
- D. David expresses this undeserved mercy when he refers to himself not only as a servant, low by most standards, but “the son of a servant,” a status even lower. Therefore only God’s strength and might would overcome David’s troubles.

What is the Focus of My Prayer?

When I pray, what percentage of the time does my prayer focus on God's deliverance for myself? What percentage does my prayer focus on God's deliverance for others? What percentage does my prayer focus on God receiving the glory for what He does for me and others.

____% primarily focus on deliverance I need;

____% primarily focus on the deliverance others need;

____% primarily focus on God's receiving the glory in the deliverance He provides;

Based on this analysis, what changes do I need to make in my prayer life this week?

Biblical Truths in Focus

1. We can call on the Lord and expect Him to answer our prayers based on His character and His desire to be gracious to us.
2. Psalm 86:11 serves as a great prayer starter for those who want to please God with their lives.
3. God's people can rely on His help because of His faithful love and dependability towards us.
4. God's strength is our only hope to survive the trials of this life.