



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N36 September 7, 2025

PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

"Psalm 139"

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Personal God

I believe God is involved
in and cares about my
daily life.

*"I lift up my eyes to the
mountains – where does my
help come from? My help
comes from the LORD, the
Maker of heaven and earth."*

Psalm 121:1-2



How is God
involved in my
life?



All three of God's "omni" attributes are alluded to in Psalm 139:1-18, the first three stanzas of the psalm. God's omniscience is alluded to in the first (vv. 1-6), omnipresence in the second (vv. 7-12), and omnipotence in the third (vv. 13-18).

Christian theology has long sought to articulate the nature of God through his revealed attributes. Among the most central are *omniscience*, *omnipresence*, and *omnipotence*. These non-moral qualities, while distinct, are deeply interconnected, each reinforcing the others and together providing a vision of God's infinite majesty and personal relationship to us.

Omniscience refers to God's perfect knowledge. Scripture repeatedly affirms that nothing is hidden from him. The psalmist declares, "Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether" (Psalm 139:4). God knows all things—past, present, and future—with full comprehension. His knowledge is not the result of observation or deduction but an eternal and immediate awareness. This truth assures believers that God's guidance and judgments are perfectly informed and entirely trustworthy. Omniscience underscores his wisdom, providence, and justice, for he cannot be deceived or mistaken.

Omnipresence describes God's unlimited presence throughout creation. "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?" asks the psalmist (Psalm 139:7). Unlike creatures bound by space, God transcends all spatial limitations. He is fully present in every place, not divided or spread thinly, but wholly present everywhere. This attribute brings comfort to his people, for it means God is never absent. His presence sustains the universe, and his nearness offers assurance in both joy and suffering. Yet his omnipresence is also holy and

penetrating, revealing that nothing can escape his gaze or his moral authority.

Omnipotence speaks of God's all-sufficiency in power. He is able to accomplish all that he wills, and his purposes cannot be thwarted. Jeremiah proclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you" (Jeremiah 32:17). Omnipotence does not imply that God can do the logically impossible or act contrary to his nature; rather, it means he is unlimited in strength and perfectly able to bring about his will. He does as he pleases (Psalms 115:3; 135:6). This attribute assures believers that God's promises will not fail and that evil cannot ultimately prevail.

These three attributes are not isolated but related. Omniscience and omnipotence work in harmony: God not only knows what is best but also has the power to accomplish it. Were he omniscient without omnipotence, his wisdom would lack effect. Were he omnipotent without omniscience, his power could be misguided. Omnipresence connects intimately with both, ensuring that God's power and knowledge are not remote but immediately operative everywhere. His knowledge is comprehensive because he is present to all things; his power is effective because no place lies beyond his reach. Together, these attributes testify to a God who is fully sovereign, wise, and near.

In sum, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence reveal the grandeur of God's being and his relationship with creation. For the believer, these truths are not abstract concepts but sources of awe, trust, and comfort. The God who knows all, is everywhere present, and can do all he wills is the same God who calls his people into fellowship with him.

Read Psalm 139:1-24

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm

- 1 You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- 3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- 4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- 7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
- 13 For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully
made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
- 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand –
when I awake, I am still with you.
- 19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- 20 They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
- 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
- 22 I have nothing but hatred for them;

I count them my enemies
23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "searched" in v. 1.
- Circle "know" in v. 1.
- Underline "sit" and "rise" in v. 2.
- Circle "perceive" in v. 2.
- Underline "going out" and "lying down" in v. 3.
- Circle "before" in v. 4.
- Circle "hem" in v. 5.
- Circle "too wonderful" in v. 6.
- Underline "heavens" and "depths" in v. 8.
- Bracket "wings of the dawn" and "far side of the sea" in v. 9.
- Box "even" indicating *emphasis* in vv. 10, 12.
- Underline "darkness" and "night" in vv. 11, 12.
- Double underline "light" and "day" in vv. 11, 12.
- Box "For" indicating *reason* in v. 13.
- Circle "created" and "knit" in v. 13.
- Circle "fearfully" and "wonderfully" in v. 14.
- Circle "frame" in v. 15.
- Underline "secret place" and "depths of the earth" in v. 15.
- Circle "Your eyes" in v. 16.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The LORD knows David (v. 1). *What* does he know about David – and you – and *when* does he know it?

 2. Put what verse 5 means in your own words (cf. v.10).

 3. Is there anything that God cannot know? What do you think?

 4. What is the implied answer to the two rhetorical questions in verse 7?

 5. *Identify and explain* the *merism* in verse 8 and the one in verse 9.

 6. Describe God's involvement in David's prenatal development (vv. 13-15) – explaining whether direct or indirect, and whether true for all children.

