

Facilitator Notes for "Knowing God by Name"  
**Lesson 7 – ADONAI –Lord and Master –Psalm 86**

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.**

## Questions

Before we consider *service* and *obedience* to *Adonai*, our *Lord* and *Master*, we must first consider what kind of *Master* we are serving, for this will make all the difference in how we respond! **Psalm 86** is a **song of trust** written by King David, a man after God's own heart. Several times in this prayer, David address God as *Adonai (Lord)* -- *Lord* and *Master* as well as *Yahweh (LORD)* – the *Self-Existent, Ever-Present One* (which will be our next lesson). As we consider **Psalm 86**, we will take particular notice of *who* God is and *what* he offers those who know and honor him.

- Psalm 86** is a personal, intimate prayer that David wrote to his *Lord* and *Master*. As you read the Psalm, mark each occurrence of the word *Lord*. (You might want to read the Psalm in a couple of different translations.) From what you have read, what words would you use to describe David's relationship to God? His feelings toward God?

Some possibilities are: Intimate, trusting, affectionate, familiar, trusting, loving, dependent, connected . . . .

David's feelings toward God: grateful, needy, loving, respectful, reliant . . .

- ♥ What words would you use to describe *your* relationship to God? Your feelings *toward* God?
- ♥ What factors do you think were most influential in the development of your concept of God? In other words, where have you gotten your ideas about who God is and what kind of relationship you can have with him? Do you think these factors and ideas are trustworthy? Why or why not?

It is always good to examine *who* and *what* we think God is and where our ideas and feelings came from. Are our beliefs and concepts based on Scripture? On what we have been taught about God? On what others have modeled for us? On our personal experience with God? It is not uncommon to hold "false narratives" about God. These untrue and incorrect ideas and feelings must be held up to the light of Scripture and must be rejected if wrong and replaced with true narratives that is backed by our personal and intimate relationship with God. Jesus came to show us who God really is and getting to know him is the best way to correct our concepts of God. We do this through reading and meditating on the Gospels – the accounts of his life on earth – and through developing a personal, intimate relationship with him – talking to him and listening to what he has to say to us. Jesus said that we live in him and he in us. Our relationship with him is meant to be personal and loving.

- ♥ What do you see in David's expressions of love and trust toward God that you don't share right now, but you wish that you did? What expressions of love and trust *do* reflect your experience with God?

- In the chart below, note how David describes **himself** and how he describes **God**.

Verse	David	Verse	God
86:1	poor and needy; needs God's help	86:5	forgiving, good, abounding in love to all who call on God and ask for help
86:2	devoted to God; claims God as "my" God; servant who trusts in God	86:8	No pagan god can compare to God; no god can do what God does
86:4	servant; life depends on God (NLT); he lifts up his soul to God (NIV)	86:10	God is great, performs miracles (marvelous things), he alone is God
86:12	praises the Lord his God with all his heart; glorify God's name forever	86:13	God has great love towards David; God has rescued him from death
86:14	being attacked by those who don't know God and don't care about God	86:15	compassionate (merciful), gracious, slow to anger, abounding (full of) in love and faithfulness (truth)
86:16	servant; son of maidservant	86:17	good, helpful, comforting

- ♥ How closely do you identify with David's description of himself? What phrases on your chart *don't* describe you right now? How closely do you identify with David's description of Lord God? What phrases on your chart *don't* describe your experience with God right now?
- ♥ Is David's description and experience of God supposed to be everyone's experience? Why or why not? We have already learned that God is eternal and unchanging (El Olam). God is not one thing with one person and something different with another. God is always and forever exactly who he is. Therefore, we can assume that how he relates to one of his children in love is how he desires to relate to all of his children. God reveals himself to us (we would know nothing about God if he didn't show us who he was) because he wants to be known and loved. What we see of David's relationship to God in the Psalms is given to us as an example of what is available in our relationship to God. If David's description of *Adonai – Lord* and *Master* does not match your own, what do you think it would take for you to experience *Adonai* in this way?
- ♥ How do you think David came to *know* and *experience* his *Lord* in this way? We get to know God the same way we get to intimately know any person – we talk, listen, spend time with them, include them, think about them, learn all we can about them, do things together, share, serve and be served, give and receive, etc. How *easy* or *hard* would it be for you to trust and obey the *Lord* portrayed by David in **Psalm 86**? How would you describe what kind of *Lord* and *Master* God is (86:5, 15) to someone who does not know him this way?

