

The Searching God

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[0 : 00] How can it be that the God David speaks about can be all-knowing of David? How can he know David even as he sits and as he rises?

How can he perceive David's thoughts from afar? How can he know what David is going to say before he even says it? Well, that's where the second part of the psalm helps.

Look at verse 13 with me. David tells us that God is the creator. That is, God created David's inmost being. He formed him while in his mother's womb.

He may, of course, have been the result of two humans having a child, but those two humans are only the means that God uses. The person behind it all is God the creator.

The very first birth in the Bible acknowledges this. You see, in Genesis 4 verse 1, Eve says that she has borne Cain with the help of the Lord.

[0 : 59] In other words, it couldn't happen without God. David knows this truth. He knows that God is the one who made him. God is the one who wove him together. Verse 15.

As verse 16 says, it's God who ordained his days before one of them came into being. They were written in God's book before that even happened, before one of them came to be.

God is a creator. Now, if God's the creator of the world, then he can know David just as he said in verses 1 to 6. What's more, if God's the creator, then there's nowhere that David will be able to hide from him because he knows his world.

He, as it were, inhabits his world. He knows every part of it. Look at verses 7 to 12. Well, where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, well, you're there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise with the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me.

[2 : 01] Your right hand will hold me fast. You might remember Jonah tried to do this. Jonah went to Tarshish, which Isaiah says is the place where the glory of God is not known.

But as he headed off to Tarshish, not even Tarshish was far enough away. Because God knows everything and everywhere. So look at how David goes on. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, or like Jonah, surely, you know, if I flee on the sea, I'll get away from you.

No. Even the darkness will not be dark to you. Or in Jonah's case, the sea will not be far enough away, and nor will Tarshish. The night will shine like the day. For darkness is as light to you.

You see, friends, God is the creator of the universe. He made David. Therefore, he knows David through and through. And therefore, there's nowhere David can go to escape his knowledge.

God's the creator. He is all-knowing, and that's what David believes about God. And that's what God says ought to be believed. And David sums up the wonder of this in verses 17 and 18.

[3 : 07] You see it there? How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. How vast is the sum of them. Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of the sand.

When I awake, I am still with you. Now let's stop and think what this all means. What is the implication of what David has said? If God is a creator, if God is all-knowing, then God will well be able to judge David, won't he?

If he knows everything that's going on in his brain, if there's no place he cannot be, if he's all-knowing, if he's the creator, there'll be nothing hidden from him.

And he'll be able to judge David. And that's what David says at the beginning of his song. It's what he says at the end of his song. Look at it with me. Verses 1 to 3. You have searched me, O Lord.

You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out. That is, you judge my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways. You've made judgments about it.

[4 : 09] David's clear. God's searching, perceiving, discerning. He not only knows, but he weighs what he finds. And look at verse 23 and 24. Look at the prayer he says to God.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. See, don't just know what's going on within me and test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there's any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Can you hear those words again? Search, test, see. God's not only the creator.

He not only knows. He not only judges and tests. But he does it so he does it with David. And he also does it with others. Look at verses 19 and 22.

David knows God's the judge. He knows he could do away with wicked people who speak of him with evil intent and who misuse his name. However, God chooses not to do it at the moment.

[5 : 05] And so David chooses that he won't be in the company of wicked people whom God will eventually judge. And he says in verse 21, he hates those who hate God.

He abhors those who are in rebellion against him. You see, he's with God and for God. He sides with God. God's friends are his friends. God's enemies are his enemies.

So he, like God, makes judgments. So there are three things to learn about God in this psalm.

God's the creator of all, including each one of us here today.

Including every person on earth. Two, God knows each one of us. And three, God will judge each one of us.

Three great truths. Now, each of those facts can be confirmed from the New Testament. We could look at almost any book in the New Testament to do this. But I've chosen to go to the very last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation.

[6 : 03] So you might go in your Bibles. Easy to find. Just flip to the back of your Bibles and flip back a little bit and you'll get to Revelation. And see if you can find Revelation 4. Revelation 4.

