

Bible Study on Psalm 139:1–18
“Knowing the God Who Knows Me”

Opening Prayer

Search us, O God, and know our hearts. As we study your Word today, help us to resist the temptation to hide behind easy answers, religious language, or carefully constructed images of ourselves. Give us the courage to see ourselves honestly, to see others compassionately, and to see you more clearly because you already know us intimately. Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

SERMON SUMMARY

Psalm 139 is one of the most personal prayers in all of Scripture. It is often called the Crown of All Psalms because no other psalm offers a grander view of God and a clearer view of humanity at the same time. In this sermon, we proclaimed that you cannot fully know yourself until you know the God who already knows you. We explored what it truly means to be known by God—not casually observed, but intimately, vulnerably, and covenantally known. And God’s knowledge of us is not by merely observation but due to God’s Spirit connecting to our Spirit and God’s creative power “knitting our physical structure together”. God’s love and investment in us was present before we were born, and follows us everywhere, even into the darkest places. Thanks be to God that God still chooses to stay and love us.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTION: *Choose one or two*

- How well do you think you actually know yourself? Has that answer changed as you’ve gotten older?
- Is there something about yourself you discovered in the last few years that genuinely surprised you?
- Do you find it easier to be honest with God, with others, or with yourself — and why?

INTO THE BIBLE

INSTRUCTIONS: *You do not need to cover every question. If in a group, read the passage together, then select the questions that best fit you or your group. The goal is depth, not speed.*

Read Psalm 139:1–6

In these verses, David declares that God has searched him and known him completely—his sitting and rising, his thoughts, his words before they are even spoken, and every path he walks. He closes this section not with fear but with awe: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me” (V. 6a).

1. David says God has “searched” him. That word in Hebrew is *ḥaqar*, and it is the same word used for miners searching rock for precious metal. What does that image suggest about how God looks at you?
2. The word translated “known” here is the Hebrew word *yada*—a word used for the deepest kind of covenant intimacy, not just information. How does knowing that change the way you hear verse 1?
3. God knows our thoughts before we fully understand them ourselves, and our words before they leave our mouths. Does that feel like good news or uncomfortable news to you? Why?
4. David ends this section in verse 6 by saying this knowledge is “too wonderful” and “too high” to attain. Why do you think his response to being completely exposed is wonder rather than shame?

Read Psalm 139:7–12

David asks where he could possibly go to escape God’s presence. He lists places like heaven, the depths of the grave (Sheol), the limits of the sea, and even the cover of darkness. All these are the extremes of places he’s never been but believes God is there and still concludes that there is nowhere to escape God’s presence and hand that guides him and holds him fast.

1. Why do people sometimes try to hide from God — even people who genuinely believe in God?

2. What are some modern ways people attempt to avoid God's presence without always realizing that's what they're doing?
3. David explores every extremes—heaven, Sheol, the farthest sea, total darkness—and believes that God is already there. Is God's inescapability good news or unsettling news to you in this season of your life?
4. Have you ever experienced a season where God felt completely absent? Looking back, where might God have been present in ways you couldn't see at the time?
5. Verse 12 says "even the darkness is not dark to you." What areas of your life feel the most hidden or the darkest right now? What would it mean to believe that God sees clearly in that exact place?

Read Psalm 139:13–18

David shifts from God's knowledge and presence to God's creative work. God formed him in the womb, saw him before he was fully shaped, and had already written every day of his life. David's response is praise: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

1. What does it mean that God formed you in the womb before your personality developed, before your achievements, before your labels of abilities or disabilities, and before your failures? What does that say about the value of your birth and the foundation of your worth?
2. Verse 14 says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." That phrase in Hebrew describes something that causes awe, and it is the same word used for God's mighty acts. How then should that affect the way we treat the poor? Elderly? Children? People with disabilities? People we disagree with politically? Difficult people?
3. Verse 16 uses the Hebrew word *golem* to describe what God saw and already loved before you were born. The word *golem* means an unformed, not-yet-complete substance. What does it mean to you that God's love for you preceded your ability to earn it or explain it?
4. Think about verse 17 and how David celebrates God's thoughts. Why do you think David finds God's thoughts of him to be weighty? What does it say about the character of God?

