

Search Me O God

Psalm 139

Psalm 139 encompasses great themes concerning God's eternal attributes. It is also a beautifully intimate expression of praise and devotion.

Main Idea: God's magnificent greatness, His tender care, and His holiness call forth worship and covenant loyalty from His people.

The Psalm is traditionally understood in four "strophes" or sections. In each David is offering praise to God. His praise is anchored in specific truths concerning God's character. In the final strophe David gives expression to his devotion to the LORD. A part of that devotion is a prayer that God will expose his heart; show him if there is any sinful way that keeps him from the ways of God.

1. You know everything about me.

Vv. 1-6

- God is omniscient – All-knowing or all-seeing.
- God's knowledge of us is far more than simple knowledge of facts. His knowledge of us is not bound by time. He knows what we will say and do before we do. God's knowledge of us involves his active involvement with us (**vs. 5**). That means there is nothing about us that is outside of God's personal care.

2. I cannot hide from You.

Vv. 7-12

- God is omnipresent – Present everywhere.
- Because we are sinners, we will often seek to hide from a God who sees all things. David gives expression to this desire. And because this Psalm is a song of praise and devotion, he is thanking God that though he may often try to flee, he cannot escape the everywhere present God.
- God's omnipresence is not merely his presence. God is not a passive observer. He leads us and holds us (**v 10**). He loves us too much to abandon us to our sinful impulses to go our own way.

3. You know me because You made me.

Vv. 13-18

- God is Creator – All that is owes its existence to God who made all things.
- God has carefully designed us. We are more complex than any machine. We store more information than any computer. There is nothing in all creation quite like humanity. Only people bear the image of God. Only people are created to relate to God personally. Each day we live has been ordained by our sovereign and loving God (**v. 16**).

4. Because you are holy I want nothing to do with evil.

Vv. 19-24

- God is Holy – Moral perfection.
- There is an odd transition beginning in verse **19**. Some of the tone is due to when the Psalms were written. They were written during a particular time in history when God's people were defined in part by national boundaries. They were surrounded by nations who hated God and His people. As a result, God's people faced constant threats. At that time, by God's own design, His glory was directly connected to the welfare of Israel. So David prays that he will have the same attitude toward the wicked enemies of God as God does.
- Notice how David describes these enemies of God:
 - They are wicked
 - They are violent ("men of blood").
 - They openly oppose God ("They speak against you...").
 - They are malicious.
 - They profane God.
 - They hate God.
 - They exalt themselves over God ("rise up").
- As vehement as are David's words, he is not being cruel or spiteful. Rather, David's words are a function of his zeal for God and knowledge of His holiness. He hates what God hates.
- Are David's words in verses **19-22** a contradiction of Jesus command to love our enemies? Absolutely not. Notice that David is not expressing revulsion at his enemies but at the enemies of God.
- No longer are God's people defined by ethnic or national boundaries. Just as He promised Abraham, God is saving people from every nation and tribe. So, we cannot look about at the surrounding nations and automatically see the enemies of God. Among all the peoples of the world God is calling His elect.
- We know from Jesus that we are to love our enemies. But we are to hate what is wicked (**Ephesians 5:1-12**). We are to flee what is evil (**1 Corinthians 6:18**). And this means more than just separating ourselves from those who practice evil. It means praying that God will search our own hearts and remove the wickedness that still lives inside. In this way God's knowledge of us is a purifying knowledge. He is at work making us more holy.