

# Psalm 139

## Intro:

When we talk about God, there are three terms you may have heard. They are what is known as the “omni” attributes, omni meaning “all”

- Omniscient- God is all knowing
- Omnipresent- God is all places at all times
- Omnipotent- God is all powerful

These three terms help us ironically sum up the insurmountability of God, meaning they help us sum up the fact that God cannot be summed up.

When we hear and ponder these terms, we begin to see God as an unknowable being above and beyond our comprehension. This is absolutely true, but David goes a different direction. In Psalm 139, David applies these three “omni” concepts to his own personal relationship with God.

- God doesn't just know all things about the universe, he knows all things about me
- God isn't just always all places, he is always present with me
- God isn't just the all powerful creator of the universe, he is the all powerful creator of me

Last week, through Psalm 22 we talked about how much Jesus loves us, because of how much he suffered for us. But Jesus didn't do all of that for you so that you could be saved and then never speak to him again. He wants a personal relationship with you.

You may have heard this phrase as a Christian “God wants a personal relationship with you,” but what does that really mean?

Through Psalm 139 we will talk about:

- Just how much God knows you personally
- What it means to have a personal relationship with him
- How to invite and welcome that kind of honest, personal connection with God

# Psalm 139

## God's Omniscience v.1-6

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me.*

*<sup>2</sup>You know my sitting down and my rising up;  
You understand my thought afar off.*

*<sup>3</sup>You <sup>[a]</sup>comprehend my path and my lying down,  
And are acquainted with all my ways.*

*<sup>4</sup>For there is not a word on my tongue,  
But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.*

*<sup>5</sup>You have <sup>[b]</sup>hedged me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.*

*<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is high, I cannot attain it.*

- Verse 1- “searched” implies God’s deep and active look into our lives and intimate knowledge of who we are. It takes us back to Adam and Eve hiding in the garden, despite God knowing exactly where they were.
- Verse 2 through 4- show us the depths of God’s intimate knowledge of every aspect of who we are:
  - He knows our actions before we do them
  - Our paths before we take them
  - Our thoughts before we think them
  - Our words before we speak them

Verse 5 and 6-

David describes what we call a “hedge of protection,” being guarded from all sides and the covered from above by God’s protecting hand. Satan uses this same language when talking about Job, saying that God has protected him from trouble. It is most often used to describe physical danger, but that’s not the kind of protective hedge that David is referring to yet (he will when he gets into God’s omnipresence.)

David is talking about God’s Omniscience. Which is why in verse 6 he says “such knowledge is too wonderful for me.” in other words, the hedge of protection is from God’s intimate knowledge of the universe and of us that is beyond our understanding.

- God knows things about the universe that we can’t handle
- God knows things about us that we can’t handle
- God knows us better than we know ourselves

## God's Omnipresence v.7-12

*<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from Your Spirit?*

*Or where can I flee from Your presence?*

*<sup>8</sup>If I ascend into heaven, You are there;*

*If I make my bed in <sup>[c]</sup>hell, behold, You are there.*

*<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning,*

*And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,*

*<sup>10</sup>Even there Your hand shall lead me,*

*And Your right hand shall hold me.*

*<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall <sup>[d]</sup>fall on me,"*

*Even the night shall be light about me;*

*<sup>12</sup>Indeed, the darkness <sup>[e]</sup>shall not hide from You,*

*But the night shines as the day;*

*The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

- Verse 7-10 recognizes God's omnipresence, his presence cannot be escaped. David sees this as good, recognizing that this means he is upheld by God's hand in any situation.
- Verse 10 blends two actions of God's hand: leading and holding. The "right hand" specifically represents:
  - Power and strength (the dominant hand in battle).
  - Authority and honor (to sit at the king's right hand was to share in his rule).
  - Favor and blessing (fathers placed the right hand on the heir in blessing—Genesis 48:14–20).
- Verses 11-12 David says that even the darkness is not enough to hide someone from God, who can see in the dark just as if it were day.
- In the ancient world darkness had a deeper meaning in the literal sense before electricity or street lights. It was more dangerous to travel and be out at night.
- In the spiritual sense darkness represented sin and separation from God. David is essentially saying "surely in my sin and shame God can no longer see me," but then praises God that he can still see us in the darkness.

God's Omnipresence means that even in your darkest, most despairing, or most sinful place God is there. He cannot be escaped. This can either be a good thing or a bad thing depending where you stand with God. For David, who recognized God's love and forgiveness, he saw it as a good thing.