Let me tell you what happens in Revelation 4. We get a little glimpse into heaven. And we see God in the midst of his created beings. And look at what they say.

Verse 11. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things. And by your will they were created and have their being.

You see, God's the creator of all. He's exactly what the first page of Scripture says. And what David reiterates in Psalm 139.

And everything in between the two. Everything between the first and the last page of Scripture. But let's think about the surrounding chapters to Revelation 4.

[7 : 02] Revelation 5 tells us of Jesus Christ who is worshipped as God. In Revelation 1 to 3, you might remember we're introduced to Jesus. He is introduced in chapter 1.

And then he gives some things to be said to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. And when you read the letters of chapters 2 and 3, they tell us over and over and over again that he knows.

In each letter we're told that Jesus knows. Look at chapter 2, verse 2. Chapter 2 of Revelation, verse 2. He says, I know your deeds.

Flip down to verse 9. I know your afflictions and poverty. Chapter 2, verse 13. I know where you live. Verse 2, chapter 2, 19.

I know your deeds. Your love and faith. Chapter 3, verse 1. I know your deeds. 3, 8. I know your deeds. Again, 3, 15. And the rest of the book of Revelation makes clear that God knows everything.

[8 : 11] Not just about his churches, but about everything in his world. His knowledge is comprehensive. Nothing escapes that knowledge. God knows all. His son Jesus Christ equally knows.

Now let's turn to Revelation 5 and 6. In these chapters we hear that God's purposes are tied up with Jesus. In Revelation 6, verse 10, we have his people call upon him to judge the world.

And the rest of the book of Revelation says that is exactly what he does. So if you read on in the book of Revelation, he judges Satan. He judges Satan's earthly accomplices.

He judges all the world. The New Testament's clear, you see. God is the creator. He knows everything that happens in his world. He knows all people.

And he judges all. Friends, that's the testimony of David, of the book of Revelation, and of the Bible as a whole. This is God's word to us.

[9 : 18] He's the creator. He knows all. He judges all. So having heard that, what should we do in response? What's an appropriate response to what we learn about God here and in the Bible?

Well, David can tell us lots about it. So, sorry, you've probably all lost Psalm 139 now, haven't you? You've moved to Revelation. Flip back to Psalm 139, middle of the Bible, and find 139.

What does David do when he finds these things out about God? Well, the first thing he does is he stands in awe and wonder of this God.

You can see it throughout the psalm, but particularly verse 6, 17, and 18. Have a look at 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Verse 17. How precious to me are your thoughts, God. How vast is the sum of them. Verse 18.

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

[10:21] When I awake, I'm still with you. You see, the first response is to stand in awe and wonder. The second response is to long after more of this God.

To long after intimacy with him. You see, if this God knows him, he wants to know this God more. He wants further intimacy with God. He longs to know God more.

Look at verse 18. When I awake, I'm still with you. Verse 23, 24. He doesn't want anything to happen that will break that relationship. Search me, God. Know my heart.

Test me. Know my anxious thoughts. You see, he's saying, I don't want to be separated from you.

So please be at work in me. Judge me. Work in me. Find out who I am and what's wrong. And straighten it out so that you and I might be closer.

See if there's any offensive way in me. Lead me in the way everlasting. That's life with you. That's where I want to be. First response. Stand in awe and wonder.

[11:18] Second response. To long for further intimacy. Third response. Is to put aside wicked things and wicked people. And that's what's going on in verses 19 to 21.

Listen to what David says. If only you, God, would slay the wicked. Away from me, you bloodthirsty. They speak of you with evil intent.

Your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in a rebellion against you? I wonder if you can see what's happening here. You see, David knows these great truths about God.

Knows he's the creator. Knows he's the judge. He wants further intimacy with God. And therefore, he wants to put aside all that will draw him away from God. And that includes people.

He says, I don't want to be with the evil ones because I know they'll lead me astray. I put aside evil and evildoers, therefore. I want to know and love you, God, more.

