

## **THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

### **PSALM 139:1-6**

Introduction:

Our God knows. He knows everything. But what moved David to this psalm of praise was the understanding that the Lord of the covenant knew him. The greatness of His knowledge is set forth in beautiful poetry. The exact circumstance out of which the Psalm came is not indicated. Some have speculated that David is being exposed to false accusation, and feels himself to be defenseless. He responds to false accusations by turning to the Lord in prayer. This beautiful Psalm is a moving prayer to the Lord.

He begins the prayer by addressing God as Jahve, the God of the covenant. He closes by addressing God as El, the Creator, the God of might and power.

David exhausts the Hebrew language in its words for knowledge. He attributes all of them to this God to whom he addresses his prayer, and more.

The theologians call His knowledge omniscience—He knows everything. But David is not concerned with how much God knows; he wants to affirm that God knows him. David's focus is on how well God knows him.

**I. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF US IS PERSONAL.**

Psalm 139:1 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*.

“O Lord, you have searched me, and you know me.” “Searched” means to “dig down” like a miner searching for gold, to “examine thoroughly.” It was also used of spying out a land to learn as much about it as possible. So God takes steps to make sure that nothing is hidden from His understanding.

## II. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF US IS COMPLETE.

### 1. He knows what we do.

“You know when I sit and when I rise.” “You discern my going out and my lying down.” These expressions indicate that God’s knowledge covers every detail of our lives. This includes knowing where we are at each moment, and knowing what we are doing in each moment.

### 2. He knows what we think.

“You perceive my thoughts from afar.” This indicates that He understands my thoughts before I do. While they are still on their way to my mind, He sees them coming, and understands them. A thought here has the power of intentions, purposes, and the deepest thoughts of the heart.

This would remind us that He knows our motivations. He knows what we do and why we do it. He has dug down into the subconscious to discern the real

reason behind the deed. Fortunately for us our motivations are not always evident to other humans. It would really be embarrassing sometimes if others could know what we were thinking as we did a certain deed. And admittedly we may not even know ourselves why we do some things. Our motives can become very mixed. But God knows the purpose behind every word and deed.

In His search God has peeled us back like an onion until He is down to the very core of our being in our understanding. All of us have hidden things that we would prefer to hide from the eyes of the Lord, but He sees us.

### 3. He knows what we say.

“Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.” He knows what we say, and why we said it.

Our speech can be such a revelation of character, and such a window into the soul. When God knows our words that are uttered by our tongues, He knows us.

### 4. He knows what we are.

“You are familiar with all of my ways.” This means that He discerns who we really are. What we are in ourselves is manifest in our ways, in the paths that we habitually travel.

There are nothing hidden from Him. His eyes penetrate through everything to discern everything about us.

## II. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF US IS COMFORTING.

“You hem me in—behind and before; You laid your hand on me.” God acts on the basis of what He knows to do us good. He acts to accomplish our salvation.

1. Since He knows what He knows, He acts providentially to protect us.

The idea in the word “hem” is to lay siege to. This often happened in the practice of warfare in the ancient world. The invader would lay siege to a city to bring it into subjection. The word could also be used of the action to surround something in order to protect it. I think the idea here is protection.

The Lord knows how fragile and vulnerable we are, so He surrounds us with His providential care. David reveals something that about the knowledge of the Lord and our vulnerability--“He remembers that we are dust,” Psalm 103: 14. He remembers that He made us out of dust. We are very limited and very finite, and very vulnerable to temptation and evil.

How many times I would have acted in ways that would have been extremely hurtful to me and to others, but God intervened. A circumstance developed that turned me from the path that I would have taken.

2. Since He knows what He knows, He acts faithfully to restrain us.

His hand is upon us to restrain us—this can be the idea in the word. You will remember the word of Paul to the Corinthians--"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." (1 Corinthians 10:13, NLT)

3. Since He knows what He knows, He acts wisely to guide us.

The hand of the Lord can also be upon us in guidance. We will learn more about this in the next stanza of the psalm, but it is here.

4. Since He knows that He knows, He acts graciously to bless us.

You will remember the experience of Hagar, the Egyptian servant of Sarah. When she was fleeing from the cruel treatment from Sarah, far-advanced in

her pregnancy, and her life finished as far as she could see, the Angel of the Lord came to her. He revealed to her that God had a plan for the life of the son that she was bearing in her womb. He also assured her that God would care for her so she should return to the tents of Abram.

In the wonder of the moment she exclaimed in worship to the Lord.

"Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are- the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?""

(Genesis 16:13, NKJV)

## II. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF US IS AWESOME.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it."

(Psalm 139:5-6, NKJV) Can you not feel the sense of awe that this reality had provoked in the heart of the Psalmist? While he is awed by the omniscience of God, the deeper awe comes from being aware that God knows Him in complete and saving knowledge.

### 1. It keeps me aware that I am not God.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it."

(Psalm 139:6, NKJV)

God is holy! This means that He is different from that which He has made. One thing that sets Him apart from us is His complete knowledge. We have a tendency to forget that we are not God.

2. It causes me to bow before Him in worship.

This is the way the knowledge of the Lord moved Paul. He closes the doctrinal section of the Roman letter with a beautiful doxology--

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"

"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.

Amen." (Romans 11:33-36, NKJV)

A small comprehension of the greatness of His knowledge of us should enrich our experiences of worship. It should leave us bowing before Him in wonder and adoration.

3. It encourages me to trust Him.

Surely His infinite knowledge of us encourages us to trust Him. Jesus gave this counsel to us--"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things

the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." (Matthew 6:31-32, NKJV)

Nothing about you is hidden from Him today. He knows you fully, redemptively, and movingly. So I will trust in Him, I will worship Him, and I will serve Him all of my days.

#### SOME QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. What one thing about you do you wish that God did not know?
2. What circumstance in your life are you glad that God understands?
3. Are you aware that God knows every person on the planet as fully as He knows you?
4. Is there something that you need to confess to Him—maybe your lack of trust in Him?