3. Consider David's "I" statements in this Psalm (from both translations). What has he chosen to do?

86:2	I am devoted to you – he chooses to devote himself to God
86:3	I call on you all day long (constantly) – he chooses to call out to God for help
86:4 (NIV)	I lift up my soul – he chooses a spiritual dependency on God
86:7	I will call on you whenever trouble strikes – he chooses to depend on God, not himself
86:12	I will praise you; I will give glory to your name forever – he chooses to praise and worship God.

- ♥ What connection, if any, do you see between David's choices and actions and his intimate relationship with God? All of David's choices are relational and they strengthen his relationship with God. He chooses to be close to God, to reach out to him, to depend on him. As with any person, this will build intimacy. Which do you think came first – David's choices and actions or his intimate relationship with God? How so? Intimacy is not automatic and doesn't "just happen" with any person, including God. Intimacy is always preceded by choices and action and results from effort given. God promises that if we choose to come near to him, he will come near to us (James 4:8). If we seek God with all our heart, we will find him (Prov. 8:17; Jeremiah 29:13; Deut. 4:29). If we seek God, he will give us a heart to know him (Jer. 24:7). If you made the same choices as David did and carried them out consistently, how do you think it would affect your relationship to God? Would it make a difference? Which of David's choices and actions are "easy" for you to do? Which of his choices and actions are "difficult" for you to do? Why?
  - ♥ If you made the same choices that David made in the chart above, what, specifically, would these actions look like in your life? In other words, how could you practically carry them out? Do you think these actions are possible for you to do? Why or why not? Are they optional? Why or why not?
4. David sees himself as *Adonai's* servant and acknowledges his *dependence* on God as his Lord. He expressed his dependence by asking for those things that he, himself, could not make happen and over which he had no control. What, specifically, did David ask of God?

86:1	Hear me and answer me	86:2	Guard my life; protect me; save me
86:3	Have mercy on me	86:4	Give joy and happiness to your servant
86:6	hear and listen to my prayer, my urgent cry for mercy and help	86:11	Teach me your ways so that I can live according to your truth; give me an undivided heart (pure heart) that I may fear or honor you. (Fear means "reverent awe.")
86:16	Turn to me, look down on me; give me strength and save me		
86:17	Send a sign of your favor or goodness – that my enemies might be put to shame		

- ♥ Which of David's requests would be your heart-felt request today? How sure do you think David was that God would give what he asked for? How sure are you? On what do we base our "sureness"? **We base our "sureness" on God's character (who he is) and his word (what he says he will do). He will never act contrary to his character and he will never lie or break his promise.**
- ♥ As a servant of *Adonai*, David bows before God, admitting he was "poor and needy," and asks God for those things he could not do for himself. Did David's position before God and the requests he made of God demean or humiliate David in any way? Was David groveling? Why or why not? What do you see in **Psalm 86** that supports your answers? **David is confident of his own strengths and abilities, as well as God's. He sees and understands the difference between himself and God. His statements are statements of love and dependence, not that of groveling. Dependence on God humbles us, but never humiliates us (1 Peter 5:5-6). Dependence on God is acknowledging the truth about God and about ourselves – that he is God and we aren't.**
- ♥ What did God need to do for David before David could serve and obey God (**86:11**)? **Teach him and give him heart that would respond to God.** What application does this have for your life? What do you think David meant by an "undivided" heart (**86:11 NIV**)? How would you describe your heart? Can you change your own heart? Why or why not? **We cannot change our own hearts. We can make choices that puts our heart in a place where God can change it, but we are dependent on God to change the hardness or rebellion of our heart and to give us a soft and obedient heart. (To learn much about your heart, do a word search for "heart(s)" in the Psalms with an online Bible (for example, www.biblegateway.com) or use a concordance to do the same thing.)**

#### OUR OBEDIENCE TO ADONAI, OUR LORD AND MASTER

**Obedience** – The Hebrew word for *obey* literally means "to hear." The implication is that if we truly hear and understand what God has said, we will respond with obedient action. In other words, obedient action is the proof that we have *really* heard what God has directed us to do. So, obedience is a response: one *hears* or *grasps* what has been communicated, and then *acts* upon it. Our actions are always the true indicator of our relationship with God. In both the Old and New Testaments, obedience is never presented apart from a love relationship with God. Obedience to God's commands apart from a love relationship results in drudgery and duty, but obedience that is motivated by a loving relationship results in freedom and joy. Someone has wisely said that "an **obedience** problem is a **love** problem." Difficulty in obeying is not solved by **trying harder**, but by **getting to know God better!**

