

Psalm 86

Read Psalm 86:1-7: To be a follower of God, we need to be intellectually honest. We cannot live without God's continual intervention. Our nature is to deny that; and to try to live untethered. The believer has gotten over their illusions of independence. The new life strategy becomes less about maneuvering through today's issues. It's about putting yourself into God's will. He will create a paradigm shift that will scoop us up. As a man of the world it is on me to make it all happen. As a Christian I just obey God. It's on God now.

This psalm is about a saint who has taken steps of faith; but now he finds himself in a predicament. This humble servant has done what he has been told; and now he feels like he is *dangling* out there. The fear of the LORD is a factor in motivating us to walk according to His word.

*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. **10** With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! **11** Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. (Psalm 86:9-11)*

We are all extremely vulnerable and are unable to survive or thrive without God's intervention and mercy. The word of God opens our eyes to the truth about the miracle of life. We do not become naive. We become aware of even more things that we never controlled. It is uncomfortable to have doubts and fears. We can choose to worry or pray.

Nobody wants to be at anyone's mercy. Living in undisturbed peace is probably not a path to long term spiritual health. Success tends to confuse us about our personal independence. It is normal to insulate ourselves from the perils of bankruptcy or sickness or crime. It is scary to be at someone's mercy in this heartless world. God is not going to let his followers be abused or neglected. He is full of mercy and kindness. The walk of faith is to take a chance on what God has told us to do; and experience his deliverance. Sometimes we have to be forced to take a chance.

Growing in grace also requires that we are engaged in the Kingdom of God. It requires a level of trust. We cannot get too far just watching others' lives. Showing up at church every week is just a start.

To develop faith requires taking risks. We have to have *skin in the game*. God makes sure that we encounter situations where there is a cost or sacrifice to following him. We have to get *in over our heads* to see God at work. There will be uncertainties and mysteries of how things will work out. Otherwise there would be no faith required. Standing near an exit is not faith. I constantly find things that are going south becoming rescued.

Read Psal, 86:8-13: There are no other gods to deliver us. God is killing our idols publicly all the time.

Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' (isaiah 46:9-11)

Knowing that there is one god is not the same as experiencing it and being forced to trust it. We get put into doubtful situations. We find ourselves in scenarios that seem to be heading towards trouble. These experiences reveal that we still have things that we rely upon instead of God. If my plan falls apart, does it mean that God is not taking care of my best interests? We have to be re-taught that there is only one god. We also have to learn how to praise God in higher praise.

What causes a man to praise God? How can you train an egocentric being to get excited about the greatness of another? Even our praises tend to be surrounding our own life circumstances. What causes a man to explore God's power and unique mercy and holiness? It is certainly not a normal thought pattern. We tend to be focused on our little world.

Praise frequently comes from deliverances. David had some of the highest praises in the bible. He was in and out of serious trouble over and over. Was he a unfairly-tortured soul...or was he on the fastest path to learn about praise? He was delivered from so many life and death situations by God. If we never let ourselves get into *a trust position*, we lose out on the deliverances and joy. God has a way of *getting us into the game*; even though we may think that we are playing it safe.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with

lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)

It is an illusion to think that there is any way to *play it safe*. To not engage in the path of righteousness is the most perilous path. God made me. He made my brain. He made my country, and my leaders, and my air, and my heart. **Fearing God is to accept that God is good; and that he has everything under control.** In a sense, **fearing God is to not fear all of the other stuff.** Either God is really in charge, or he is not.

At any given moment, God is balancing all of the orbits of the planets in the universe. At any given moment; God is preventing the pathogens in our own throat from growing in strength. It is only God who is making our hearts beat. There is no other safe place. Our personal dramas are for our personal development.

Read Psalm 86:14-17: What kinds of things bring us to prayer; and to communicate with God? The threat of harm or personal loss is an easy way to get us to pray. I find myself in need of assistance from others. God will let me work on a problem. Sometimes I get nowhere. Then God sends a helper to fix my problem. I did my part; but God showed me that I had nothing to do with the solution. Without those kinds of ongoing situations and dramas, I find myself *dialing down* my prayers and fading spiritually.

Consider Adam and Eve. They probably had no real pressures. No bills, no bad neighbors, no taxes, no disease, etc... They got into spiritual trouble. God's discipline is designed to heal us. The effort to work and daily disappointments were prescriptive to their spiritual growth.