 7. It appears that David's days were numbered. How so?

 8. David refers to God's "thoughts" (v. 17). "Thoughts" about what?

 9. Put the point of verses 19-22 in your own words.

 10. **Discussion:** The psalm closes much like it opens. Talk about whether David's prayer is a prayer that you can pray.
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Commentary On The Text

Commentators on Psalm 139 confirm its link to the Central Belief Personal God. “I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.” Consider the following examples. One commentator writes: “Any small thoughts that we may have of God are magnificently transcended by this psalm; yet for all its height and depth it remains intensely personal from first to last” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, TOTC, 100). Another concurs: “The conception of intimate personal relation between God and man is perhaps more remarkably and forcefully dealt with in this song than in any other in the whole collection” (G. Campbell Morgan, *An Exposition of the Whole Bible*, 273).

In a nutshell, David—assuming “Of David” in the superscription indicates authorship—describes his personal relationship to God in terms of the relationship of God’s three “omni” attributes to him personally: *omniscience*, *omnipresence*, and *omnipotence*, the subjects of the psalm (vv. 1-18). After which, he pledges his allegiance to God and invites him to continue examining him with a view to further leading him “in the way everlasting” (vv. 19-24).

In the first stanza (vv. 1-6), David reflects on God’s exhaustive knowledge of him, referring to God’s *omniscience*. The first verse says it all. “Yahweh knew David intimately because of his penetrating examination of him” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Psalms,” 2025 ed., 493, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf). The *merisms* (see note) in verses 2 and 3 indicate that God knows all about him. God knows all his *activities* (“when I sit and when I rise”) and all his *thoughts*. He knows everything David does and the motives behind it (v. 2). God not only knows everything David does, he knows it all of the time (“my going out and my lying down”). At no time does he not know what the psalmist is doing. God *even* knows what David is going to say before he says it (v. 4). David senses he is encompassed by God’s presence; God has his hand on him (v. 5)—figuratively speaking that is. Such divine knowledge is beyond David’s comprehension; he is unable to fathom it (v. 6). God likewise knows everyone.

In the second stanza (vv. 7-12), David reflects on God’s existence everywhere, referring to God’s *omnipresence*. He begins by asking two rhetorical questions, affirming that neither he nor anyone else can escape God’s presence. The *merisms* in verses 8 and 9 indicate that God is present at the hypothetical *vertical* spatial extremes of height and depth (“the heavens . . . the depths”) and at the hypothetical *horizontal* spatial extremes of east and west (“wings of the dawn . . . far

side of the sea”). No matter where David might go, “*even there*” the hand of God will guide him and keep him secure (v. 10). Just as the whole of creation offers no place to hide from God, neither does the darkness of night (v. 11). The light of day and the dark of night are all the same to God. David writes: “*Even* the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, *for darkness is as light to you*” (v. 12). No one can escape God’s presence—Jonah tried and failed.

In the third stanza (vv. 13-18), David reflects on God’s creation of himself as well as other individuals. He recognizes that he is awesomely made (v. 14). Through the process of reproduction that God designed, he created David’s whole person. “Inmost being” (v. 13) is literally “kidneys,” a *figurative* expression, referring to the seat of human emotions—a person’s soulish nature. “*Knit me*” (v. 13) is another *figurative* expression, referring to formation of David’s embryo, or “unformed body” (v. 16) in his mother’s womb—a person’s physical nature. David continues to describe his prenatal development in verse 15. “My frame” refers to his bones. “Secret place” and “depths of the earth” refer to his mother’s womb. “*The depths of the earth*” are a metaphor here for deepest concealment, i.e. the hiddenness of the womb. This line (15b) is close in thought to 13b, whose term ‘knit together’, is taken a step further in the expression *intricately wrought* [i.e., woven together NIV], suggesting the complex patterns and colours [*sic*] of the weaver or embroiderer” (Kidner, 102). Not only is God the one who gave David life, he is also the one who ordained David’s lifespan (v. 16). “Your thoughts” (v. 17), which likely refer to God’s plans for David, were a daily encouragement to the psalmist (v. 18) for his life had meaning and purpose. Everyone’s life has meaning and purpose.

In the fourth stanza (vv. 19-24), David pledges his allegiance to his God. The wicked malign God, but he sides with the one who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. God’s enemies, those who speak evil of him and slander his name, are David’s enemies too. He hates those who hate the LORD, and abhors those who rebel against him. “David concluded this psalm with a prayer for God to search and test him (cf. 26:2) in order to prove his loyalty, thus showing that he was not like the wicked mentioned in 139:19-22 . . . Such an examination David was convinced, would yield evidence of his loyalty. The Lord in His leading would then preserve his life (everlasting, *’ôlām*, probably means prolonged life) here as he followed the Lord” (Ross, 893).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 **searched** Or “examined;” cf. “LORD, you have *examined* me, and you know me” (GNT). “David said God’s knowledge came as if He had scoured every detail of David’s life and thus knew him intimately” (Allan P. Ross, “Psalms,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 891).

v. 1 **know** “A major theme in Psalm 139 is “knowing.” The word *yāda’* occurs seven times in the psalm (vv. 1, 2, 4, 6, 14, 23 [2x]), four times in vv. 1-6 Tod know all there is about the psalmist, inside and out—every detail of the daily routine and every unspoken thought. For the beleaguered singer of Psalm 139, that thought is comforting” (Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf F. Jacobson and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT, 964).

