

PSALM 139: David's Road Map To Relationship

Psalm 139:7-12

We have been discovering how deep and rich is Psalm 139 *relationally*. But also, for countless centuries, scholars have been gleaning more about how God relates to His creation *theologically*. Let's begin with a preface from the late Dr. Vernon McGee:

This is a theological psalm in that it reveals something of the attributes of God in relation to His creation. It reveals His omniscience, His omnipresence, and His omnipotence. These are what I call four-cylinder words, but they simply mean that God is all-knowing (omniscient), He is everywhere present (omnipresent), and He is all-powerful (omnipotent). God can do anything that is the object of His power. Sometimes the ridiculous question is asked, "Can God make a rock so big that He cannot lift it?" The answer to that is that God never does anything ridiculous.

Amen, Dr. McGee. So, as we study out the text, keep an eye out for where the text is describing one of these three attributes of God - His omniscience, His omnipresence, and His omnipotence. This is important to the relational aspect of God also, as we can learn how God *actually* communicates with His creation. The fact that He is sharing these wondrous attributes with us is evidence that our Father God wants us to know Him intimately.

Psalms 139:7

(KJV) *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

(NIV) *Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*

The question-and-answer, hide-and-seek nature of God pervades the whole canon of Scripture. It is God's Father heart to raise children that will learn to ask. It is these children of His that seek, and who find. (Matthew 7:7). Before we proceed any further, let's look at two verses that address two attitudes of asking.

James 4:1-4

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Matthew 7:7-11

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. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give

good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Do you see it? Do you see the contrast between these two passages? In the passage from James, God is condemning the self-centred, covetous, worldly kinds of prayers that spring from a heart that is not right with God. The prayer of asking that God loves is in the second passage in Matthew. Here we are asking with the humble, innocent heart of a child, trusting that our Daddy in heaven loves us and knows exactly what we need.

***QUESTION FOR MEDITATION:** In which attitude of prayer from above do you find yourself today? Why do you think this is?

In Psalm 139:7, we see the same childlike heart in David as he ponders and wonders at God's everywhere-present power. David is asking God and giving Him praise in childlike awe. This verse also speaks to the very real carnal tendency of humans to run away from God. We see this in the Garden of Eden, to the extent that God calls out to Adam, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:9 *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

Adam was hiding. Adam was on the run! Read Genesis 3 to witness the beginning of our sinful sprint from Almighty God.

And what about Jonah. Prophet receives assignment from God, rejects the assignment and...oh...there he goes! He's a runner too!

Jonah 1:2-3 *"Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.*

You and I run every day, and not just a two-mile jog, but our incessant need to be busy and ignore God, essentially giving Him the leftovers of our time - the time that *He* affords us so that we may live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28) Stop! Stop running!

Beloved, we are a people on the run. In this verse David is standing still and beholding His Everywhere Father. Time to stop and get to know our Heavenly Father again...

Psalms 139:8

(KJV) *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

(NIV) *If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

David here continues to worship God with childlike faith, trusting that as high as David could fly to the moon and the stars, or as low as David could swim to the depths of the deepest ocean, there God would be. So much for running, folks! Our running in any direction only exhausts *us*! God is already aware of our destinations of rebellion. With that said, could we just stop running from Him altogether, and stay in His holy presence on our knees?

Psalms 139:9

(KJV) *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

(NIV) *If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*

Many English translations of this verse bring forth the poetic word pictures that David is imagining. I often think of a world traveller, traversing the globe, seeking adventure and feigning peril in the urban and actual jungles of the world. Wherever we go... *wherever* we go, God is there.

Psalms 139:10

(KJV) *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

(NIV) *Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

This verse moves me. No more do we envision a religious God in hot pursuit across land and sea, after the unrepentant sinner bent on finding refuge in a modern Babylon. No, this is the true and living God who, through Jesus, has become our Father in heaven and chased us down in His mercy and love, if only to guide us back to Himself, to hold us close, and never again let us run away.

We are all prodigals, beloved. Give thanks and praise to God that wherever home is for you, God is already there waiting to receive you, and to hold you fast.

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for

you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' "My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Can you recall a season of life when you were clearly on the run from God - in little ways or big ways? How did He get your attention, and bring you back to Himself again?

Psalms 139:11

(KJV) *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

(NIV) *If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"*

1 John, a book of black and white contrasts, has much to say about hiding in darkness, and walking in light.

1John 1:5-10

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

We perceive as sinful humans that we can deny access to our holy Creator to the sinful compartments of our lives, simply by closing a door or building a wall or turning off a light. But verse 11 teaches us that God has no darkness in Him or around Him. He dwells in unapproachable light:

1Timothy 6:16 *who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.*

So darkness to us is essentially sin and self-deception. And a dark heart is a hard heart. Dangerous place to be? Oh yes, and be sure, beloved, that we are not hiding *anything* from God:

Proverbs 15:3 *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Galatians 6:7-8

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

To study out this verse in another way, the darkest night of our soul is not dark to God at all. Jesus, who is the light of the world, is always there to take our hand and rescue us from our

dark places into His marvellous light - just as He did at our point of greatest need, our need for salvation:

Colossians 1:12-14

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Psalms 139:12

(KJV) *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

(NIV) *even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: You may have sin habits and patterns that you have been hiding in darkness for many years. Ask God for the courage to bring these sins into the light, so that He can wash you, cleanse you, and help you crucify these sins daily.

*STUDY POINT: Meditate on Colossians 1:12-14, in context of Paul's prayer for the Colossians believers. (Colossians 1:9-14) In two columns, compare David's references to light and dark in Psalm 139:11-12 with Paul's references to light and dark in his prayer.

The power of proclamation of God's Truth cannot be denied! David's declaration of who God is should strengthen our faith and resonate in our spirit.

Hallelujah!

God's light shatters the hopeless hue of our dark world as we shine forth and walk in the light as He is in the light. (1 John 1:7)

- Reverend Darren McClelland