

I FEEL UNSEEN, UNKNOWN, EVEN WORTHLESS. WHAT DO I DO?

(PSALM 139:1-18)

First of all, understand that all of you (teenagers) are in a season of life where your bodies are rapidly changing. Your emotions and hormones are all over the place – up one minute and down the other. *Then* you have to interact each day with lots of *other* teenagers whose emotions are all over the place. Not to mention family issues, dating issues, sports, and the pressures of schoolwork, jobs.

So, it's easy to get overwhelmed – you start to view life *and your worth* through what you're FACING (circumstance) and what you're FEELING (emotion). But those two things are constantly changing and often out of your control.

So, the answer – the key - is to view your life and your worth through one STEADY and UNCHANGING lens – the lens of *truth*. Truth isn't affected by circumstance or emotion. And Psalm 139 spells out, in detail, what is *true* about you!

1. God Knows You Intimately.

You are known intimately by the Creator of the universe.

Psalm 139:1–6 “O Lord, you have searched me and known me!² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.”

In these first six verses, David is focused on the fact that God is all-knowing (omniscient). In fact, some form of the word *know* occurs seven times in this chapter (vv. 1, 2, 4, 6, 14, 23). For example...

- **He knows your heart.** (vs.1) *“O Lord, You have searched me and known me.”*

The word **“searched”** means “to examine with pain and care.” The Jewish people used this word to describe...

- **Digging deep into a mine** – searching carefully for something valuable.
- **Or exploring a land** – observing the value of the land.
- **Or investigating a legal case** – searching intently for important evidence.¹

It shows how the Lord *digs, explores, and investigates* our heart!

- **He knows your thoughts and actions.** (vs.2-3) *“You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.”*

The two opposites of **“sitting”** and **“rising”** represent all of David’s actions and steps. There’s not a single step – from my first one as a toddler to my last step as an old man – that God doesn’t know.²

But God also knew David’s thoughts **“from afar,”** which carries the idea of space and time.³ In other words, no matter how fast and far you go – you cannot escape God’s “intimate acquaintance” of your thoughts and actions. He knows your every thought and action...

Hebrews 4:13 “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

- **He knows your words.** (vs.4) *“Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.”*

Jesus said we will give an account for every single word, whether they are thought, spoken, typed, or posted. Even if we blurt out something before we think it through, God is not surprised. He saw it coming before you ever said it.⁴ He knows your every word “even before it is on your tongue”!

- **He knows your life.** (vs.5) *“You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.”*

When it says, “You hem me in, behind and before” – the word **“hem”** literally means “to be cramped or limited.” It’s the word used for besieging a town. In other words, God hems us in on every side so there is no escape.⁵

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (pg.196). Cook Communications Ministries.

² Phillips, J. (2012). *Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary* (Vol. 2, Ps 139:1–5). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

³ Smith, J. E. (1996). *The wisdom literature and Psalms* (Ps 139). Joplin, Mo.: College Press Pub. Co

⁴ Akin, D. L., Hunt, J. M., & Merida, T. (2021). *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 101–150* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 284). Holman Reference.

⁵ Phillips, J. (2012). *Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary* (Vol. 2, Ps 139:1–5). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

Some view this as *thrilling* and some view it as *threatening* – it all depends on how they're living!⁶ But remember, God knows us so *intimately* because He values us so *greatly*!

And notice: David is overwhelmed by God's love for us. That's why he says in verse 6, "This is too much for me – My mind is blown!"

2. God Is with You Constantly.

You are seen by the God of the universe.

Psalm 139:7–12 "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you."

In these six verses, David is focusing on the fact that God is everywhere-present (omnipresent).



Have you ever thought about the fact that God has never gone anywhere? He's always been *everywhere*! He is inescapable.⁷

Remember, I told you that some people view this as *thrilling* and some view it as *threatening* – it all depends on how they're living!

For example, when Adam and Eve were right with God, they enjoyed His constant presence. But when they sinned, they tried to hide from His presence (Gen. 3:8). And so did the prophet Jonah. But there's no escape from God's presence. For example...

- **Death can't hide us from God.** (vs.7–8) David asks two rhetorical questions that have one clear answer. "Where can I go to escape your Spirit?" And "Where can I hide from your presence?" And the answer to both is NOWHERE!

If I go as HIGH as I can go (heaven), God is there. And if I go as LOW as I

⁶ Phillips, J. (2012). *Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary* (Vol. 2, Ps 139:1–5). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.
⁷ Akin, D. L., Hunt, J. M., & Merida, T. (2021). *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 101–150* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 286). Holman Reference.

can go (Sheol – the grave or place of the dead), God is there too. He is up and down and everywhere in between!⁸

Amos 9:2 [God says] “If they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them; if they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down.”

