

## GOD FOR ME (Psa 139)

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True worship requires 1) knowing that the LORD, he is God (Deut 4.35, 39), 2) knowing God as he really is in himself (Deut 7.9-10, in Psa 139 → omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, sovereign, holy), and 3) knowing God as mine, and myself as his, in the bond of covenantal love (Hos 8.2; Psa 100.3-4). Only such people have a heart to praise him, and all such do.

Psalms 139 is a psalm (song of praise to the LORD) of David, great king of Israel. He sings with joy and wonder not just about God's objective greatness and goodness, but that he was God *for him*. The whole is directed to God, very personally, like Augustine's Confessions. Yet it is public, for each one of God's chosen people. All and only believers in Christ can say to the Lord, "You are God for me," and this confession is a great part of how his glory is reflected in us.

This explains why some will not really worship the Lord, even in church. They may know intellectually that God is great and good, but not that his greatness and goodness secures their blessedness. They sense the enmity between them and God, and so they are not grateful but resentful. I say to them, we believers were all like you once, but we found the Lord to receive us graciously when we surrendered to him. He was the Father of a prodigal to each and every one of us, and so he shall be to you if you will come home where you belong. He will be a God for you if you will but repent and trust in him. Come to him out of your doomed fortress with your hands up, and he will celebrate, embracing you as a son of his household!

Now let us warm to praise by making David's meditations ours.

### YOU DELIGHT IN ME (vv. 1-6)

Yes, God knows absolutely everything. "In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent of the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain" (1689 LBCF II.2). But David's point is that God knows him.

Further, this knowledge is not mere awareness, but the fruit of God's delight in him. When a man truly loves a woman, he pursues her for an ever-more intimate knowledge. She becomes his study and obsession. He never tires of knowledge that brings her closer.

See this connection between knowledge and love in Gen 4.1 and Psa 1.6. Yes, the Lord *is aware of* the way of the ungodly, but he *knows, delights in*, the way of the righteous.

Each believer is the beloved object of God's constant attention and study. God has "searched/examined" and "known" him or her (v. 1)—daily habits (v. 2a), secret thoughts (v. 2b), all the details of one's manner of life (v. 3), and every single word we speak (v. 4). God keeps us within certain bounds (v. 5a, "you fence me in, behind and in front"). He keeps us "in his sight and under his power" (v. 5b, Poole).

This is amazing, incomprehensible (v. 6)! That the transcendent God *notices* me, *knows* me through and through, and *still delights* in me! How can any Christian withhold heartfelt praise to this "God for me?"

### YOU ABIDE WITH ME (vv. 7-12)

Yes, God is also absolutely everywhere. "The Lord our God is . . . immense, . . . every way infinite" (1689 LBCF II.1). He exists as immanent (within creation) and transcendent (beyond creation).

But the wonder here is that God abides *with me*! Note the eleven self-references (I, me, my). The psalmist is not terrified, but assured, that no matter where he should go (extremes of heaven, hell, or earth's remotest bounds), "thou art there" (v. 8a), not just existing, but abiding favorably. "Thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (guiding me, holding me fast). Not even the cover of darkness diminishes God's knowledge and gracious presence with me!

You will praise God best when you know deep down that he is always, always with you in his love and faithfulness. Everywhere, in absolutely all circumstances. Even in the deep darkness of your depression, doubt, demerit, and deficiency—he is there as your devoted Savior. Not even by sinning can a true Christian escape God's loving care!

### YOU CREATED ME (vv. 13-18)

God's care and love for me began long before I realized it (TH #56).

*When all thy mercies, O my God, my rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise.  
Unnumbered comforts to my soul Thy tender care bestowed,  
Before my infant heart conceived from whom those comforts flowed.*

V. 13: “Possessed my reins” → “created my inmost self [lit., kidneys];” “covered me” → “knitted me together” in my mother’s womb. God works his gracious wonders in and through mothers carrying babies.

V. 14: “For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders. You knew me through and through” (NJB).

Vv. 15-16: You planned me, knew me, and delighted in me long before I even existed and came into the world.

Vv. 17-18: Overwhelmed with adoration, amazement, assurance.

### **YOU SAVE ME** (vv. 19-22)

A third party intrudes the soliloquy—the enemy. David is acutely aware of their presence and threat to his soul, but his confidence of ultimate salvation is not shaken for two reasons.

First, they are God’s enemies. They are wicked while God is holy. They speak against God wickedly, breaking the 3C, and “the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exod 20.7). When God’s patience ends and he finally rises up to cast them down, they will be destroyed, no longer posing any threat to any of God’s people.

Second, David hates them. “Depart from me therefore, ye wicked men” is his anticipation of this judgment and repudiation of their company. Just before the ground opened to swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Moses exhorted, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins” (Num 16.26).

David’s disassociation is not only from fear of shared judgment but from a sincere detestation of their ways. He appeals to God, searcher of all hearts, for this. The two questions are rhetorical, implying a positive answer. He hates those who hate God, and for that very reason. This is not personal vindictiveness but zeal for God’s kingdom. Luther admitted praying against God’s enemies:

I cannot pray without cursing [pronouncing a curse] at the same time. If I say: “Hallowed be Thy name,” I must thereby say: May the names of the papists and all who blaspheme Thy name be accursed, condemned, and dishonored. . . . Truly, thus my lips and heart pray day in, day out; and all who

believe in Christ are praying this way with me. (cited in Taking Hold of God, Beeke and Najapfour, pp. 25-26).

True lovers of God will necessarily hate all that stands in opposition to Him. This siding with God against his enemies is proof that we are his friends, his beloved, and as such, that we are in the way of ultimate salvation by God’s grace and faithfulness.

### **YOU PURIFY ME** (vv. 23-24)

Although Psa 139 is all prayer addressed to God, this is the first petition. It is a confident plea for complete deliverance from all sin, even the smallest specks remaining in the innermost soul, hidden from all men, including the psalmist himself. From the Hebrew:

Search (out) [examine] me, O God, and know my heart:  
Try [test] me, and know my (anxious) thoughts.  
And see if there be any wicked way [a way of an idol] in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.

The wife who loves her husband wants him to know her more and more, and so she reveals her secrets to him. Even so, the Christian aware of God’s intimate knowledge invites and revels in it. With confidence in his faithful, covenantal love, a believer knows that the further discovery of any sin will only lead to its removal and the increased fellowship of these two lovers.

O Lord, you are God for me. You know me thoroughly and delight in me. You abide with me in all places and circumstances. You created me in your wisdom and power. You save me from all my enemies. You purify me from all my remaining sins, and lead me in the way everlasting.

### **APPLICATION**

Does your whole soul resonate with these truths? Is our God really and truly “God for you?” If not, he will be yours if you will have him. He really and truly offers himself to you in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is to you like a suitor on bended knee (Isa 45.22; Matt 11.28-30).

If he is God for you, let your heart be warmed to earnest praise! Confess these things to him, as David did, and keep praying for purification until he finishes his work in you and you fall into his arms. Then you will finally find him to be God for you!