

Psalm 139: God and David

Psalm 139 is the words of God,
not the words of men.

David was the penman for this
precious divine truth.

From Jewish scribes to older conservative commentators, the language used to describe this Psalm is very lofty for content and description.

Psalm 139: God and David

The Spirit of God is the Author; David is the penman.
David was the man after God's own heart and favorite.
The introduction sends it to the chief musician to be sung.
It is an exquisite description of God's thoughts upward.
It includes an inspired response that David returned.

Psalm 139: God and David

A goal of your pastor is for you to be like David.
David and Jesus are very connected in both testaments.
We know more about David and relating to God than others.
Our current sermon series is about God's thoughts to us.
The Psalm details God's thoughts and a response.

Psalm 139: God and David

THEME

God's infinite omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence in all the internal and external aspects of David's life provoked him to great joy in God and for His many blessings, to hate the wicked for rebellion and mocking of God, and to soberly request perfection in His sight.

The purpose of Psalm 139 is the comfort and delight of God's thoughts toward us.

The case is presented in three parts, and David has three responses to his dear God.

Psalm 139: God and David

- 1-6** God's perfect knowledge of David's life (omniscience).
- 7-12** God's presence with David everywhere (omnipresence).
- 13-16** God's detailed plans for David even before conception.
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Psalm 139: God and David

The Jews, preservers of Psalms, thought this best.
The main theme is very positive – only indirect warning.
Hand leads and holds ... covers ... praise ... precious unto me.
Do not make it a terrifying Psalm of God's search for sin.
Make it a tremendous one of comfort and delight.

Psalm 139: God and David

God's omniscience and omnipresence were needed.
David was anointed in secret to replace the sitting king.
He faced danger with the sheep, Goliath, Saul, his sons, etc.
Yet he survived all threats, funded the temple, died rich.
He was protected and promoted as Jesus' namesake.

The pronouns are first and second person
only ... very personal ... David and God.

thou ... 11

thee ... 8

thy ... 8

thine ... 3

I ... 17

me ... 16

my ... 15

mine ... 2

O LORD ... 3

O God ... 3

80 first and second pronouns in only 24 verses @ 3.3
He liked me ... I love Him and will praise Him forever!

Only first and second person pronouns are
used ... very personal ... David and God.
No third person of God or David.

CONTRAST

Psalm 18 ... *I will love thee, O LORD ... I will call upon the LORD.*

Psalm 23 ... *The LORD is my shepherd ... For thou art with me.*

Psalm 91 ... *For he shall give his angels charge over thee.*

Psalm 103 ... *Bless the LORD ... forget not all his benefits.*

Psalm 110 ... *The LORD said unto my Lord ... The LORD hath...*

The purpose of Psalm 139 is the comfort and delight of God's thoughts toward us.

There has been a tendency by many to see God's omniscience here as looking for sin.

Psalm 139 is for Comfort and Praise, Not Warning

There are no words about fear, sin, or repentance in the body of it. God's knowledge by searching was wonderful, rather than fearful. David did not fear God searching or trying him (139:23-24; 26:1-12). God knew David's superiority and told Samuel about it (1 Sam 16:7). God liked David and chose him over all siblings and men (1 Chr 28:4). God's hand on David was to protectively lead and hold him (139:10). God's hand on David was not to arrest him, but favor him (Ps 80:17). Omniscience and omnipresence should match his loving formation. His formation was in all kindness without any fear or warning at all. God's detailed plan of his formation has no hint about sin or fear. The book with all David's members written was God's providence. Beyond formation, God had countless precious thoughts for David. These countless precious thoughts resulted in David still with God. God's thoughts were precious and countless ... of sins? I trow not.

Psalm 139 is for Comfort and Praise, Not Warning

Though it begins with God's search and knowledge, there is no sin. Countless precious thoughts are blessings we can easily start listing. God was with David for favor and help, not omnipresence for sins. Contrary to David, who was righteous, God would slay the wicked. David wanted away from the wicked for God's judgment of them. David wanted away from the wicked due to their murderous lives. David wanted away from the wicked for their words against God. The result of God in David's life was hatred of the wicked, not fear. David's spirit is perfect and passionate against both sin and sinners. David's loyalty could not have been more righteous as found here. Why the closing prayer? He began with God knowing him perfectly. Why the closing prayer? To prove his difference from the wicked. Why the closing prayer? To clear his hatred of them of hypocrisy. Why the closing prayer? His desire to be holy without possible sin.

The purpose of Psalm 139 is the comfort and delight of God's thoughts toward us.

Rather than think fear or warning, let us find incredible thoughts of God's favor.

