

Psalm 139: David's Road Map To Relationship

Let's begin with Psalm 139, one of David's most intimate Psalms, and a poetic masterpiece that proclaims God's love and care in creating each of us, while inviting Him to cast His holy searchlight upon our hearts and lives. As we study out these verses, pray that God, through the Holy Spirit, would illuminate these verses and help you cultivate and fortify deeper intimacy with God as Father.

Psalms 139:1

(KJV) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

(NIV) For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

It is worth noting that Psalm 139 ends with a prayer request to God to search him and know and convict him of any hidden sin, and this psalm opens with a proclamation that God has answered David's raw and vulnerable prayer. These prayer requests and answers work both ways because Psalm 139 is all about relationship, child to Father and Father to child. Indeed, God desires that we each come to know Him as Father more and more through His Word, through His Spirit, and through Jesus.

In fact, it is Jesus who models this deeper intimacy with His Father in heaven as He teaches His disciples how to pray, and how to address God as Father in **Luke 11:1-13**:

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

For David, even amidst a land of myriad idols and man-made philosophies, there was but one God, one Lord for David. David gives us supernatural insight into a holy God that Fathers His

children perfectly, intimately. David knew this God because God first knew and loved David, all of him. The vocabulary used here is personal and relational.

God has searched David:

châqar
khaw-kar'

A primitive root; properly to *penetrate*; hence to *examine* intimately.

God has known David:

yâda'
yaw-dah'

A primitive root; to *know* (properly to ascertain by *seeing*); used in a great variety of senses, figuratively, literally, euphemistically and inferentially (including *observation, care, recognition*; and causatively *instruction, designation, punishment*).

If you are saved through Jesus, God's Son, God searches you and He knows you, beloved.

Luke 12:7

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Is your relationship with God one in which you love and trust Him enough to allow Him to search you and know you?

Psalms 139:2

(KJV) *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

(NIV) *You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

While verse 1 is a testimony and statement of God's overall investigative power over our lives, we are about to learn how deep, profound, and comprehensive is His watch over David and over all of His children.

When you finally sit on the edge of your bed after a long day, God knows the hour, minute, and second you rest your weary body on that bed. *Before* you do, in fact. When you open your eyes and when you rise in the morning to greet the dawn and seize the day, God knows what time it is - He already has the day's path cleared for you.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: When you awake in the morning, and when you go to bed at night, are you aware of God's presence and care over your day? If not, what could you do to be more aware of Him?

When he was thirteen, my son Jordan once asked me how God could know our thoughts, intimating that no one could know our thoughts. Well, only God can and does know our thoughts, and that's a good thing! It should be cause for both fearful reverence and rejoicing -

that He loves us anyway, despite the tens of thousands of unbelieving and negative thoughts that travel down our mind's highway every hour! And His mercy and grace is one more reason to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:30)

David often spoke to God not only out loud, but from his mind and heart. Indeed, it is how each of us prays without ceasing through the Holy Spirit. Prayer is like breathing to the born-again Christian:

1Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

Perhaps in our mind's eye we perceive God in heaven, in glory, to be far away. This is what David believed. But God revealed to David that He perceived his every thought, his every unspoken cry, all his unexpressed anxiety and fear. God perceived it all from afar. Oh, loving, intimate, compassionate God!

Psalms 139:3

(KJV) *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*

(NIV) *You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*

I want to introduce you to Derek. Derek represents all our ways, our whole life and lifestyle. The whole deal! This Hebrew word encompasses all the desires, attitudes and priorities that order our steps and drive the course of our lives.

derek

deh'-rek

a road (as trodden); figuratively a course of life or mode of action.

As I was praying over this verse, the words *all my ways* really stood out. That God discerns our going out to school, work, church, or wherever, and then back home - I get that, as other verses in this psalm indicate, no problem for God. But *all my ways*? This unsettled me, because these three words point to our overall motives, desires, actions, and lifestyle. If we are to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6), the Holy-Ghost conviction comes hard and fast upon our North American Christian priorities and lifestyles.

Oh God, wretched, spoiled child that I am. Conform me to the image of your Son. Don't leave me in this state of apathy. The work that you began in me, perform it until the day of Christ Jesus! (Philippians 1:6)

Amen.

Psalms 139:4

(KJV) *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

(NIV) *Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.*

We need go no further than the Book of James to learn the power of the tongue. Because I have been called of God to teach, and because Scripture explains Scripture, I will simply read this passage and let the Holy Spirit do the rest:

James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

David's desire was be holy, not only in deed, but in speech; and not only in public, but in private. This is the heart of a man after God's own heart:

Psalms 101:1-8 Of David. A psalm.

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, LORD, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life— when will you come to me? I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart. I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate. My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.

I pray that this would be our heart's desire also. God can help stop up the floodgates of pride and profanity springing from our hearts to our minds to our tongues:

Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

Psalms 141:3 *Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

*STUDY POINT: Recall some instances in your life when you wish you could have taken back the hurtful words you spoke to someone you love. Write down and memorize at least six Scripture passages that will stop your tongue from hurting others, from dishonouring and misrepresenting your Saviour and Lord Jesus.

Speaking for myself, the vitriol I used spew out as a new Christian came from my old life in sin, but I knew my anger and self-loathing speech had to go. God gave me these verses to fight off these evil words before they reached open air:

James 1:19-21

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Psalms 139:5

(KJV) *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

(NIV) *You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*

David had no one in the wilderness. Read this passage in 1 Samuel 23:14-29 as David wanders in wilderness strongholds:

1 Samuel 23:14-29

David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands. While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh. The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands." Saul replied, "The LORD bless you for your concern for me. Go and get more information. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah." So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David. Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

We each have seasons of profound aloneness, even when there are people around. The sense of closeness indicated in this verse is not a feeling. We apprehend it by faith, as David did. Feeling the closeness of God amidst profound isolation and depression, loneliness, and fear may be a supernatural gift to you today. But even if God seems far away in the natural, His Word, His Promise is enough to carry you through this dark time. David proclaimed God's

promise of His enveloping presence - probably out loud - and the reality of God's surrounding love and care could not have been more real.

It's your promise for today, beloved. Believe it, speak it, experience God by faith.

Psalms 139:6

(KJV) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

(NIV) *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*

Let's look at this verse as pure praise! So much of Who God is, what He has done, and how He reveals Himself to us, is really beyond our capacity to understand in the natural. But through the Holy Spirit's illumination of Holy Scripture, we catch glimpses of His glory, and we are forever changed. David confessed to his inability to understand God's comprehensive love and care and detail over His life. David spent the balance of his life composing over 73 psalms of adoration and praise to God from which we can glean not just a cursory knowledge of God, but discover a wide-open gateway to knowing God intimately, and enjoying Him for all eternity.

- Reverend Darren McClelland