## God's Omnipotence v.13-18

<sup>13</sup> For You formed my inward parts;  
You <sup>[a]</sup> covered me in my mother's womb.  
<sup>14</sup> I will praise You, for <sup>[a]</sup> I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my soul knows very well.  
<sup>15</sup> My <sup>[b]</sup> frame was not hidden from You,  
When I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.  
And in Your book they all were written,  
The days fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them.

### Verse 13

**“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.”**

- “Formed” = Hebrew *qanah* (to create, acquire, fashion). God is the artisan who *shaped* the most hidden parts of David.
- “Inward parts” = literally “kidneys,” in Hebrew thought the seat of emotions, conscience, and deep feelings. God didn’t just make David’s body—He formed his *inner life*.
- “Covered” = Hebrew *sakhakh*, “to weave together, hedge, knit.” Suggests the careful, intimate act of weaving threads into fabric.

### Implications:

- Human life is intentional and handcrafted by God.
- Identity and personality are not accidents but designed.
- God’s work in the womb establishes the sacredness of life from conception.

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### Verse 14

**“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.”**

- “*Fearfully*” = Hebrew *yare’*, meaning “in awe, reverent.” Our design inspires reverence—humans are not casual creations but awe-inspiring.
- “*Wonderfully made*” = Hebrew *palah*, meaning “to be distinct, set apart, extraordinary.” Human beings are not mass-produced—we are individually marvelous works of God.

### **Implications:**

- Human worth comes from being God’s wondrous creation, not from status, achievement, or ability.
  - Self-contempt and self-exaltation are both corrected here: we are humble because God made us, but confident because He made us wonderfully.
  - Worship should naturally flow from reflecting on how God made us.
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### **Verse 15**

**“My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.”**

- “*Frame*” = bones, skeletal structure. God was present even as David’s skeleton was forming—He saw the unseen structure before anyone else.
- “*Made in secret*” = the womb is hidden, mysterious, beyond human sight, yet fully in God’s view.
- “*Skillfully wrought*” = Hebrew *raqam*, “embroidered, stitched with color.” Like an artist weaving a tapestry.
- “*Lowest parts of the earth*” = poetic metaphor for the womb, a hidden, dark place like the depths of the earth.

### **Implications:**

- Even in the most hidden places, God’s work is active and intentional.
  - Our “frame” (strengths, weaknesses, even limitations) was carefully crafted.
  - The womb is described as a sacred workshop of God, not a random biological process.
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## Verse 16

**“Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”**

- “*Substance, unformed*” = Hebrew *golem*, meaning “embryo” or “unfinished vessel.” God sees us even before we are fully shaped.
- “*Your book*” = imagery of divine foreknowledge and sovereignty—God has a record, a design plan, a purpose for each life.
- “*Days fashioned*” = every day of life is part of God’s design, not random.

### Implications:

- Life has purpose and meaning even before birth.
- God’s sovereignty extends beyond creation into the destiny and story of each person.
- Our days are not accidents—they are part of God’s larger plan.

David has praised God over three key things:

- His Omniscience, the fact that God knows everything about him
- His Omnipresence, the fact that God is always with him even in darkness
- His Omnipotence, the fact that God has all power over him, even from the womb

David concludes this praise with two verses about God’s thoughts towards us, verse 17 and 18. In them he recognizes two important things about how God thinks about you.

## God’s thoughts v. 17-18

*<sup>17</sup>How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!*

*How great is the sum of them!*

*<sup>18</sup>If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;*

*When I awake, I am still with You.*

- His thoughts towards you are precious, despite knowing everything about you.
- His thoughts towards you are innumerable. God thinks about you immeasurably more than you think about Him.

David then concludes the psalm by recognizing God's Holiness and praying for God to personally know him and guide him into righteousness. This final prayer is at the heart of what it means to have a personal relationship with God.

## God's Holiness v.19-22

*19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!  
Depart from me, therefore, you <sup>[v]</sup>bloodthirsty men.  
20 For they speak against You wickedly;  
<sup>[v]</sup>Your enemies take Your name in vain.  
21 Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You?  
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?  
22 I hate them with <sup>[k]</sup>perfect hatred;  
I count them my enemies.*

- After much meditation on God's attributes and holiness, David is overcome with the desire to see evil and wickedness cast away, to be set apart from a sinful world
- To take the Lord's name in vain is to blaspheme against His character. David considers his relationship with God so personal, that he takes attacks on God's character as personal (David and Goliath)
- In Hebrew Idiom, Love and hate can be terms of allegiance. David isn't just saying he hates people who hate God, he is pledging total opposition to the sinful world that mocks God, and perfect allegiance to His creator.