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O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Psalms 139:1

O LORD = I AM THAT I AM ... our great God Jehovah.

This is not general omniscience, but very personal to David.

Most like dear or important others learning about them in detail.

David was glad God Jehovah knew his faith, integrity, plans, fears, etc.

His knowledge of David here is His perfect awareness of all that was David.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
thou understandest my thought afar off.

Psalm 139:2

Not past or future, but present tense knowledge.

God knew every activity of David, stopping and starting.

God knew and understood every thought within David's heart.

God need not wait for our thoughts, he knows and has known them.

He knows all your activities and thoughts, so think bottle and book (Ps 56:8).

*Thou tellest my wanderings:
put thou my tears into thy bottle:
are they not in thy book?*

Psalm 56:8

Thou compassed my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with all my ways.

Psalms 139:3

Compassed = God surrounded all David did.

God knew all angles of David's actions and sleeping.

Every aspect of David's life was clearly known by Jehovah.

Either awake and active, or asleep and unconscious, God watched.

God was with David at all times to know every activity and all his ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue,
but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

Psalm 139:4

A word in David's tongue was not yet heard.

God knows what you need before you ask (Matt 6:8).

Others cannot know before hearing, but God does perfectly.

When others do hear our words, they often misunderstand them.

But God knew each of David's words and thinking behind each perfectly.

Thou hast beset me behind and before,
and laid thine hand upon me.

Psalm 139:5

Beset = To surround with things set in place.

Here it is God's presence He had set around David.

Like *compasest*, God was in front and David's rereward.

Surrounded by God, and holding him, David could not be safer.

God had His hand on David, not to arrest him, but bless and help him.

*Even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Psalm 139:10

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

Psalm 18:35

*Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed;
he will hear him from his holy heaven
with the saving strength of his right hand.*

Psalm 20:6

*My soul followeth hard after thee:
thy right hand upholdeth me.*

Psalm 63:8

*Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
thou hast holden me by my right hand.*

Psalm 73:23

*With whom my hand shall be established:
mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

Psalm 89:21

Let thine hand help me;
for I have chosen thy precepts.

Psalm 119:173

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me:
thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies,
and thy right hand shall save me.*

Psalm 138:7

*Even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Psalm 139:10

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

Psalm 139:6

The knowledge here is perfect omniscience.

God knew each thought, word, and action of David.

God was all around David and did not miss a single detail.

Such omniscience, far above David, was wonderful, not fearful.

This verse ends the first part as David turned to God's omnipresence.

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Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Psalm 139:7

Omnipresence = always present everywhere.

David knew God was always with him by His Spirit.

He was never alone by God's presence always around him.

This verse does not suggest David trying to run away from God.

If David had to go or flee, which he often did, God was still with him.

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

Psalms 139:8

Omnipresence proved by two extremes.

Both cases are only hypothetical, not intentional.

If David were to enter heaven, it is God's dwelling place.

If David were to enter the region of death, *behold*, God was there.

God is present in both opposites, glory of heaven and destruction of hell.

*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Psalm 16:10

The sorrows of hell compassed me about:
the snares of death prevented me.

Psalm 18:5

*For great is thy mercy toward me:
and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*

Psalm 86:13

*The sorrows of death compassed me,
and the pains of hell gat hold upon me:
I found trouble and sorrow.*

Psalm 116:3

Hell and destruction are before the LORD:
how much more then the hearts of the children of men?
Proverbs 15:11

If I take the wings of the morning,
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Psalms 139:9

Wings of the morning are the flight of light.

Uttermost parts of the sea are distant and unknown.

No matter how fast or far gone, God would still be with him.

These are David's inspired, hypothetical views of His omnipresence.

Unknown speed and unknown places, God would be fully present there.

Even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.

Psalm 139:10

Great speed to unknown parts ... God is there.

Spurgeon wrote of God leading a fugitive under arrest!

This is God's hand of guiding, helping providence leading him.

And this is God's right hand upholding David for success and victory.

Be cautious. Why would any corrupt this verse to lose the inspired theme?

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me;
even the night shall be light about me.

Psalm 139:11

Opposites ... speed and distance ... darkness.

Darkness does hide, and it had hidden David before.

But darkness only hides from men with eyes needing light.

Not only do men hide in darkness, but men also fear in darkness.

Though we cannot see in the dark, God can see in it as if it were light.

*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;
nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

Psalm 91:5-6

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day:
the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

Psalm 139:12

Darkness is a great hindrance to man.

But Jehovah finds no difference in darkness or light.

David added more about God's eyes seeing perfectly at night.

There is no difference to God by those things that greatly limit men.

