

SPECIAL SESSION

Wonderfully Made

Summary and Goal

In this session, we will examine Psalm 139 and see that God knows us intimately. He knows everything about us, and no thought can be hidden from Him, which can be a great comfort and also quite frightening. We will also see that God is always with us—there is nowhere we can go to be apart from Him or to escape from His presence. Finally, we will see that God made us wonderfully as the pinnacle of His creation. From these three truths, we will see where our value comes from—not from within or from our culture but from God Himself.

Main Passage

Psalm 139:1-18

Session Outline

1. God intimately knows us (Ps. 139:1-6).
2. God is always with us (Ps. 139:7-12).
3. God wonderfully made us (Ps. 139:13-18).

Theological Theme

God the Creator cares intimately for all people—the pinnacle of His creation.

Christ Connection

God created people to be in relationship with Him, but because of our sin, we were separated from Him and deserved death. God provided Jesus to be Immanuel—God with us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, whoever trusts in Him is brought into relationship with God as His child and has eternal life with Him.

Missional Application

Because God provided forgiveness through Jesus as an act of grace to us, we share the gospel with everyone, recognizing that all people are loved and valued by God.



Session Plan

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Special Session

For Further Discussion

Why do you think non-believers tend to assume human dignity on some level?

How can challenging a non-believer's basis for believing in human dignity and value serve as an effective path toward evangelism?

Why is a biblical worldview important for maintaining a consistent and concrete basis for human dignity?

- How does a person's worth impact some of the issues being fought over today, such as abortion, sexuality, and racism?

Summarize the session on Psalm 139 and how our value as human beings comes from God Himself (leader p. 5; PSG p. 2).

1. God intimately knows us (Ps. 139:1-6).

Mention the four-part structure of Psalm 139, and then read verses 1-6. Appeal to the statistics the writer cites about books, grains of sand, and computer data to illustrate the breadth and depth of God's knowledge (leader pp. 5-6; PSG pp. 2-3).

- How does the extent of God's knowledge make you feel about Him? About yourself?

Emphasize that God doesn't merely know *about* creation but that He also *knows* creation. Explain why God's exhaustive knowledge can create in us both comfort and dread. God knows us completely and perfectly—even as sinners—and yet, He still loves us (leader pp. 6-7; PSG p. 3).

- Are you more comforted or troubled by God's knowledge of you? Why?
- How does the gospel impact how you view being known by God?

2. God is always with us (Ps. 139:7-12).

Ask a volunteer to read Psalm 139:7-12. Note that sometimes even followers of God, like David, want to flee from Him. Highlight the biblical examples of sinners trying to escape God's presence (leader pp. 7-8; PSG p. 4).



How does your sin tend to impact how you relate with God?

Show where the Bible teaches God's inescapability and that He exists apart from and outside of time and space. Talk about how God is present everywhere yet not in the same way relationally, depending on whether or not someone is in Christ (leader pp. 8-9; PSG p. 5).



How have you experienced the goodness of God in guiding and holding you?



How should God's presence as a loving Father for all Christians impact how we view and relate with other believers? How should God's presence as the righteous Judge of all unbelievers impact how we view and relate with them?

3. God wonderfully made us (Ps. 139:13-18).

Read Psalm 139:13-18. Note that while David did not have the same level of medical knowledge about a baby's development in the womb as we do today, he nonetheless was sure that God was providentially involved. God did design the natural process, but He did not remove Himself from it (leader pp. 9-10; PSG pp. 6-7).



How should God's providential work in forming every person in the womb impact our value of human life?

Turn attention to how David looks ahead to all the days of his life: The same God who carefully knit David's body together in the womb also knit all the days of his life. Articulate how the gospel comes into view through the movement of the psalm. Connect how God's involvement in forming every person in the womb compels us to value all human life—inside the womb and outside of it as well (leader pp. 10-11; PSG pp. 7-8).



How do you feel about God knowing all the days of your life? Does that truth prompt any questions?



What are some ways we can declare and show the value all people deserve—both the unborn and the born?

Conclusion

Bring the session to a close by saying as God's people, we should be known for our love and value of all people as we take a stand in our culture against any attempt to devalue human life while at the same time seeking to proclaim the gospel (leader p. 11; PSG p. 8). *Apply the truths of this session with "His Mission, Your Mission" (PSG p. 9).*

Point 2 Option

Before your group meets, enlist a volunteer to read the article "10 Things You Should Know About God's Omnipresence."

