

Unlocking Paul's Secret Joy, Week 8 – A Heart Sustained by Knowing God Study Guide

Day 1

After watching the brief video online, complete the following study guide.

During the lesson, we looked at Paul's steadfastness, even in light of his circumstances. Paul knew God, He knew who God is, He knew who God had revealed Himself to be through the Old Testament, and He was indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

Paul knew God...We can know God...Just like Paul, we have been given God's Holy, inerrant Word, we have been given the Holy Spirit, the one Jesus refers to as our "Helper" in John 14:16-17;

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may be with you forever; *the Helper is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him because He remains with you and will be in you."

This week we will be studying Psalm 139, focusing our attention on gaining a better understanding of who our God is, knowing Him better, growing deeper in our relationship with Him!

Start your time today with prayer, asking for guidance from our great Helper, God the Holy Spirit as we turn to His word to know Him more.

Below you will find Psalm 139:1-6 as today we will be focusing on God's Omniscience.

Merriam-Webster defines omniscience as: possessed of universal or complete knowledge

God's Omniscience means, quite simply, that He knows everything...He knows all things. I know this concept may seem quite simple, but when our hearts run wild with anxious thoughts, we must remember that God knows our situation so much more, with so much more detail than we can imagine.

This Psalm is a Psalm of Praise written by David for worship.

Spend time today reading, meditating on and marking up the first six verses of this Psalm, making observations, interpretations and applications!

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Psalm 139:1-6

Lord, You have searched me and known *me*.

² You know when I sit down and when I get up;

You understand my thought from far away.

³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down,

And are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before there is a word on my tongue,

Behold, Lord, You know it all.

⁵ You have encircled me behind and in front,

And placed Your hand upon me.

⁶ *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me;

It is *too* high, I cannot comprehend it.

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Observe with me:

1. List 3 words or phrases from this passage that express how intimately God knows you:

2. Does God know our thoughts? (verse 2) _____

3. Is God aware of everything we do each day? (verse 3) _____

4. Does He know what we are going to say before we say it? (verse 4) _____

5. Does He allow and sometimes orchestrate circumstances in our lives to restrict our actions? _____

6. Can you recall an instance in your Christian life when God has restricted your actions to cause you to remain in His will? Briefly describe:

7. What is David's response to the reality of how intimately our God knows each of us? Copy verse 6:

Understand with me:

1. How can the realization of how intimately God knows me, how much attention He pays to me...impact my...

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a. Thoughts

b. Emotions

c. Repentance

d. Gratitude

e. Anxieties

f. Concerns

You see, dear one, He doesn't just know you in an casual way as if He is watching from a distance, He knows each life, from conception...He knows each tear, each smile, each distress, each hurtful thought, each triumph, each dark valley...HE KNOWS. He has numbered the hairs of our heads...He promises to take care of us, and He knows what we need more than we can even imagine! That's what David is expressing in verse 6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."

What should our response be, then, when faced with the omniscience of our Heavenly Father?

Understanding that not only does He know us, but He knows all things! He knows what is going on in our world from the greatest event, to the tiniest detail...He knows how

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these things will impact each and every one of us...He knows, and He will be glorified through all of it.

What then should our response be? Absolute Surrender.

Take time to pray, confessing to our Heavenly Father any areas in your life you have failed to surrender completely to His Omniscient hand. Confessing any sin that may be lingering in your heart, asking Him to purify your heart and make known any sinful way within you. Then spend some time worshipping the Lord today! Be Blessed!

Day 2

Today we will be looking at another attribute of God, His Omnipresence.

Merriam-Webster defines Omnipresence as: being present in all places at all times.

This means, not only is God in all places at once, but also that He is not bound by time. Time is a principle designed by God for our benefit, but not something that could ever constrain Him. He is, quite literally, in all times at the same time. This is a concept that is a little difficult to wrap our minds around, since we are completely bound by time and space, but it is who He is.

Spend time in prayer before turning to the text today, asking God to forgive your sin, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Ask Him to illumine His Word to your heart, helping you see the truth of who He is. Read through the text making observations, interpretations and applications.

Psalm 139:7-12

⁷Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

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⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there;

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

⁹ If I take up the wings of the dawn,

If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me,

And Your right hand will take hold of me.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,

And the light around me will be night,"

¹² Even darkness is not dark to You,

And the night is as bright as the day.

Darkness and light are alike *to You*.

Observe with me:

1. Several "places" are listed in this passage that even if we tried, we would not be able to escape the presence of God, list four of those:

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2. What is it that God continues to do, even if we feel far from Him? (vs.10)

3. Copy verse 11-12:

Understand with me:

It is important to note here, that in verses 11-12 phrase “darkness and light are alike to you” in no way indicate that God looks upon evil and righteousness in the same way. Light and darkness are often contrasted in scripture in referring to evil and righteousness. However, that is not the case here. What is communicated here is that we are not hidden from God in the dark times we face. To God the troubles we face, the dark times that come, the valleys that are so dark you can’t see your way out...when the storms of life have completely made the lighthouse unseen, He is still there. He is in control.

Apply with me:

1. What overwhelms you today?

2. Verse 11 states: “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will overwhelm me...’, then verse 12 continues: “Even darkness is not dark to You...” Fill in the blank here, with whatever it may be that overwhelms you, personalizing this truth about God.

