

Search Me, God, and Know My Heart

Psalm 139:1-24

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.
¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
²² I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

The psalmist uses the “you-me” pronouns, speaking about God’s characters in a personal way. The psalmist encounters God intimately. God is not a deity that rules from a distant, but a sovereign God who relates to his creation individually, personally revealing his characters to each of us.

1. The All-Knowing (Omniscient) God Knows Me (vv. 1-6)

- ¹ You have **searched** me, LORD,
and you **know** me.
² You **know** when I **sit** and when I **rise**;
you **perceive** my **thoughts** from afar.
³ You **discern** my **going out** and my **lying down**;
you are **familiar** with all my **ways**.
⁴ Before a **word** is on my tongue
you, LORD, **know** it completely.
⁵ You **hem** me in behind and before,
and you **lay your hand** upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

You	searched	me	
	know	me	
	know	sit	rise
	perceive	thoughts	
	discern	going out	lying down
	familiar	way	
	know	word (tongue)	
	hem	me (in behind and before)	
lay your hand	(upon) me		

- The omniscience God who knows everything that happens in the universe, is the same God who knows everything that happens to us as well as inside of us. The all-knowing, all-powerful God is also a personal and intimate God.
- God knows everything the psalmist does, speaks and thinks, even before he does any of those things. There is nothing that he can hide from God. God knows his strengths and weaknesses, his motives, and his struggles.
- V. 5: “hem” in Hebrew means “besiege” – to encircle and enclose a fortified area as an aggressive military strategy to defeat a city or nation. (cf. 1 Samuel 23:8, *And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to **besiege** David and his men.*)
- God hems us because he searched us, and he knows us. He knows our weaknesses and struggles, he knows our stubbornness to hold on to our sinful ways, he knows our pride of thinking that we know better. In Psalm 23, the shepherd uses the rod and the staff to protect and direct the sheep on the right paths, and it sometimes involved encircling, enclosing, surrounding the sheep so that they don’t go out of the path. God hems us, to protect and direct us on the right path. God’s pursuit of us, surrounding us, hemming us, is motivated by his love for us, to keep us on the path that leads to righteousness instead of destruction.
- The psalmist struggles with God’s complete knowledge of him. It is too much for him to comprehend (v. 6: too wonderful, too lofty), and it drives the psalmist to flee from God (in the next verses), but he will soon find out that there is nowhere to run.
- Like the psalmist, we are often tempted to run away from God. The impulse to flee from God started from the Fall, after mankind’s perfect relationship with God has been broken. Sin tempts us to flee from God. There are always temptations that lures us away from God.

2. The All-Present (Omnipresent) God Pursues Me (vv. 7-12)

⁷ *Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?*

⁸ *If I go up to the **heavens**, you are there;
if I make my bed in the **depths**, you are there.*

⁹ *If I rise on the wings of the **dawn**,
if I settle on the **far side of the sea**,*

¹⁰ *even there your hand will **guide** me,
your right hand will **hold** me fast.*

¹¹ *If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,”*

¹² *even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

- The psalmist asks the question, “where can anyone go to escape the presence of the Almighty God?” And his answer was, “everywhere we go, God is there.”
- In verse 8 and 9, the psalmist uses opposite words to show that God is present in every part of the world.

The heavens	The depths: sheol – underworld, hades, grave, realm of the dead
Dawn: sunrise – east	Far side of the sea: west

- The point is there is no place anyone can go that God isn't there. There is no limit to where God is. He is omnipresent.
- Whatever reasons that drive us to flee from God, we cannot outrun him, we cannot hide from him. Not even darkness, physical darkness or spiritual darkness can hide us from God. God pursues us like a shepherd pursues a lost sheep. The reason why Jesus came, was to save the lost, to save those who were away from God.

Romans 8:38-39, ³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,* ³⁹ *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- Because of what Christ has done, we who were once lost are now found. God pursues us, because he loves us.
- V. 10: there is a change of language, the psalmist now sees God's pursuit of him as guidance and protection as compared to God hemming, besieging him, laying hand upon him, in verse 5. He begins to appreciate the knowledge and the presence of God.
- God's omnipresence has a dual significance: it also means that the wicked cannot run away from God. God knows them just as God knows us. (This links to verse 19 when the psalmist pleads for God's judgement upon the wicked.)

Job 34:22, *“There is no deep shadow [the same Hebrew word as “darkness” in vv. 11-12], no utter darkness, where evildoers can hide.”*

3. The Creator God Weaves Me (vv. 13-18)

- ¹³ *For you **created** my inmost being;
you **knit** me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully **made**;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*
- ¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you
when I was **made** in the secret place,
when I was **woven together** in the depths of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ *Your eyes **saw** my unformed body;
all the days **ordained** for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.*
- ¹⁷ *How precious to me are your **thoughts**, God!
How vast is the sum of them!*
- ¹⁸ *Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.*

- God has always been with the psalmist from his conception. God was the one creating, knitting, making, weaving together, each part of the body, the inner organs, the yet-to-be-formed body, making it wonderful.

The past
(creating us)

The present
(God searched and
know us)

The future
(God has ordained all
our days)

- The tone in the psalmist has changed to seeing this as wonderful and precious. God's work is wonderful, and it reveals the plan and commitment that God has towards the psalmist. God is committed to be with the psalmist from his conception to his completion.
- "How vast are God's thoughts": it is beyond our comprehension. He is the God who created the universe, naming every star, putting each planet, stars, galaxy, black hole in its perfect location and perfect distance from one another, so that everything in the universe works out harmoniously. And this God searches us, knows us, created us in every tiny detail, and weaving everything together for our good.
- God weaved David's life:
 - God chose David, the youngest among his brothers.
 - God prepared him for the battle against Goliath as he shepherds the sheep.
 - God protected and delivered him from Saul and Absalom.
 - God prepared him to be king by moulding his character and heart with every circumstance.
 - God gave him victories over his enemies.
 - God chastised him when he sinned and committed adultery.

Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

4. The Holy God Searches Me (vv. 19-24)

¹⁹ *If only you, God, would **slay** the wicked!*

*Away from me, you who are **bloodthirsty**!*

²⁰ *They **speak of you with evil intent**;*

*your adversaries **misuse your name**.*

²¹ *Do I not hate those who **hate you, LORD**,*

*and abhor those who are in **rebellion against you**?*

²² *I have nothing but hatred for them;*

I count them my enemies.

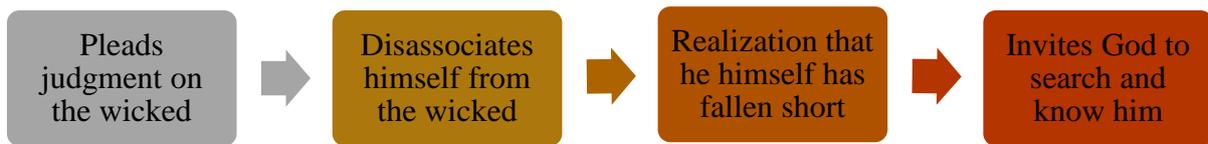
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***test** me and know my anxious thoughts.*

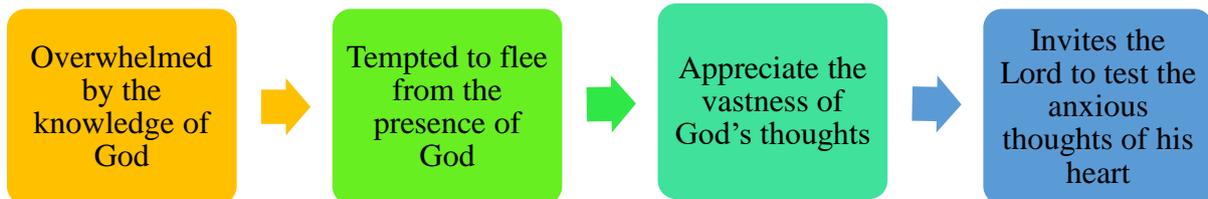
²⁴ ***See** if there is any offensive way in me,*

*and **lead** me in the way everlasting.*

- Despite God knowing all things, God being present everywhere (no one can escape God), and despite God weaving everything together, evil still exist. "Why does the sovereign, loving, and good God allow evil and suffering?"



- “Search” and “know” (v. 23): the same words used in verse 1, but this time with a change of tone from dismay to humility and worship.



- In humility, he wanted to get rid of anything that is offensive towards God. This is a courageous request, coming from someone who has just pleaded for God’s wrath against the wicked, based on the holiness and justice of God. But, he knew that only the Lord can lead him to the righteous path that leads to eternal life.
- Too often, we seek judgement on the wicked that we see happening, yet we are reluctant to look within and recognize the evil in ourselves. It takes humility and courage to confess that we are capable of the same evil as those we despise, hate and abhor. We must learn to humble ourselves and invite the Lord to search and test us.

Bloodthirsty (v. 19)	Do we wish revenge on the people that we hate? Do we hope that they get punished and condemned? Do we have compassion and mercy like God does?
Speak of you with evil intent ... misuse your name (v. 20)	Do we use God only to get what we want? Do we treat God’s name with contempt? Do we use it as a magic spell?
Hate you ... rebel against you (v. 21)	Do we have idols that take God’s place in our lives? Are we worshipping something else? Are we disobeying God?

- Are we running away from God or are we running towards God?
 - Are there disappointments and anger that cause us to have doubts or distrust towards the Lord?
 - Are we misplacing our faith in something other than God (self-sufficiency, idolatry)?
 - Is there something that we are unwilling to let go, unwilling to repent of?

God created us, he knows us from conception, he knows every part of our lives. He pursues after us, he invites us to partake in his divine plan as he weaves everything together for our good, he invites us to receive his love and forgiveness, to be holy as he is holy. Let us make it our prayer to ask God to search and know our hearts, to test and know our anxious thoughts, to see if there are any offensive ways in us, and to lead us in the way everlasting.

Prayer

*²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Church

- Wisdom and God's timing to restart our physical service
- We will hunger for God, through prayer and the meditation of God's word.
- We will be focus on what is important, instead of pursuing earthly treasures.
- Transformative work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- We will be faithful to welcome and minister to all the people that God sends to us.
- We will be a place of healing, restoration and reconciliation.
- Unity based on God's love and truth: breaking barriers between people from different groups.
- Workplaces: we will respond to our calling in the harvest field, representing Christ to the world.
- Compassion and wisdom to help those who are in need.
- Salvation for our loved ones.
- Ministries:
 - Open doors
 - Wisdom and discernment to reach out and minister
 - Sensitive to the needs of the people

Covid-19

- Those who are sick, those who have lost loved ones
- Healing and deliverance
- Government: wisdom and compassion
- Economy
- Mental health, domestic abuse
- Church: to bring hope with the Gospel

Healing

- Paul, Yee Leng, Aldrich & baby (Praise God for healing & protection)

Malaysia

- Leadership: righteousness, integrity, compassion for the people
- Unity: between all people group
- Justice and mercy: care for the marginalized (the poor, oppressed, widows, orphans, foreigners)
- Church: instruments of love and unity, prophetic voice to the nation
- Salvation