<http://www.samstorms.com/enjoying-god-blog/post/10-things-you-should-know-about-gods-omnipresence>

Allot 3-4 minutes during your meeting for the volunteer to summarize each of the ten items from the article. Then discuss the following questions:

- How do these ten things compare to how you have previously understood God's omniscience? Do they make God seem more or less personal to you?
- Why is it important not to think of God's omnipresence in terms of size but instead as a way to describe how He is infinite and unlike creation?

Christ Connection: God created people to be in relationship with Him, but because of our sin, we were separated from Him and deserved death. God provided Jesus to be Immanuel—God with us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, whoever trusts in Him is brought into relationship with God as His child and has eternal life with Him.

Missional Application: Because God provided forgiveness through Jesus as an act of grace to us, we share the gospel with everyone, recognizing that all people are loved and valued by God.



Expanded Session Content

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Special Session

Introduction

Today's church in the West is in the midst of a culture war—a clash of biblical and secular worldviews that has been waged since at least the 1990s. On one side stand people who hold more “traditional” values. On the other side stand those who hold more “progressive” values. The battles between these two sides can begin suddenly and be intense. Abortion. Sexuality. Immigration. Race. Marriage. Politics. Euthanasia. Truth.

While the battle lines tend to be distinct (although they are shifting with some of the issues) and the skirmishes out in the open, as in any war, there is a guerilla war transpiring as well. This stealth war began long ago and occurs today in social media, television, magazines, movies, office buildings, and even churches. It is the fight over self-worth.

The first shot in this guerilla war was fired in the garden of Eden when the serpent tricked Eve into thinking that God was holding something back from her and that she deserved more. Eve fell for that lie, and Satan found an effective battle tactic.

Several millennia later, we are still grappling with questions of self-worth—either thinking too much or too little of ourselves—fed by the world around us. We, for instance, post on social media sites, hungry for affirmation from others in the form of “likes” and “follows.” Sometimes we look in the mirror and wonder who we are and what good we are.

Where we find our worth is a critical question to answer. Is it from somewhere within ourselves? Is it from what our culture values—possessions, power, or influence? Or is it from somewhere else? How we answer this question and understand our worth—and that of others—shapes the other battles in the culture war and, more importantly, informs our own worldview.



How does a person's worth impact some of the issues being fought over today, such as abortion, sexuality, and racism?

Session Summary

In this session, we will examine Psalm 139 and see that God knows us intimately. He knows everything about us, and no thought can be hidden from Him, which can be a great comfort and also quite frightening. We will also see that God is always with us—there is nowhere we can go to be apart from Him or to escape from His presence. Finally, we will see that God made us wonderfully as the pinnacle of His creation. From these three truths, we will see where our value comes from—not from within or from our culture but from God Himself.

1. God intimately knows us (Ps. 139:1-6).

David wrote Psalm 139, a poetic wisdom psalm, in amazement of who God is. The psalm can be divided into four parts, with each six-verse section focusing on an attribute of God. David begins by marveling at God's omniscience—He knows everything.

¹ *LORD, you have searched me and known me.*
² *You know when I sit down and when I stand up;
you understand my thoughts from far away.*
³ *You observe my travels and my rest;
you are aware of all my ways.*
⁴ *Before a word is on my tongue,
you know all about it, LORD.*
⁵ *You have encircled me;
you have placed your hand on me.*
⁶ *This wondrous knowledge is beyond me.
It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.*

Imagine going to a book store or library and selecting a random book off the shelf. It's an average book—250 pages long, with about 80,000 words, or 400,000 letters, typed on those pages. God knows each page, word, and letter of that book—even the typos. He knows what words were changed in the editing process, and He knows which words the author wanted to use but did not. He knows what every word means, what is true in the book, and what is not true. Now imagine looking up from that one book and realizing that God knows every other book the same way. Every word and every letter on every page in the entire room. But even that is too small; God knows every word that has ever been printed in books, magazines, handwritten letters, signs, and on the Internet. And He knows every word that *will* be printed.