5. What is the first and most important command God gives to those he has created (**Joshua 22:5; Matthew 22:34-38**)?

Love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, obey his commands, hold fast to him and serve him with all your heart and all your soul;  
 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

- ♥ What are some things you do to obey God's first and greatest commandment (**Matthew 22:37-38**)? How do you feel about this command? Is it possible? Optional? Desirable? Worthwhile? Beneficial?
  - ♥ Why do you think God puts love before obedience? Obedience without love is not a relationship – it is servitude. Sometimes we view obedience as a list of difficult demands put on us by a stern, hard-to-please God. However, God asking for obedience is always motivated by his love for us and he asks obedience for our good, not his. His commands are given to protect us, to keep us from reaping the consequences of actions and attitudes that will hurt and harm us. Why do you think we often make *obedience to God* more important than *love for God*? Which is easier or you – *love* or *obedience*?
  - ♥ What would it take for you to absolutely trust and obey someone who is "lord" or "master" over you? What would it take for you to absolutely trust and obey *Adonai* as your *Lord* and *Master*?
6. What connection do you see between *love* and *obedience* in the following Scriptures?

John 14:15, 21, 23-24	John 15:9-11	1 John 5:2-3
<p>If we love God, we will obey his commands. Love is not a feeling; it is action. Jesus says it is not really possible to separate love and obedience. Love, obedience and relationship all go together. God loves us and tells us how to live. We show our love to God by obeying his commands about living life. God love is shown by his living in us – and never leaving us alone. His Spirit in us is the One who gives us the power to obey.</p>	<p>Jesus loves us with the same love that the Father has for him. We are to stay vitally connected to this love which will bring us great joy. We stay connected to his love by obeying his commands – living the way he has shown us to live. Obeying his commands is for our good and benefit. Obeying his commands (living life God's way) results in joy because we are being and doing what we were created to do. This will always give us joy.</p>	<p>We cannot separate love and obedience and we return God's love for us by obeying his commands <b>which are not burdensome or difficult!</b> If obedience seems difficult and impossible, we have the wrong idea of what obedience is.</p>

- ♥ Is it possible to *obey* God without *loving* him? We can try to keep a list of rules, but this is not what God meant obedience to be. Is it possible to *love* God without *obeying* him? The above verses would indicate that the answer is no – it is not possible. However, our definition and understanding of obedience may be different than God's. On what do you base your answer?
- ♥ How do we know what God's commands are? God's commands (directions about living life or living life God's way) are found in God's written Word – the Bible. Is it possible to keep all of God's commands all the time? Why or why not? Does God expect us to keep all his commands all the time? Why or why not?

To try to keep all of God's commands (living life God's way) would require perfection and certainly would be difficult and burdensome to attempt. Jesus said that his commands are not burdensome or difficult (**1 John 5:3**) and his yoke was easy and his burden light (**Matt. 11:28-30**). It is clear that God's idea of obedience is linked to a love relationship that results in great joy.

Relationship is the key to obedience. God never intended us to do obedience alone. Obedience is more personal than keeping a list of rules or commands. Obedience is yoking ourselves to Jesus and learning from him how to live life. This would be difficult, if not impossible, apart from an intimate, close relationship in which we can hear what Jesus is saying to us by his Spirit who lives in us. Obedience begins with remaining or abiding or staying vitally connected with Jesus (**John 15**). Obedience is more of a moment by moment process where the Holy Spirit will direct us what to personally do in the present moment. As we stay connected to Jesus (through his Word and in

relationship to him), the Spirit will lead and guide us and show us how to live our lives. This, after all, is how Jesus lived his life and was obedient to the Father. He lived by the power of the Spirit and only did what he saw his Father doing and only said what he heard his Father saying (**John 5:19-20; John 8:28-29; John 14:24**). If Jesus lived life this way – how much more should we learn to live life this way also. This is what true obedience is all about and if we live this way we WILL experience God's love and joy.

If we continue in disobedience, God's love for us is constant and does not change, but we may become warped in our perception his love. When we fail, God does not condemn us – for he knows we are "dust" (**Psalms 103: 8-14**). God never expects perfection (just progress!) and if we disobey or sin he has provided the means for us to begin again, with a clean and cleansed heart. This is what confession, forgiveness and cleansing are all about (1 John 1:9). We can begin again, learn from our failures and watch as God works **everything** together for good in our lives – even our disobedience.