v. 2 **sit and rise** “The psalmist employed a figure of speech (merism) to express completeness in verse 2. In merisms, the opposites named, here sitting down and rising up, represent everything in between them. God knew every move David made. Furthermore He understood his motives as well as his actions. ‘Far away’ (v. 2) may refer to time rather than space. The ‘You’ is emphatic in the Hebrew text” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Psalms,” 2025 ed., 493, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).

v. 2 **perceive** Or “understand;” “You understand my thoughts from far away” (HCSB).

v. 2 **going out . . .** Another example of *merism*. “The opposites of **going out** in the morning and **lying down** at night represent the whole day’s activities” (Ross, 891).

v. 4 **before** Some argue that God cannot know what people with free-will will do before they do it, because his knowing would make their actions certain, and therefore no longer free. Verse 4 indicates otherwise. “You know what I am going to say even *before* I say it, LORD” (NLT).

v. 5 **hem** God has the psalmist “surrounded” in a positive sense. “*You hem me in*. To keep me under scrutiny. *Lay your hand upon me*. So that I do not escape you” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 139:5).

v. 6 **too wonderful** “Your knowledge is beyond my comprehension; it is so far beyond me, I am unable to fathom it” (NET); cf. “*Heb* ‘too amazing [is this] knowledge for me, it is elevated, I cannot attain to it’” (*The NET Bible*, 7tn on Ps 139:6).

v. 8 **heavens, depths** Another example of *merism*. The heavens above and the depths of Sheol below are viewed as opposites, i.e., *vertical* extremes.

v. 9 **wings . . . far side** Another example of *merism*, referring to *horizontal* extremes. “Even if he could travel as fast as the speed of light, and live at the remotest place on earth, he could not escape from Yahweh’s presence, (v. 9; cf. 103:19; 1 Chron. 29:12; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32)” (Constable, 494).

vv. 10, 12 **even** Used as an adverb “even” is used to emphasize something surprising or extreme.

vv. 11, 12 **darkness, night and light, day** “Just as the whole creation offers no hiding place (vv. 8-9), neither does the darkness of night (see Job 34:22)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 139:11-12). God sees in the dark as well as he does in the light.

v. 13 **created, knit** “The language is figurative in that creating and knitting describe God’s sovereign superintendence over the natural process of reproduction (on knitting; cf. Job 10:11)” (Ross, 892).

v. 14 **fearfully, wonderfully** “Fearfully” here connotes “reverence and awe,” and “wonderfully” connotes “striking/remarkable” (see deClaissé-Walford, 965). Together as a *hendiadys* (two words used to express a single idea) the terms connote “astonishingly” or “awesomely.” The marvels of the human body are astonishing.

v. 15 **frame** I.e., “skeleton” or “bones.” Cf. “My bones were not hidden from you” (NET).

v. 15 **secret place . . .** “Reference is to the womb: called ‘the secret place’ because it normally conceals (see 2Sa 12:12), and it shares with ‘the depths of the earth’ (see note on 30:1) associations with darkness, dampness and separation from the visible realm of life” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 139:15). “The ‘depths of the earth’ is a figure of speech for the womb. When God was forming David in his mother’s womb he was as far from human view as if he were in the depths of the earth. His ‘formless substance’ (v. 16) is his embryo” (Constable, 495-96).

v. 16 **Your eyes** An anthropomorphism or anthropomorphic expression. God has no actual eyes.



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

After pledging allegiance to your God – whose omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence you have experienced in your own life – invite him to further guide your way.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

When my firstborn turned one, my best friend came to visit for a few days. By the time she left, she had him saying, "I cute," with a sweet smile and a little tilt of his head. Oh, and he was absolutely the cutest; I have pictures to prove it! We start building identity in our kids from the moment they enter this world. If you ask your elementary children to describe themselves, what will they say? Will they say they're cute, funny, smart, or athletic? Chances are they're correct, but is this their identity? So often our identity is found in our accomplishments, career path or skillset, hobbies, extracurricular activities and abilities, or financial status. Sadly, this identity is grossly misplaced. Our identity should be found in Christ alone. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14). This is our identity. We're made by the Creator to fear Him, to revere, stand in awe and great respect, of Him. We can only fully live this out by focusing on God's immutable attributes. Psalm 139:14 is a favorite of Christians around the world, but notice the verses that come before. David starts this psalm by recognizing who God is—a personal and omniscient God who knows everything about him; an omnipresent God safely guiding and restraining him; an enlightening God who searches and reveals our heart. Knowing who God is helps us understand who we are and our place in this world. In building your child's identity, rather than focusing on personal attributes, focus on the One who made them, e.g., "God made you funny! I love your sense of humor." We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 139.

1. Looking at verses 2-4, what does God know about King David?
2. Looking at verses 7-12, where is God?
3. What does King David ask God to do in verses 23-24?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to be "fearfully and wonderfully made" (v. 14)?

What Do You Do?

David seems to be in awe of how awesome God is. What about God's character overwhelms you? Write your own psalm praising God.

CORE COMPETENCY: Prayer

I talk to God so I can know Him, ask Him for things and find out what He wants me to do.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 103:8

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love"

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.