[12:14] And so David wants to distance himself from all who don't want to know God and love God. So response one, stand in awe and wonder. Response two, long for greater intimacy with this great God.

And response three, put aside wicked things and wicked people. By the way, do you remember David talking about this way back in Psalm 1? He said, you know, I don't walk along with the ungodly.

I don't sit with them. I don't stand with them. I find distance from them because I want to stay in relationship with you. So fourth response is to yield yourself to God's ongoing examination.

That's what verses 23 and 24 are about. Listen to them all. Look at them. Search me, O God. Know my heart. Test me. Know my anxious thoughts. See if there's any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

You can hear what he's saying, can't you? David knows that what matters in life is being related to God. He knows that sin separates him from God. He knows that evil separates him from God.

[13:19] And so he says to God, look, will you just examine me? Early in my Christian life, I prayed this prayer over and over again. And it's a good prayer to be praying occasionally.

If not constantly, search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me. Know my anxious thoughts. See if there's any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. He says, God, please expose me.

I want to yield to examination by you. And I want to do that so I can grow in godliness, grow closer to you. So the fourth response is the other side of the third response.

Yielding to God's examination is the other side of putting aside evil and evildoers, isn't it? He's

saying, I grow closer to God. I put aside more. And the final response is to continue to put your trust in God's forgiveness available in Jesus.

Now, you won't find that in Psalm 139. David doesn't mention it. But we are Christians. And we are believers, therefore, in great David's greater son.

[14:21] And I want you to ask what a Christian does when they yield themselves to God's examination. And they find that there is evil present. There is sin present.

What do they do? Well, the New Testament says that we return to forgiveness offered in Jesus Christ. Because it's only God's forgiveness in Christ that will maintain our relationship with God. And this is where the reading from 1 John comes into play. Remember what we read? My children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous one. And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

And not only for us, but also the sins of the whole world. You see, when you draw near to God through his Son, and you find that you are sinful and ungodly and unholy, what do you do?

[15:17] You bring that sin to God. And it is atoned for through Jesus. Friends, we have learnt and remembered great things today. I know most of these are not new to you.

And I know most of you will probably know this psalm. It is a great one. We've learnt that God's the creator. That he knows all things, including us. That he is our judge. And friends, this is the God that I know, that you know in Christ.

And if it is, then God's taught us some right responses to this God. We can respond to God, the creator, who knows all things, who's our judge. And the responses are clear.

Let's stand in wonder of this God. Let's long for greater intimacy with him. Let's put aside evil and the doers of it.

And let's yield ourselves to God's ongoing examination, so that we might draw near to him. And let's continue to put our trust in his forgiveness available in Christ.

[16:22] Prince, is this God your God? Is he your creator? Does he know you through and through? Is he your judge? Then respond rightly to him.

And it's a good way to end a year and begin a year, isn't it? How do you want to end this year and begin the next? Stand in wonder of this God who knows you and loves you.

Long for further intimacy with him. Put aside the things that will separate you, evil and the doers of it. Yield yourself to God's ongoing examination.

And continue to put your trust in God's forgiveness available in Christ. Now, Paul acknowledges we can never separate ourselves from the doers of evil in this world.

But we cannot be like them, can't we? So stand in wonder. Long after intimacy. Put aside evil. And don't learn from the doers of it.

[17:22] Yield yourself to God's ongoing examination. And put your trust in God's forgiveness available in Christ. A good way to end a year. And a good way to begin the next.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you that you know us. We thank you that you knew us before we were even conceived.

Father, we thank you that you have called us to be your own.

And Father, we stand in wonder of you. We stand in wonder of your knowledge of us. We stand in wonder because of your work in Christ.

We long for further intimacy with you. Please help us to put aside evil. To yield ourselves to your ongoing examination.

[18:22] And to continue to trust in your forgiveness available in Christ. Draw us closer to you, we pray. Help us to make these things lifetime goals and habits.

For you have made us for you. And our eternity is in your hands. And there is nowhere else to go. For in your Son, He alone has the words of eternal life.

That assure ongoing fellowship with you. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.