- **Distance can’t hide us from God.** (vs.9-10) *“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”*

David is saying, “If I could fly at the speed of light (wings of the dawn) to the far side of the sea, I could not escape from the Lord.”

And notice, God’s presence is beginning to take on a new meaning for David. Now he’s saying, “Your hand will *lead* me and *hold* me.”⁹ God’s constant presence and perfect knowledge is becoming a THRILLING thought to David instead of a THREATENING thought!

- **Darkness can’t hide us from God.** (vs.11-12) *“If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.”*

The Bible says that “men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” That’s why most of this world’s crimes are committed under the cover of darkness. But here’s the problem: darkness hides *man from man* but it cannot hide *man from God!*¹⁰

Jeremiah 23:24 [God says] “Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.”

3. God Made You Wonderfully.

You are so valued by God that He literally hand-crafted you in the womb.

Psalm 139:13–18 “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very

⁸ Akin, D. L., Hunt, J. M., & Merida, T. (2021). *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 101–150* (D. Platt, D. L. Akin, & T. Merida, Eds.; p. 286). Holman Reference.

⁹ Ross, A. P. (1985). Psalms. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 892). Victor Books.

¹⁰ Phillips, J. (2012). *Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary* (Vol. 2, Ps 139:11–12). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

well. ¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.* ¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.* ¹⁷ *How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!* ¹⁸ *If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you."*

David has already focused on the fact that God is all-knowing (Omniscient), and everywhere-present (omnipresent), and now he focuses on the fact that God is all-powerful (omnipotent).

- **He designed your body.** (vs.13-15) When David says he was "**fearfully made**" – the word "fearful" means he was *awe-inspired* by God's creation of the human body.¹¹

Illustration: Every person is made up of microscopic cells so small that the letter "O" on this page would contain between 30-40 thousand of them. And each cell is a micro-universe of almost unbelievable complexity.

Each cell has its own specialized function, and each is designed to know when to grow, when to divide, when to make hormones, and when to die. Every minute of every day, 3 billion of your cells die and the same number are created to take their place. Your body has more than a million of these cells in each square inch of your skin, and 30 billion in your brain!¹²

When verse 14 says you are "**wonderfully made**" it speaks to the fact that you are *distinct* and *separate*.¹³ It's a reminder that you are different from anyone else who will *ever* be created. For example, your one-of-a-kind finger prints began forming only 8 weeks after you were conceived. And those finger prints are *distinct* from any other person who will ever live!

The term "**skillfully made**" describes *embroidery* or *needlework*.¹⁴ In verse 13, David says, "You *knitted* me together in my mother's womb." It shows God's attention to detail as he "wove" together your body, including your intricate veins, arteries and nerve endings.

¹¹ Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996, S. H3372

¹² Phillips, J. (2012). *Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary* (Vol. 2, Ps 139:13–16). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

¹³ Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996, S. H6395

¹⁴ Strong, James: *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996, S. H7551

***Job 10:11* “You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews.”**

In verses 15-16, David says God already knew everything about him when he was still just an “**unformed**” embryo.

***Jeremiah 1:5 [God told Jeremiah]* “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

From the moment of conception, God already knows your name, your “frame” (bone structure), and His call on your life (for Jeremiah, it was a prophet to the nations). But that’s not all. God not only designed your body...

- **He determined your lifespan.** (vs.16) “...In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

God determined the length of our life before we were even born...

***Job 14:5* “Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass.”**

So, let’s put all this together, using Jeremiah as an example. When Jeremiah was still just an unformed embryo (David referred to it as his “unformed substance”) – even then God already knew:

- **His name** (God said, “Jeremiah, before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”)
- **What he would look like** (David referred to it as his “frame” – bone structure)
- **What his occupation would be** (a prophet to the nations)
- **His total lifespan** (David & Job said his days and months were determined by God before he was born).

In other words, God *knew* and *valued* Jeremiah at every stage of life – from the moment of conception in the womb to his final day on earth.



If God valued David and Jeremiah this way even when they were still unformed embryos, how does that line up with abortion?

And David looks at all of this and he says, "I know this very well" (vs. 14). He says, "I have no doubts about the greatness of my Creator and the value of my life!"

But even though God has given us such detailed attention and affection, we sometimes still struggle with a sense of worthlessness.

Illustration: A man was walking through the streets of Hong Kong, and he walked by a tattoo shop. In the window, samples of tattoo designs were displayed. But one design caught his attention. It was three words: "Born to Lose." He walked in the shop and asked the Chinese tattoo artist, "Do people really pay to have that phrase, *'Born to Lose'* tattooed on their body?" He said, "Yes, sometimes." The man said, "I can't believe anyone in his right mind would do that." The Chinese man tapped his forehead and said in broken English, "Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind."

You see, some people have no problem tattooing that phrase on their body because it's already tattooed on their mind. They feel worthless. They've lost sight of how VALUED they really are by God.

Small Groups