## Prayer for holiness v.23-24

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties;  
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.*

The psalm ends the way it began; it started with "God has searched me", an acknowledgement that God already knows you intimately better than you know yourself. But it concludes with an invitation, this time we are inviting God to search us, and opening ourselves up to accept God's correction and guidance.

Through this psalm we've seen just how personal God's "omni" attributes are in our lives. He knows us, He is with us, and he has power over us. Our final prayer is an invitation to humble ourselves and be partakers in this intimate and personal relationship with God.

## The Challenge of Our Personal Relationship

**Here's the challenge:** a relationship requires two parties. How is it possible for us to know God personally the way he knows us personally? We've talked a lot about God's infinite and intimate knowledge of us, but how can we know him the same way?

Thankfully it was God's desire that we be able to know him and have a personal relationship with Him despite our sin that separates us from Him.

### God's Desire for a Personal Relationship

#### **Jeremiah 9:23–24**

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom... but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me."

- God's ultimate desire is that we know Him personally—not just facts about Him.

#### **Hosea 6:6**

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

- God is after relationship, not empty ritual.

#### **Jeremiah 31:33–34** (New Covenant promise)

"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts... They shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest."

- Anticipates the new covenant in Christ, where God dwells with His people directly.

#### **John 17:3** (Jesus' prayer)

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

- Eternal life is defined not as duration, but as *relationship with God through Christ*.

## Why God Sent Jesus – To Bridge the Gap

#### **John 1:14**

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory..."

- God made Himself knowable and relatable in the person of Jesus.

### **Hebrews 1:1–2**

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.”

- Jesus is God’s clearest and most personal revelation.

### **1 Timothy 2:5**

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

- Jesus personally bridges us to God.

## Christ as Sympathetic High Priest

### **Hebrews 4:15–16**

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...”

- Jesus’ humanity means He understands us fully, and His divinity means He can help us perfectly.

### **Hebrews 7:25**

“He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

- Jesus’ priesthood is ongoing—our relationship with God is sustained through His intercession.

Psalm 139 shows us that God knows us intimately, is present with us always, and formed us with care. The rest of Scripture shows us that this God doesn’t just want us to acknowledge Him from afar—He wants us to *know Him personally*. That’s why He sent Jesus: so we would have a Mediator who not only reveals God to us but also sympathizes with our struggles, drawing us into a living relationship with Him.

# How do I have a personal relationship with God?

## **Believe in the Son, Jesus Christ**

- Relationship with God begins with faith in Jesus, who reconciles us to the Father.
- *John 14:6* — “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

## **Receive God’s Grace through Faith**

- Salvation is not earned—it’s a gift received by faith.
- *Ephesians 2:8–9* — “For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God.”

## **Pray and Speak with Him Daily**

- Prayer is conversation with God that deepens intimacy.
- *Philippians 4:6* — “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

## **Read and Meditate on His Word**

- Scripture is God’s voice to us, shaping our minds and hearts.
- *2 Timothy 3:16–17* — “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... that the man of God may be complete.”

## **Obey His Commands in Love**

- Love for God is expressed by obeying Him, which keeps us close to Him.
- *John 14:23* — “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

## **Walk by the Spirit**

- The Spirit makes God’s presence real in our lives and helps us grow in holiness.
- *Galatians 5:16* — “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

## **Fellowship with Other Believers**

- Community strengthens our faith and helps us experience God’s love through His people.

- *Hebrews 10:24–25* — “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”

### **Trust God in Trials and Depend on Him**

- Relationship grows deeper when we lean on Him in hard times.
- *James 1:2–4* — “Count it all joy when you fall into various trials... that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

## Closing Summary

### **God’s “Omni” attributes are not just cosmic, they are personal.**

Psalm 139 reminds us that the God who is all-knowing, ever-present, and all-powerful applies those attributes to us individually. He knows every detail of our lives, is always with us, and formed us with His mighty hand.

### **Our sin once limited our ability to know Him personally.**

Though God knew us perfectly, our sin created separation—we could not know Him as fully as He desired. But in His love, He sent Jesus to bridge that gap, to reveal God’s heart, and to intercede for us as our sympathetic High Priest.

### **Now we can truly know God in a growing relationship.**

Through believing in His Son, receiving His grace, walking in prayer, Scripture, obedience, and fellowship, we enter into an ever-deepening personal relationship with God—one that will only grow until the day we see Him face to face.

Psalm 139 begins with God’s intimate knowledge of us, but in Christ it ends with an invitation: that we would know Him just as personally, walking with Him daily, and experiencing His presence to the fullest.

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

*Try me, and know my anxieties;*

*24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,*

*And lead me in the way everlasting.*