Too abstract? How about the grains of sand on every beach on the planet. Researchers have estimated there are 7.5×10^{18} grains of sand, or seven quintillion, five hundred quadrillion grains in the world. God knows what that exact number is, and He knows where each one is right now.²



Further Commentary

“The Hebrew verbs can be interpreted as timeless truth: ‘You search me and you know me.’ God’s attributes are not restricted to time. The words ‘know’... ‘understand’... ‘observe,’ and ‘are aware’ speak of God’s omniscience. The word *observe* comes from the Hebrew root *zorah*, which means ‘measure.’ The Hebrew word for ‘ways’ does not necessarily denote literal walking but daily behavior.”³

—Kevin R. Warstler
and Sherri L. Klouda



Further Commentary

“God knows not only every move we make in our daily routines, but also the motives behind our actions. The expression ‘from far away’ [v. 2] can be temporal or spatial; in this context it is probably temporal—beforehand, and not from a distance (see v. 4).”⁴

—Allen P. Ross

Voices from the Church

“The fact that God sees every aspect of our lives may, at first, leave us afraid and eager to hide from God rather than in awe, wanting to embrace him. But the fear of the Lord makes us aware both of God’s holy purity and hatred of sin and his holy patience and forgiveness. When we remember both, we have no reason to run in fear, especially since there is no place to run beyond the gaze of God. Instead, as we look at the Lord, we see that he invites, cleanses, and empowers us to grow in holiness.”⁶

—Edward T. Welch

Voices from Church History

“The deeper our despair of entering aright into the thoughts of God, the greater the confidence of expectancy may be. God wants to make His Word true in us.”⁷

—Andrew Murray
(1828-1917)

How about one more? In the 1980s when personal computers were just beginning to make it into the mainstream, an Apple III came with a 5 MB internal hard drive.⁵ Today, many *files* are larger than 5 MB, and you can purchase 8 TB (which is over 8 million MB) drives. And yet, God knows every byte of data on every computer ever made.

This *begins* to help us picture God’s omniscience. And the more God’s knowledge comes into focus, the more in awe of Him we become. Our God is a glorious God! We are left with our jaws agape, echoing David: “This wondrous knowledge is beyond me. It is lofty; I am unable to reach it” (v. 6).



How does the extent of God’s knowledge make you feel about Him? About yourself?

God knows every word, grain of sand, byte of data, and more, and yet, His knowledge is not just an inventory of creation. He doesn’t merely know *about* creation; He *knows* creation, which includes people, the pinnacle of all He made (Ps. 8:3-9). God is not distant; He is near. He is immanent and He relates with us in a personal way while remaining distinct from His creation. *This*, more than God’s knowledge of sand, is what is at the forefront of David’s mind. This is what has stupefied him—God is intimately aware of every detail of his life.

God knows when David sits and when he stands, echoing Deuteronomy 6:7, and when he travels and when he rests. Whatever David does, God knows. This was true of David, and it is true of us as well. None of our actions escape God’s knowledge.

But it isn’t just what we do, it is also what we think. David pens that God knows his thoughts, even from far away—either referencing God’s separateness from creation or distance in time. Before a word can fall from David’s lips, God knows what it will be.

Being troubled by God’s knowledge is just as understandable as finding comfort in it: “God knows every one of our thoughts? *Every* one? Even the ones we don’t *want* Him to know? And He knows all our actions? *All* of them? Even our sinful ones?”

When we consider the full counsel of Scripture—seeing who God is and who we are—it is fitting that we respond to God’s omniscience with a mixture of comfort and dread. While it is comforting to be known and loved by God, it is also unnerving knowing how sinful we are. God’s knowledge of us should be sobering. It should motivate us to consider carefully our thoughts and actions, knowing they are never truly private. But at the same time, we delight in knowing that we are under God’s grace in Christ and we have been given Christ’s righteousness. God’s knowledge of us is sobering and should motivate us not to sin, but it does not cause us to doubt His love.

God knows us completely and perfectly, and yet, He still loves us. That is wondrous knowledge, too lofty for us.

- ② Are you more comforted or troubled by God's knowledge of you? Why?
- ② How does the gospel impact how you view being known by God?

2. God is always with us (Ps. 139:7-12).

David begins this psalm by considering an all-knowing God who is near. Perhaps feeling overwhelmed and vulnerable by God's omniscience (v. 5), David next asks where he can go to escape God—to be alone where his thoughts can be his own. But this question leads David to consider another attribute of God—His omnipresence. There is no place a person can go to be apart from God.

