

INFINITE...YET INTIMATE
Four Great Attributes Of God
Psalm 139

The *greatness* of God is *infinitely vast*. Yet this *infinite* God is *intimately aware* of *every individual* on the face of the earth. In the midst of over *7.5 billion people* (and counting) on the earth, God *knows* each and every one of us *perfectly*. The Bible says that the very *hairs* of our *heads* are *numbered*. He *knows* what each person *will say* before we *say it*. He is *present everywhere* and *personally involved* at even the *most minute level*. Having *created* every life, God *presides* over *every aspect* of each of these lives. Every *thought, attitude, word, and deed* is an *open book* before Him. How can a God so *immense* be so *immanent*? Such is the *mind-boggling* yet *soul-comforting reality* about our *infinite* yet *intimate* God.

Psalm 139 is a *wisdom psalm...intensely personal*, written by David. It reveals the *awe* and *wonder* he felt towards God... the God who *created* the *heavens* and the *earth*, yet who *actually knew* him and was *intimately involved* in *every detail* of his life. This *psalm* describes some of the *most unique attributes* of God...His *omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, holy* and *eternal nature*. David sees them not as mere *theological ideas* or *thoughts*...but as *dynamic realities* that *deeply impacted* his life...what gives him *hope* and *security*. Here is a *personal testimony* by this beloved man of God...a man after God's own heart. It surveys *four great divine attributes* which *should influence* every believer's life today. David *meditates* upon the *crucial truths* that God is *all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, and all-holy*.

I. GOD IS ALL-KNOWING: (vs. 1-6) *Omniscience...His knowledge of all things*.

O Lord, You have searched me and known me (vs. 1)...

Searched...used to describe *the careful scrutiny involved in mining operations* and *in exploring a country*.

David realized that *nothing* in his life was *hidden* from God's *penetrating knowledge*...that God had *scoured every detail* of his life and *knew* him *intimately*.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar (vs. 2)...

These *two activities* are intended to represent David's *every day activities*. Not only does God know his *actions*, but He *knows his thoughts* and *sees into his heart*.

You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all (vs. 3-4)...

Scrutinize...means to *sift through something...to winnow as grain...to sort out...to look at thoroughly and critically*.

Intimately acquainted...God was *deeply familiar* with all his ways. He even *knew* what he was *going to say* before he *said it*. David could *only conclude*...You know it all.

You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me (vs. 5)...

Enclosed...means that *there is no means of escape*. God *surrounded* David like a city *being besieged* with *no way of escape*. There was *no way* for him to *escape* God's *all-knowing thoughts*.

Laid Your hand upon me...God had His *hand on David* ...He was *always near*. It's the picture of someone taking hold of a *blind man* and *safely leading* him.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it (vs. 6)...God's *omniscience* is both *convicting* and *comforting*. It's *humbling* beyond one's *capacity to grasp*.

Too wonderful...God's omniscience surpasses human ability to comprehend it.

"Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, the wonders of one perfect in knowledge..."

~Job 37:16

"For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths."

~Proverbs 5:21

It's like a parent having eyes in the back of their head. It amazes children when their parents know what they have done. They thought that they had gotten away with it.

II. GOD IS ALL-PRESENT: (vs. 7-12) Omnipresence...His presence everywhere. Emmanuel...God with us.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there (vs. 7-8)...

David understood that God is *all-present*...and that he *could never escape* His *divine presence*.

He asked *two rhetorical questions*...and they imply a *negative answer*. There is *nowhere* God *isn't present*.

If I ascend to heaven, You are there...

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there... Sheol...a reference to the *dead* or the *grave*. Even the *abode of the dead isn't apart* from God's *omnipresence*.

"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

~Romans 14:9

If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me (vs. 9-10)...

North, south, east, and west are all represented here. No matter *where one goes* in life, God's *hand* is there to **lead** us. We are *never beyond* God's *divine reach*.

Will lead me...means to *direct* or *guide* someone down the *right path*...down the *path of righteousness*. Nowhere is this verb more *vividly demonstrated* than in the **Book of Exodus** where God *led Israel* with a *cloud by day* and *fire by night* (**Exodus 13:21**).

If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night," even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You (vs. 11-12)...

God's *all-seeing eyes* can *penetrate* even the *darkness*. *Dark times* are *light* to God. He is *present in them*, *knowing perfectly* all that is *transpiring* and what His *eternal purposes* are.

"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation which did not call on My name. I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts..."

~Isaiah 65:1-2

Isaiah reminds us that *God is here for us*. It's remarkable to think that even when we are *ignoring* Him, *distracted* by our *lives, social media, stress, pressures, networking*, or trying to *impress others, not really aware* of Him or, perhaps, *not even interested*...that He is *available* for us. *Relationally, desirous* for us to be *with* Him. To *hear* Him. To *respond* to Him in conversation, with our lives.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good."

