

The Greatest Prayer That's Rarely Prayed!

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Psalm 139: 1-6

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

Theme Verse

Psalm 139: 23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

“David meditates on the omniscience (139:1–6), omnipresence (vv. 7–12), and omnipotence (vv. 13–18) of God. He then applies these truths to the wicked, whom he calls on God to slay (vv. 19–22), and to himself, whom he calls on God to examine and to lead (vv. 23–24).” Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion* (electronic ed., p. 379). Wheaton: Victor Books.

- Psalm 139 is considered an imprecatory psalm. Psalms that invoke judgment or curse on One's enemies... (Ryrie)
- Psalm 139 is one of 73 psalms attributed to David's authorship. (Scofield).
- Charles Spurgeon states: *“This is a Psalm we can never read too often. It will be to us one of the greatest safeguards against sin if we have its teaching constantly before our mind's eye, and the teaching of this Psalm is simply this, “Thou God seest me”.*
- *“What we think about God and our relationship to Him determines what we think about everything else that makes up our busy world—other people, the universe, God's Word, God's will, sin, faith, and obedience. Wrong ideas about God will ultimately lead to wrong ideas about who we are and what we should do, and this leads to a wrong life on the wrong path toward the wrong destiny. In other words, theology—the right knowledge of God—is essential to a fulfilled life in this world. David contemplated God and wrote for us a psalm whose message can only encourage us to be in a right relationship with Him.”* (Warren Wiersbe, BE Exultant Praising God for His might works, OT Commentary Psalms 90-150. David C. Cook Publishers Colorado Springs. 2004. Pg. 193).
- *“Psalm 139 provides us with marvelous insight into the Father's perfect knowledge of us and His abundant love for us just the way we are.”* The Charles Stanley Life Principles Bible, NKJV. Thomas Nelson Publisher Nashville, TN. 1982. Pg. 732
- Go to God, asking Him to show you, not just tell you but to show you by putting you under His spiritual microscope.

- “This climactic strophe (vv. 23 and 24) is linked grammatically by a conjunction “and” (v.24a) and by an escalating and unrelenting flow of six petitions. The first five ask I AM to judge him, and the climactic sixth asks God to lead him in the everlasting way.” Waltke, B. K., Houston, J. M., & Moore, E. (2010). *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (pp. 567–568). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

1. It takes a heart surrendered that will pray for God to inspect and detect unseen moral imperfections!

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Vs. 23a

- It’s a servant’s heart that prays that God will search him or her!
- Laid bare his heart to I AM’s XRay of his hidden self.
- Get up on the O.R. Table
- I call this Psalm the “reporting for duty” psalm!

A. Give God permission to do what He knows must be done.

Jerimiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

**23b: Alex Barnes: The idea is, Search me thoroughly; examine not merely my outward conduct, but what I think about; what are my purposes; what passes through my mind; what occupies my imagination and my memory; what secures my affections and controls my will. He must be a very sincere man who prays that God will search his thoughts for there are few who would be willing that their fellowmen, even their best friends, should know all that they are thinking about.”

B. Ask God to show you, what you cannot see (or don’t want to see).

1 Samuel 16:7 “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

C. Allow God to detect the sins of T.E.M. (Thoughts, Emotions, and Motives)

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Proverbs 16:3 “Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.”

Psalm 141: 4. “Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice wicked works With men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.”

2. It takes an enthusiastic heart that will pray asking God to purify and quantify the quality of our loyalty to Him.

Try me, and know my anxieties; Vs. 23b

Genesis 22: 1-2 “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

• *“David wanted God to test him, as a refiner tests metal, to show that he was loyal to the Lord. Since God knows all, he would know David's anxious thoughts. He would discover no pain that God's afflicting him for doing wrong had caused him, or any offensiveness in him that might lead to God's affliction. Consequently, God would preserve his life.”*(from Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible. Copyright © March 4, 2014 by Thomas L. Constable. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

• *“But God cannot work in us without our consent. There must be a surrendered will. The mature person does not argue with God's will; instead, he accepts it willingly and obeys it joyfully. “Doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6). If we try to go through trials without surrendered wills, we will end up more like immature children than mature adults.”* (Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 339). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

A. Excited about being tested concerning right thinking.

1 Chronicles 28: 9 *“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”*

B. Excited about being tested concerning right living.

• James 1:12 *“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*

• Romans 5: 1-4 *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

1 Chronicles 29:17 *“I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You.”*

Psalms 66: 10 *“For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.”*

C. Excited about being tested concerning misplaced affections!

• *“know my anxieties”* is *“disquieting thoughts”*

• Disquieting: disturbing, making uneasy, depriving one of rest or peace.