⁷ *Where can I go to escape your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
9 If I live at the eastern horizon
or settle at the western limits,
10 even there your hand will lead me;
your right hand will hold on to me.
11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me,
and the light around me will be night”—
12 even the darkness is not dark to you.
The night shines like the day;
darkness and light are alike to you.*

When we read David's rhetorical question and its restatement in verse 7, we might respond with a question back to David: "Why do you, a follower of God, *want* to flee from God's presence?" David's question feels off to us, out of place, perhaps even inappropriate. God's people should not look for ways to "escape" and "flee" from God. We should look for ways to *draw near* to Him. And that is true, but if we are honest, many of us have felt the same way David does in verse 7. We can trace this impulse all the way back to Eden.

After Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate the forbidden fruit, they heard the sound of God approaching (Gen. 3:8). The way this is stated in Genesis makes it seem as if this was a regular occurrence up to this point—God would come to be with the people He had created. We can assume that up to this day, Adam and Eve would have moved toward God, or at least stayed where they were anticipating their Creator's arrival.



Further Commentary

"The notion of escaping to heaven and hell finds its roots in ancient Near Eastern mythology. The OT acknowledges God's ability to access 'Sheol' because he is sovereign (Job 26:6; Amos 9:2), but banishment to the underworld removes a person from God's blessing (Ps. 6:5; Eccl. 9:10)."⁸

—Kevin R. Warstler and Sherri L. Klouda



Further Commentary

"Such deep assurance of the presence of the Lord is good for a healthy spiritual pilgrimage. It enables us to live a holy life both in private and in public. No matter whether one is alone in a hotel or in a pulpit before a crowd, one is always in the presence of the Lord. This knowledge that we are never alone also gives peace of mind. We can have the confidence to say, 'Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff—they comfort me' (23:4)."⁹

—Augustine Pagolu, Jesudason Baskar Jeyaraj, Eliya Mohol, David Clarence, and Ajoy Kumar

99 Essential Christian Doctrines

14. God Is Immanent

When we say that God is immanent, we mean that God is personable and relatable to those made in His image, while remaining completely distinct and unique from all of His creation. It means that God is not a distant deity (as imagined by the deist) who only sits on His heavenly throne with no interaction, but instead, He is a personal God who created people in His image to be in personal relationship with Him.

Voices from Church History

"Though heaven be God's palace, yet it is not his prison."¹⁰

—Thomas Brooks
(1608-1680)

But not this time. This time, because of their sin, they turned away from God and hid among the vegetation. In their minds and hearts they asked the same thing David asked—"Where can I flee from God's presence?"—only to learn they could not.

We see this pattern in other places in Scripture as well. When Isaiah realized he was in the Lord's presence, he responded in dread, not joy: "Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies" (Isa. 6:5). Simon Peter responded similarly when he was confronted by the deity of Jesus: "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" (Luke 5:8). And even John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, fell at Jesus' feet as a dead man when he encountered His presence in Revelation 1:17.

When we consider the holiness of God, we are also forced to come to terms with our sinfulness. The natural reaction at the juncture of these two realizations is to want to move *away* from God, not *toward* Him. Just as we must shield our eyes from a brilliant light, God's glory humbles and convicts us.



How does your sin tend to impact how you relate with God?

David knows the answer to his question. We cannot escape from God. There is nowhere we can go where God is not present. A person cannot go up into the heavens. God is there. Neither can a person go to the other extreme and descend into Sheol—the place of the dead. God is there too. You cannot go far enough east or far enough west; God is inescapable (see Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2-4; Heb. 4:13). God is spirit, and as such, He exists apart from and outside of time and space; He is not limited by their constraints (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:24).

God's omnipresence may prompt a question: "If God is present everywhere, does that mean He is present in hell? Isn't the punishment of sin eternal separation from God?"

To answer this, we have to understand that God is present everywhere, but He is not present everywhere in the same way. God is present with His people—the redeemed—as a loving Father. So God is present with His people in a more profound way—He is not merely spatially present, but He is relationally present. That cannot be said for those who are not in Christ. They are separated from God in that they are not in relationship with Him.

Even if David's response to God's omniscience was dread (Ps. 139:5-6), as he considers God's omnipresence, he begins to see the goodness of an all-knowing, all-present God. God is always there to lead and hold him (v. 10).