### OUR SERVICE TO ADONAI, OUR LORD AND MASTER

*Service – Adonai is our Lord and Master and we are his servants.* How do we serve God? In our culture, one does not aspire to be a servant. We spend most of our life working ourselves into a place where we can be served, rather than serve. We often see the ones who get waited on and served as the fortunate and privileged. When asked what the first and greatest commandment was in the Law, Jesus said it was to love God with all our heart. Then he added, "A second is equally important: Love you neighbor as yourself" (**Matthew 22:39**). The primary way we serve God is to serve others. When we are willing to love and serve, God reveals himself and blesses others *through* us – and the Bible says that when we serve others, it is as if we are serving God (**Matthew 25:37-40; Colossians 3:23-24**).

7. Why is the *Kingdom of God* sometimes called the "upside down" kingdom (**Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:14**)?

Greatness in God's kingdom comes through service to others – just the opposite (upside down) from the kingdom of this world. We are to follow Jesus' example and not "lord over" other people – but humbly serve them just as Jesus came to serve and give his life to "buy us back."

♥ In what specific way can you serve someone, using Jesus as your model? What will this do for you?

8. What do you find out about the importance of service to others in each of the following verses?

Ephesians 2:10	Philippians 2:3-4	1 Peter 4:10
God has specially created each one of us to do the good works that he planned for us to do. This gives us significance and purpose.	Our natural instincts direct us to be self-centered and to put our efforts into taking care of ourselves – because if we don't take care of ourselves, who will? But this way of living will never bring joy or fulfillment. We reflect God's character in us as we serve others in humility – looking out for their interests too.	The gifts and abilities that God has given each one of us are given so that we may serve others, demonstrating to them God's love and generosity. We truly are the only "Jesus" some people know.

♥ Why do you think God puts such an emphasis on serving others? What does it do for you? For God?

♥ If God has prepared, in advance, good works for us to do (**Ephesians 2:10**), how do you suppose we find out what they are?

This, again, shows the importance of obedience being linked with an intimate, loving relationship where we are vitally connected to Jesus, following where he leads us (doing good works) by his Spirit who lives in us. Unless we are in relationship with Jesus and can hear what he is telling us to do, we can never know which of the opportunities to do good works are the ones that God has prepared for US to do. We cannot learn this personal information in the Bible. We need to be in a listening, love relationship with Father, Son and Spirit.

## ♥ Heart Therapy

Just as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one, so the followers of Jesus are one. If we are in the body of Christ, we belong to each other and we are to make every effort to serve, rather than be served. Service to others can take on many different forms and is best done "undercover," rather than for recognition.

Read the "one another" verses listed below and ask God to show you a *person* to serve (perhaps someone in your small group) and some *actions* to take. Continue to be mindful of this person, looking for ways to serve over the next month. Evaluate what your acts of service do for you, God and the one served.

**John 13:34-35/1 Peter 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Romans 15:7; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 4:9; Romans 12:10**

Don't try to do this Heart Therapy Exercise "on your own." Look for where the Spirit is guiding you and listen to what Jesus is telling you to do. This exercise can be a great way practice obedience "in relationship" rather than following rules.

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

## NIV

**Joshua 22:5** But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

**Matthew 22:34-38** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” **37** Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment.

**John 14:15** “If you love me, you will obey what I command.

**21** Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

**23** Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

**John 15:9-11** “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

**1John 5:2-3** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

**Matthew 20:25-27** Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **26** Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**John 13:14** Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Philippians 2:3-4** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. **4** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

**1 Peter 4:10** Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

## NLT

**Joshua 22:5** But be very careful to obey all the commands and the law that Moses gave to you. Love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, obey his commands, be faithful to him, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

**Matthew 22:34-38** But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they thought up a fresh question of their own to ask him. **35** One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” **37** Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment.

**John 14:15** “If you love me, obey my commandments. **21** Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.”

**23** Jesus replied, “All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them. **24** Anyone who doesn’t love me will not do what I say. And remember, my words are not my own. This message is from the Father who sent me.

**John 15:9-11** “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. **10** When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

**1John 5:2-3** We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments. **3** Loving God means keeping his commandments, and really, that isn’t difficult.

**Matthew 20:25-27** But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. **26** But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever wants to be first must become your slave. **28** For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”

**John 13:14** And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

**Philippians 2:3** Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. **4** Don’t think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.

**1 Peter 4:10** God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you.

## Heart Therapy Verses

### NIV

**John 13:34-35** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

**1Peter 1:22** Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

**1Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

**Romans 15:7** Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**1Peter 4:9** Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

**Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

### NLT

**John 13:34-35** So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **35** Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

**1Peter 1:22** Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts.

**1Thessalonians 5:11** So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

**Romans 15:7** So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified.

**Ephesians 4:32** Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

**1Peter 4:9** Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

**Romans 12:10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.