• Know the worst about yourself

• Philippians 4: 7 Be anxious for nothing

Psalms 42:5 *“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?”*

Psalms 94:19 *“In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts (consolations) delight my soul.”*

Proverbs 12:25 *“Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word (kind word) makes it glad.”*

• Weigh a man down

3. It takes a sensitive and vulnerable heart that will pray asking God to expose idolatrous sins and direct righteous living.

And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting Vs. 24

Vulnerable (capable of being wounded)

- *“More probably the painful way in him refers to the pain his sin inflicts upon I AM, his covenant partner (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30). Hence the gloss “offensive.” What is offensive to God will end in everlasting destruction.”* Waltke, B. K., Houston, J. M., & Moore, E. (2010). *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (p. 569). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

- Hebrew word means an image or idol or idol worship.
- Anything that causes us to go back from God.
- Also, the way of pain or way of iniquity
- We let anxious thoughts control us.

• Jeremiah 32: 19 “¹⁹You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.”

A. Asking God to expose and reveal aspects of our heart that grieve the heart of God.

Isaiah 63:10 “*But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them. (in spite of all that God did for Israel.)*”

Hebrews 3:8 “*Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,*”

Psalm 95: 7-8 “*7.For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: 8 “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,*”

[strife and contention]

B. Asking God to expose and reveal aspects of our heart caused by our sinful self-deception.

Isaiah 29: 15 “*Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?”*”

- Thinking God did not see their actions!
- Song: He Knows My Name

I have a Maker

He Formed My Heart

Before even time began

My life was in hands

He knows my name

He knows my every thought

He sees each tear that falls

And hears me when I call

C. Asking God to direct us in the path of righteousness.

- *“Then also we look for leading. The will is broken, as the thoughts are judged, and our desire is to be led of God.”* (from Darby's Synopsis of the Bible, PC Study Bible electronic database Copyright © 2003-2014 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Psalm 1:6 “*For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*”

2 Timothy 2:19 “*Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*”

John 10:14 “*I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*”

Psalm 5:8 “*Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.*”

Proverbs 12:28 “*In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.*”

4. Application

Why is this a big deal?!

A. One Observation:

Poem:

The greatest prayer rarely prayed,
When prayed in earnest, a stalwart made.
Requires a willingness to be bold,
And with faith and courage, trust and be exposed.
Knowing our loving, caring Father must test the heart to make it pure,
While strengthening our soul to be spiritually mature.

There is a great blessing in successful heart surgery

James 1:12-13 "12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."

B. Three Questions:

#1 Before you seek and answer....Have you asked the right question?

Have you asked God to change you?

Psalm 51: 10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit in me."

#2 Before you move out with confidence...Have you "tapped out" to Jesus!

Isaiah 64:8 "But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand."

#3 Before you throw up your hands in rancor (rankling resentment, ill will, bitterness, malice).... Have you set your feet as an anchor?

Psalm 73:21-23 "Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed (embittered) in my mind. 22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand."

"21 For my heart was grieved, embittered, and in a state of ferment, and I was pricked in my heart [as with the sharp fang of an adder]. 22 So foolish, stupid, and brutish was I, and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You do hold my right hand." \

The Amplified Bible. (1987). (Ps 73:21–23). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

C. Three Watch out for:

1. **Presumptuous Sin**

Psalm 19:13-14

"Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight,"

2. **A haughty Spirit** (Webster 1828: Proud and disdainful; having a high opinion of one's self, with some contempt for others; lofty and arrogant; supercilious.)

Proverbs 18:12 "Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility."

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."

3. The “No Fear” Syndrome:

Psalm 36: 1-4 “1 An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes, When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. 3 The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good. 4 He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good;”

D. Which “everlasting” are you preparing for?

John 14: 6 “6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Proverbs 12:28 “In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.”

Finally, David asks to be led in the everlasting way (v. 24). This is the way of righteousness. It and it alone finally leads to everlasting life. The child of God has received the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, out of gratitude, seeks to live a righteous life.” (Ellsworth, R. (2006). Opening up Psalms (p. 128). Leominster: Day One Publications.)

2 Thessalonians 1: 7-10 “and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”