As believers, it is good that even in our sin, God is present as our Father. *Apart from Christ*, being unable to escape from God forces us to confront the reality that we stand condemned under His divine judgment. There is nowhere we can flee from His justice. But *in Christ*, God's presence reminds us that we stand forgiven under His divine love and grace. We are secure in our relationship with God, even when we sin as Christians, because of the forgiveness and righteousness given to us in Christ. Nothing can separate us from God's love (see Rom. 8:31-39). Not even the darkest night can hide us from our all-knowing, all-present, all-loving God (Ps. 139:11-12).

- ① How have you experienced the goodness of God in guiding and holding you?
- ② How should God's presence as a loving Father for all Christians impact how we view and relate with other believers? How should God's presence as the righteous Judge of all unbelievers impact how we view and relate with them?

3. God wonderfully made us (Ps. 139:13-18).

David began the psalm by considering how God knows everything, which naturally led him to consider how God is always present with him, a reminder of God's love and concern. Now David turns his thoughts toward God's power in his life—power that was revealed at the start of his life in the darkness of the womb.

- ¹³ *For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ *I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.*
- ¹⁵ *My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was formed in the depths of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ *Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.*
- ¹⁷ *God, how precious your thoughts are to me; how vast their sum is!*
- ¹⁸ *If I counted them, they would outnumber the grains of sand; when I wake up, I am still with you.*



Voices from Church History

"This banishing God from the world is simply intolerable, and, blessed be his name, impossible. An absent God who does nothing is, to us, no God. Christ brings God constantly near to us."¹¹

—Charles Hodge
(1797-1878)



Further Commentary

"Secure in the knowledge that God loves him even more than the mother who gave him birth, the psalmist's fear of God's omniscience is replaced by amazement at God's care for him: how 'precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!' (139:17). Trying to count everything God has done for us and knows about us is as impossible 'as counting grains of sand' (139:18a). The exact meaning of the words, 'when I awake, I am still with you' (139:18b) is not clear. It seems to refer to something more than merely awaking from normal sleep. Thus, this verse is sometimes taken as further proof that even OT believers had some hope of life after death. The psalmist is sure that when he rises after this life, he will still be with God (see also Job 19:25-26)."¹²

—Nupanga Weanzana,
Samuel Ngewa,
Tewoldemedhin Habtu,
and Zamani Kafang

Further Commentary

"The psalmist used 'the depths of the earth' poetically to describe the womb because it is similarly hidden from the eye. The reference to being hidden ties this stanza back to the previous one (vv. 8-9)." ¹⁴

—Allen P. Ross

Further Commentary

"These verses illustrate the point of vv. 11-12 (the section begins with 'for,' showing the connection to the previous) by describing a particular 'dark place' where the Lord saw and cared for the singer, namely, his 'mother's womb.' God was active as the 'unformed substance' (embryo) grew and developed; indeed he is the one who 'formed my inward parts' and 'knitted me together.' God 'saw' him, and even had 'written' in his 'book,' 'every one of... the days that were formed for me.' The worshiper realizes that, even before his mother knew she was pregnant, the Lord was already showing his care for him. His personal life began in the womb, and God had already laid out its course."¹⁵

—C. John Collins

David begins this section by considering his development as a baby in his mother's womb—a truly remarkable process. Within the first month after conception, a baby's first nerve cells have formed and the face begins to take shape. Blood cells begin to develop and circulation begins. The "heart" tube also forms and beats 65 times a minute by the end of the fourth week. At this point, the baby is just one-fourth of an inch long.

In the second month, the face continues to develop and the ears begin to form. Buds that will become arms and legs begin to take shape, as well as the fingers and toes. The neural tube is formed along with the digestive tract and sensory organs. Bones begin to replace cartilage and the heartbeat can be detected at the end of the sixth week. And still, the baby is only one inch long and weighs one-thirtieth of an ounce.

By the end of the third month, the baby is fully formed, and from this point he will mature. The baby can open and close his fists and mouth and is a mere four inches long and weighs one ounce.¹³

While David may not have had a full understanding of all that went on in his development, he is sure of one thing: God was providentially at work in the process. David did not have a deistic notion of a baby's development in the womb. God did design the natural process, but He did not remove Himself from it. He was at work creating, knitting, making, and forming David, and He does the same for every other baby in the womb as well. The thought of God, the all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful Creator of the universe, being intimately involved in his development as a baby drives David to worship (v. 14).



How should God's providential work in forming every person in the womb impact our value of human life?