~Proverbs 15:3

“‘Am I a God who is near,’ declares the Lord, ‘And not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?’ declares the Lord.”

~Jeremiah 23:23-24

I used to tell the boys that there was no place they could go, or do anything that I wouldn't know about (Jefferson and J. Clyde Morris Blvd.)

III. GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL: (vs. 13-18) *Omnipotence* ...*His power in the formation of man.*

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb (vs. 13)...

Formed...means *to acquire by creation...molded* like a *skilled artist* would form a *pot* out of *clay* or one would *weave* a beautiful *tapestry*.

Inward parts...refers to all the *organs, muscles, nerves*, etc...*skillfully made*.

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well (vs. 14)...

Fearfully and wonderfully made...David *praised* God for this display of perfect *omnipotence*...a response of *awe* and *wonder* towards God who *created* him so *perfectly*.

My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth (vs. 15)...

My frame...refers to his *bones* or *skeleton*.

Not hidden from You...in *full view* to *divine eyes*. Even though made in secret (in the *mother's womb*)...he wasn't hidden from God. *Concealed* from *human eyes* but *not from* God.

Skillfully wrought...means *woven together* like *fine needlepoint*.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them (vs. 16)...

Unformed substance...refers to the *embryo*.

All written the days that were ordained for me...The *span of his life*...the *precise length of his life*...was *determined* by God *before* he was *born*.

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You (vs. 17-18)...

This led David to conclude that the Lord's *plans* for His people are *most precious* and in fact are *innumerable*. These *divine truths* were beyond his *comprehension*. If he tried to *list these truths*, they would outnumber the grains of *sand* on the beaches of the world...*surpassing* the *ability* for anyone to *count* or *comprehend*.

When I awake, I am still with You...Each morning when he would awaken, this *sense of awe* continued to *dominate*...he *couldn't remove* such *towering thoughts* about God from his *mind*.

IV. GOD IS ALL-HOLY: (vs. 19-24) *Eternal...His holiness* *which destroys evil and searches the believer's heart.*

“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind...”

~Jeremiah 17:10a

O that You would slay the wicked, O God; depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. For they speak against You wickedly, and Your enemies take Your name in vain (vs. 19-20)...

God's *enemies* were David's *enemies*. They *blasphemed* God and *abused* His name. David *couldn't bear* this. He *desired* that God would *destroy* those who would *speak against* Him and those who *opposed* Him.

Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies (vs. 21-22)...

David *expresses* his **hate** for those who **hate** God. This means that he *rejects* and *refuses* those who would *rise up against* God. To *oppose* God was to *oppose* David. He was so *burdened* for God's *kingdom work* to *move forward* that he asked for *all obstacles* to be *removed*, even those *adversaries*.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way (vs. 23-24)...

In dealing with *sin*, David was *equally hard* on himself. He asked God to **search** and *examine* his own **heart**. He knew that God *knew his heart* better than he *knew his own heart*.

Try me and know my anxious thoughts...David remained in an *open, honest, and vulnerable posture*, imploring the Lord to *take a proactive role* inside him by *pointing out* or *finding* and *seeing* anything that *offends* Him. He asked God to *test* him as a *refiner* would *test* and *purify metal*.

If there be any hurtful way...Hebrew for an *idol*. In David's culture *idols* were *actual objects* that people believed *had power, prayed to, tried to appease, and gave authority to*, like ones for *fertility* or *nature*.

In our Western, secular culture, we don't necessarily have the same *idols* but we certainly *try to appease* and *glorify* various *objects, habits, people, or political beliefs...* placing them *higher than* God. If we are honest, we hope any one of these things *will save us, keep us happy, define us, and/or have authority* in our lives even more than our loving heavenly Father.

In this *confessional prayer*, David is *humbly* and *honestly* putting his foot down to his *behavior*, especially to his *idol worship*. Looking at the **Hebrew** in **verse 24**, the *cry of his heart* sounds something like this: *Show me my idols God...I know they offend you. I know they are keeping me from You and You from me. I know they are not You. I need Your help because, God, I want You to lead me and guide me (in a governing sense) forever and ever!*

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **The personal application and direct appropriation of this Psalm begins with an overwhelming sense of the INFINITE GREATNESS of God...who He is.**
 - As we ponder the *immensity* of His *greatness*, yet how *intimately involved* He is in a *personal relationship* with us...**our hearts should be captivated, even awestruck, that He would be so LOVING and INTIMATELY involved with us.**
- God, who *knows* all and *controls* all. God *is* all and *in* all.
- **The greater our understanding of who God is, and of His attributes, the greater will be the AWE and WORSHIP that will flood our hearts for Him.**

It would be difficult to *adore* a God we could *completely understand*. The fact that He *exceeds the limits* of our *human comprehension* causes our *hearts to be filled* with even *greater amazement* toward Him.