5. The final line of verse 18 is simply: “When I awake, I am still with you” (NIV translation). After everything David has wrestled through in this psalm, he settles on companionship with God and not just talk about God (theology). What would it do to your daily life if that single line became the first thing you believed and briefly meditated on every morning instead of reaching for other things first?

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. The sermon suggested that you cannot fully know yourself until you know the God who knows you. Where in your life have you been defining yourself by something other than God’s knowledge of you, such as by performance, by others’ opinions, by comparisons, by your failures, etc.?
2. Who in your life needs to hear that they are seen and known by God? Who should you tell that their worth was woven-in before they could earn it? How might you share that message with them this week?

GOING DEEPER

(For those ready to push further)

- The sermon made the point that in Matthew 7:23, Jesus says to his disciples and to other religious people that on Judgment Day people will say, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons...and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, “I never knew you.” The issue was not information because Jesus obviously knew who they were. The real issue was the lack of true relationship. What is the difference between knowing about God and being in a covenant relationship with God? Where do you honestly think you are on that spectrum?
- Which attribute of God in Psalm 139 most moves you to worship: His knowledge, His presence, His power, or His thoughtfulness and care of you? Why?
- If God’s knowledge of us is truly intimate and covenantal, meaning it is defined by love and commitment and not just by observation and quick judgment, how should that change the way we look at ourselves and others?
- How would our church look different if we consistently viewed people through Psalm 139?

FOR SPECIFIC SEASONS OF LIFE

The questions below are written for specific life experiences and stages. These questions may open doors that general questions do not. Choose to use them for group discussion or for personal reflection.

For Young Adults (roughly 18–35)

- At your stage of life, identity questions are especially loud: Who am I becoming? Do I matter? Am I enough? How does the truth that God knew you before you were formed, before you had a career, a relationship, or a reputation, speak into those questions right now?
 - Where do you most feel pressure to perform for acceptance? And what would it cost you (and how would it free you) to believe that you are already known and already chosen?
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For Married Couples

- Psalm 139 describes God's knowledge as the Hebrew word *yada*—a deep covenant knowing. David finds in God the kind of knowing he cannot hide from and finds it to be a gift and not a threat. How vulnerable are you with your spouse? Is there a version of yourself they do not know yet that God already sees?
 - Where have you and your spouse tried to bring God's presence into the hard or dark seasons and where have you tried to navigate those seasons without Him?
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For Parents

- How do you help your children develop an identity that is rooted in being known by God rather than in performance, grades, appearance, or social approval?
- What would it look like in your home to regularly speak the truth of Psalm 139 over your children in ways that they feel and hear that they are seen, formed, and wonderfully made?

For Those in Midlife (roughly 40–60ish)

- Midlife often brings an honest reckoning with who you actually are versus who you thought you would be by now. How does Psalm 139's declaration that God has known you from the beginning—including this exact moment—speak to where you find yourself?
 - Have there been seasons in your life where darkness felt overwhelming? Looking back, where do you see evidence that God's hand was guiding you even then?
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For Seniors (60ish +)

- You have lived long enough to look back across decades. Where do you most clearly see God's hand having been present in seasons where you did not recognize it at the time?
 - Verse 16 says God wrote all your days before any of them came to be. As you reflect on the days behind you, what does that verse mean to you now that it could not have meant when you were younger?
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Closing Prayer

Lord, search us and know us. Reveal what needs healing, strengthen what is good, and transform what does not reflect your heart. Help us to live honestly before you, compassionately with others, and faithfully in the world. Lead us in the way everlasting. In Jesus' name. Amen.