This verse ends the second part as David turned to God's creation of him.

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For thou hast possessed my reins:
thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13

Reins = kidneys, inner parts and passions.

God owned David's reins to know and guide them.

God as Creator made David's reins and knew him perfectly.

God had also protectively covered his body forming in the womb.

What glorious providence! ... *Owning his reins! ... Sheltering his body!*

*I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel:
my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

Psalm 16:7

*Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
try my reins and my heart.*

Psalm 26:2

*Thus my heart was grieved,
and I was pricked in my reins.*

Psalm 73:21

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Psalms 139:14

Recall the theme – *I will praise thee!*

Fearfully and wonderfully made – inside and out.

Fear is not of God's omniscience but His wise omnipotence.

God's works – making of David – were wonderful and marvellous.

It is all very individual and personal, verse after verse, *my soul knoweth!*

My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret,
and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Psalm 139:15

Curiously = carefully, skillfully, exquisitely.

Lowest parts of the earth = a woman's secret womb.

David's incredible and intricate body formed under God's eye.

No one could see, for it was hidden away, but not from God's view.

In the secret place of a woman, God formed the miracle of David's body.

*But those that seek my soul, to destroy it,
shall go into the lower parts of the earth.*

Psalm 63:9

*(Now that he ascended,
what is it but that he also descended first
into the lower parts of the earth?*

Ephesians 4:9

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect;
and in thy book all my members were written, which in
continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalm 139:16

As cells multiplied to form David's body, God saw him.

We might not easily recognize the forming body, but God did.

God had a book where He had chosen the features of David's body.

And by God's plan and schedule the design became reality from nothing.

This fabulous description of God's providential love is not for fear, but praise.

Are you thankful to God for your existence?

*He gave you existence to know Him and
His Son, and then He saved you
to know Him and His Son.*

David by the Spirit has in lofty language
described God's infinite care of him by

Omniscience
Omnipresence
Omnipotence

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The previous 16 verses are fabulous and fantastic about our glorious GOD Jehovah.

But the rest of the Psalm might be even better by showing the perfect response.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
how great is the sum of them!

Psalms 139:17

David's reaction/response *with emphasis!*

“Also” takes God's thoughts far past his formation.

God had thought wonderful things for David's prosperity.

The number of God's thoughts toward David was a countless sum.

Before thinking David an exception, why not be like him? He was not perfect.

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:
when I awake, I am still with thee.

Psalms 139:18

Grains of sand are too few!

Did David know, *Count Your Many Blessings?*

Name them one by one ... to see what God hath done.

Sleep stops counting and praise, but when we wake, we resume.

Waking brings consciousness ... God is still there ... He is our only constant.

A Few of God's Countless Thoughts toward David

*Placed in a genealogy from Adam to Jesus, Abram to Jesus.
What body did God form? Beautiful and goodly to look to.
Killed a bear and a lion as a youth to protect family sheep.
Musical genius to play, write, compose, invent for worship.
God gladly told Samuel he was a man after His own heart.
Of all the men in Israel, God liked David of Jesse of Judah.
Had a melancholy spirit that God prompted for the Psalms.
He was a prophet with many Messianic prophecies of Jesus.
Happed on Goliath, killed him with one stone, cut off head.
God gave him wisdom and the hearts of Israel due to it.
Knew ethical wisdom to once eat ceremonial shewbread.
Protected him from Saul's numerous attempts to kill him.
Jonathan, older and heir apparent of Israel, loved David.
Lived successfully among Philistines in Goliath's hometown.*

A Few of God's Countless Thoughts toward David

*Sent Abigail to supply his men and keep him back from sin.
Given Abigail for wife as God killed Nabal for his rudeness.
Defeated all enemies, ran through a troop, leaped a wall.
Saved God's anointed (Saul) to eulogize him like no other.
Won pagans like Hiram king of Tyre, ever a lover of David.
Six hundred Gittites (Goliath's hometown) devoted to him.
Forgiven for adultery and murder (and a great confession).
Given Solomon and Nathan (and others) by his Bathsheba.
He is twice the father of Jesus, both legally and naturally.
Saved from Absalom and Adonijah attempts to steal throne.
Prompted to build God a house but God rather built him one.
Engaged in one of the most intimate exchanges with God.
Given a dynasty forever with Jesus as His Son on his throne.
Died in a good old age, full of days, at 70, with great faith.*

Doing this exercise for David's life is helpful,
wise, rich, and fun, for God recorded much.

Then do it for your own life ... *Count your
blessings! ... Name them one by one!*

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Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:
depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

Psalms 139:19

God will judge and kill murderers.