David looks back at God's involvement at the start of his life in the womb, and he also look ahead to all the days of his life. As God looked on David's formless body in the first few days and weeks of his life, all the rest of his days were already written and planned (v. 16), further evidence of God's loving sovereign authority over him. The same God who carefully knit David's body together in the womb also knit all the days of his life.

If David had been uneasy about God's involvement in his life at the start of the psalm, he is no longer. The thought of God working providentially in and through David is "precious" to him (v. 17). The scope and depth of God's knowledge amazes him.

If we work from this point of the psalm back to its beginning, we can see the gospel come into view.

God created people for a purpose (His omnipotence) and wanted to be with us and know us (His omnipresence), yet our sin separated us from Him. But in His perfect wisdom (His omniscience), God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with us, and through His perfect life of obedience, sacrificial death, and resurrection, we can be saved and brought back into relationship with God.

Like David, we can find great comfort, hope, and joy in understanding how our all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful God loves us and cares for us. However, this psalm also challenges us to look beyond ourselves and consider how God views other people, and how we should too.

Knowing that God forms every person in the womb in His image (Gen. 1:26) compels us to value all human life—inside the womb and outside of it as well. God calls on us to defend the lives of the unborn, as they are precious in His sight, but our concern is not to end there. The gospel is the great equalizer. Our sin joins us all together, no matter our ethnicity, nationality, income level, education, political party, or any other factor. We all, together as one, stand condemned because of our sin. But we know we are also united by our opportunity to repent of our sin, trust in Jesus, and be saved.

- ① How do you feel about God knowing all the days of your life? Does that truth prompt any questions?
- ② What are some ways we can declare and show the value all people deserve—both the unborn and the born?

Conclusion

Knowing we are all made in God's image does far more than give us the proper view of ourselves; it frames how we live with others with love, care, and respect. God has created people with great diversity. Our goal, then, is not to *look past* our differences and love people *despite* them but to *celebrate these differences* as part of God's good and beautiful design.

As God's people, we should be known for our love and value of all people as we take a stand in our culture against any attempt to devalue human life, such as through racism, abortion, murder, pornography, genocide, and more. At the same time, we are to share the gospel with everyone, recognizing that all people are loved and valued by God.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God created people to be in relationship with Him, but because of our sin, we were separated from Him and deserved death. God provided Jesus to be Immanuel—God with us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, whoever trusts in Him is brought into relationship with God as His child and has eternal life with Him.



Voices from Church History

“From this greatness and immensity of God also your soul must reverently stay all its busy, bold inquiries, and know that God is to us, and to every creature, incomprehensible. If you could fathom or measure him, and know his greatness by a comprehensive knowledge, he were not God. A creature can comprehend nothing but a creature. You may know God, but not comprehend him; as your foot treads on the earth, but does not cover all the earth. The sea is not the sea, if you can hold it in a spoon.”¹⁶

—Richard Baxter
(1615-1691)



Voices from Church History

“‘Pray for all the saints.’ ‘Pray also for emperors and magistrates and rulers,’ and for ‘those who persecute and hate you,’ and for ‘the enemies of the cross,’ that your fruit may be manifest in all, so that you may be perfected in him.”¹⁷

—Polycarp of Smyrna
(circa 69-155)

Additional Resources

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Study Material

- *God's Very Good Idea: A True Story About God's Delightfully Different Family* by Trillia Newbell
- "Why Being Pro-Life Is About More Than Opposing Abortion"— Article by Trevor Atwood; find a link to this article at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

Sermon

D. A. Carson: "The Omnipotence of God (Psalm 139:13-16)"

Find a link to this at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

Tip of the Week

Sanctity of Human Life

On or around Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, many churches choose to stand up publicly against abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia, recognizing that all people—regardless of age, gender, race, or social status—have been made in the image of God. Yet some in our churches and groups are struggling because of a past experience in which he or she was the offender and made a choice for abortion or a choice that diminished the dignity of another. Such people need to hear afresh the good news of Jesus Christ, that His forgiveness covers all sin for those who repent and believe in Him. He is the ultimate mediator before our God and Father. In Him there is no condemnation for those who believe (Rom. 8:1).

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About the Writer

Brian Dembowczyk is the Managing Editor of *The Gospel Project* and has seventeen years of pastoral ministry experience in churches in Florida, Kentucky, and Maryland. He is the author of *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry* and *Cornerstones*. Brian and his wife, Tara, have three children.

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