



God is All-Knowing and Ever-Present

Psalm 139

By Daniel J. Denk

This Bible study takes a closer look at a characteristic of God that is important for us to acknowledge and understand today.

Primary Questions: These are the core questions we will ask in this study of [Psalm 139](#):

- Who is God?
- What is God like?
- How do we apply these truths to influence the way we think about God and understand our world?
- How will we respond in appropriate worship?

Background Note: [Psalm 139](#) is traditionally attributed to David who certainly experienced God's presence and God's pursuit of him in both his failings and his victories. In all of David's circumstances, he was a man after God's own heart, and he had a rich, intimate relationship with God. The poetry of this psalm rises to the greatest heights of all Hebrew poetry. Notice the parallel structure in each couplet (or triplet), the superb imagery and the anthropomorphisms. This psalm is sometimes given the title "[Hound of Heaven](#)." It reminds us of [Augustine's Confession](#), "Our hearts are restless until we find rest in Thee."

1. Read [Psalm 139](#). Notice how David addresses God directly as "you" throughout. This is a prayer. What can we learn about the intimacy of David's relationship with the Lord? Eugene Peterson says that we should learn the language of prayer by gaining deep familiarity with the [Prayer Book of Israel](#). How might this Psalm influence our prayers?
2. God is revealing some important truths about himself in David's prayer. His attributes of *omniscience* (all knowing) and *omnipresence* (everywhere present) are seen throughout this Psalm. How do these two attributes relate to each other?
3. Make a list of all the things that God "knows," according to David (1-6).
4. Make a list of all the places where God is "present," according to David (7-12).
5. There is also a sense of God's relentless pursuit of David (1-12). Is this reality comforting or frightening to David? Is this reality comforting or frightening to you?
6. Do you think that God's omniscience interferes with our understanding of human freedom? Why?

7. God clearly abides outside of time and space and the limitations of finiteness. How is this described? By contrast, David is a finite creature (like the rest of us). How is this described?
8. While it is not explicitly stated, what is the assumption about the beginning of human life in this Psalm (vv.13-16)? Are there implications for the abortion issue?
9. How does David describe the immensity of God's "mind" (vv. 17-18)?

Offer prayers of worship to God for his all-knowing, ever-present nature.

The Hound of Heaven

(stanza 1)

by Francis Thompson

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot, precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,

From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me'.