God's perfect character includes holy judgment.

David in reaction/response to His love hated His enemies.

We do not know the specifics here ... but Doeg and Joab are two.

Truly loving God and walking with Him requires separation from sinners.

For they speak against thee wickedly,
and thine enemies take thy name in vain.

Psalm 139:20

Here is their conduct David hated.

They blasphemed against God that David loved.

They were strange children that used God's name in vain.

Why are these two verses here? David's love and loyalty to God!

The more you love God like David the more you hate enemies of God.

Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?
and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

Psalm 139:21

This is holy, high, pure love ... for God!

Love in the Bible requires hatred of its opposite.

David emphasized such hatred and Solomon confirmed it.

Why are these two verses here? David's love and loyalty to God!

Lament (grieve) their ruin (MH)? ... hate the sin but love the sinner? No!

*Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said,
It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*

Psalm 95:10

*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved;
he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away:
the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Psalm 112:10

*And when he had looked round about on them with anger,
being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,
he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand.*

Mark 3:5

I hate them with perfect hatred:
I count them mine enemies.

Psalm 139:22

David's perfect love had perfect hatred.

He had holy hatred without foolish, natural hate.

These were not David's personal enemies, but rather God's.

Sometimes an enemy of God might be David's, he also hated them.

This is ultimate love, loyalty, and friendship – *your enemies are my enemies.*

Ye that love the LORD, hate evil:
he preserveth the souls of his saints;
he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97:10

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil:
pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 8:13

*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:
I hate the work of them that turn aside;
it shall not cleave to me.*

Psalm 101:3

*Through thy precepts I get understanding:
therefore I hate every false way.*

Psalm 119:104

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Search me, O God, and know my heart:
try me, and know my thoughts:

Psalm 139:23

David knew God deserved perfection.

This request is not in fear at all, but confidence.

He already knew from the first verse that God knew him.

Having ripped the wicked, David wanted to avoid any hypocrisy.

This is not the main purpose of the Psalm but rather David's pure heart.

And see if there be any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:24

Love of God seeks to be perfect.

Friendship with God is eager for His search.

What does God deserve for His thoughts? Holy living!

David is not fearful, but confident, yet he wants to be perfect.

An excellent spirit toward God hates hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

How to Apply Psalm 139 to Your Life like David

*Know and praise His omniscience for knowing all about you.
Know and praise His omnipresence for always being with you.
Know and praise Him for giving you existence to know Him.
Know and praise His eternal counsel in your favor to this day.
Know and praise His countless precious thoughts toward you.
Return precious thoughts back to Him of love, praise, worship.
Believe He will justly destroy wicked men that blaspheme Him.
Love Him with total loyalty to reject all persons not loving Him.
Love Him with total loyalty to hate those that are His enemies.
Count His enemies your enemies in defense of His perfectness.
Examine yourself to find any sin and ask Him to search you also.
Often pray for Him to search and know your heart and thoughts.
Tell Him you want Him to find any sins and lead you in holiness.
Give Him the most righteous life you can with love and praise.*

God's Precious Thoughts to N.T. Christians

Matthew 1:1

Matthew 1:21

Luke 10:20

John 1:1,14

John 17:1-3

Romans 8:32

I Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 1:1-3

**Leading to This Precious Thought
and the Proper Reaction/Response**

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,
that we should be called the sons of God:*

therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God,
and it doth not yet appear what we shall be:
but we know that, when he shall appear,
we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*And every man that hath this hope in him
purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

I John 3:1-3

For Further Study

- God's Thoughts Toward You ...** (2026; 6 detailed sermons) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2026/gods-thoughts-toward-you-1/>
- Traits of David ...** (2022; PPT Slides) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2022/david-the-king/>
- Character of David ...** (2017; 15 detailed sermons) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2017/david/>
- Heart of David ...** (2004; 7 detailed sermons) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2004/heart-of-david/>
- Exceeding Magnifical ...** (2008; detailed sermon) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2008/exceeding-magnifical/>
- Psalms 101 ...** (2015; PPT Slides) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2015/psalm-101/>
- Psalms 103 ...** (2025; detailed sermons) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2025/psalm-103-1/>
- Last Words of David ...** (2003; detailed sermon) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2003/last-words-of-david/>
- Jesus the Son of David ...** (2009; detailed sermons) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2009/jesus-the-son-of-david/>
- David the Musician ...** (2013; detailed sermon) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2013/david-the-musician/>
- David and Jesus Compared ...** (2021; detailed sermon) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2021/david-and-jesus-compared/>
- David's Deeds ...** (2015; detailed table) ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2015/davids-deeds/>