Even_____is not dark to You!

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As our study comes to a close today, take time to reflect on how God's omnipresence impacts your life. Select a verse or several from the passage we studied today and meditate on it. One great practice to try to make a habit in your life is starting a meditation walk. Spend time each day out in God's nature, meditating on His Word and praying over what He is revealing to you through His Word.

Day 3

Today we will continue to look at the omnipresence of God, but we will also be looking at the omnipotence of God as we study His great care for us as He tenderly formed each one of us from conception and what His Word teaches us about how we should view our body.

Merriam-Webster defines omnipotence as: having unlimited power of authority over all. As always, go to the Lord in prayer before you turn to His Word, asking Him to forgive your sins, and illumine your heart with His Word.

Read the following text making observations, interpretations and applications.

Psalm 139:13-16

¹³ For You created my innermost parts;

You wove me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully *made*;

Wonderful are Your works,

And my soul knows it very well.

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¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You

When I was made in secret,

And skillfully formed in the depths of the earth;

¹⁶ Your eyes have seen my formless substance;

And in Your book were written

All the days that were ordained *for me*,

When as yet there was not one of them.

Observe with me:

1. Who wove you together and created your innermost parts? _____
2. At what point in life did God begin to have His hand on you? (vs. 13)

Scripture is clear that all life begins at conception! God Himself has His mighty hand on each of us, weaving our intricate parts together from the moment of conception! God has blessed Stuart and I with eight children (one has already gone ahead of us to be with our Lord). Each of our pregnancies was an uphill climb, with complications and bed rest. Life is a miracle, and our Heavenly Father graciously ingrained this truth into our hearts as we walked through each challenging pregnancy on our knees! Even conception alone is a miraculous! God has His hand on each of us, each life from the moment of conception. What an incredible truth to hold in our hearts. What great value He has placed on each life...the imagery here denotes attention to detail and intention.

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3. Take a moment and write a note of thanksgiving to God, praising Him for His care and attention in your life as noted in verse 13,

4. Copy verse 14 below:

5. How has God made you? (verse 14)

This is so important for us as women to grasp...we are "...awesomely and wonderfully made...", not because of our keen fashion sense, not because of makeup, Botox, cosmetic surgery, not because we fit into a certain size clothing...not because we are tall or short...our self-image must be completely and utterly immersed in who God is. God's Word says you, sister, are "awesomely and wonderfully made"! Not that you need to look like someone else, or meet some computer generated ideal this world has created of what a woman must look like! Be healthy, take care of yourself, but for the purpose of serving your King with excellence not to meet some societal standard of what beauty is!

6. Verse 14 ends with: "Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well." His soul was at rest knowing that he was a work of God, and that made him wonderful? How about you? Are you able to rest in that comforting truth today? _____ If not, confess that before the Lord, asking Him to give you peace and trust in His work in your physical body.

7. Are our days numbered? Has God already written in His book the number of days each of us will live? (vs. 16) _____

8. How should this reality, that our days have already been recorded by God, change the way we live our lives, change the way we approach current events in our world?

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As we close out our time today, turn to the Lord in prayer, confessing any sin the Holy Spirit may have revealed to you through His word today. Spend some time focusing on committing a verse out of the text to prayer that may speak truth to your heart during a trying or difficult moment.

Day 4

Today we will be looking more intently at the infinite, vast mind of God.

Remember to begin your time today with prayer!

Read the following passages, making observations, interpretations and applications.

Psalm 139:17-18,

¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts for me, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sand.

When I awake, I am still with You.

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,

Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.

⁹ “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

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So are My ways higher than your ways

And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Observe with me:

1. Based on the above passages, describe the thoughts of God:

Apply with me:

2. Isaiah 55:8-9 compares the thoughts of man to with the thoughts of God, reflecting on the truths revealed through this passage, what impact does this have in your life when you face:

- a. Disappointment:

- b. Seemingly unanswered prayers:

- c. Temptation to think you know better than a godly person in authority over you:

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d. Refusal to submit to God's will in your life:

As our time today comes to a close, reflect back on the passages we studied, asking God to change your thoughts, to align your focus with His will, causing you to fully rely on Him, knowing that what He chooses to do may not always make sense to us, but His way is always Good, because He is Good, His way is always Right, because He is Righteous, His way is always Just, because He is pure Justice, and His way is always Love, because He is Love and He loves us infinitely more than we could ever understand. Be blessed!

Day 5

David closes out this beautiful Psalm, overwhelmed by who God is. Seeking God to search out his heart, not in a boastful way, but sincerely asking God to reveal any sin lurking in his heart, understanding that his sin puts a separation between himself and God, and wanting any and every sin to be eradicated from his heart!

Read the following verses, mark up the text...observing, interpreting and applying the truth to your own life.

Psalm 139:23-23

Search me, God, and know my heart;

Put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts;

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²⁴ And see if there is *any* hurtful way in me,

And lead me in the everlasting way.

Observe with me:

1. What two things does David ask the Lord to check his heart for?

2. What two things does David ask the Lord to do for him?

It is undeniable that a greater understanding of who God is will always prompt us to worship Him and create within us a renewed awareness of our own personal guilt - a heavier sense of our desperate need for forgiveness, and a meek spirit of repentance. As we close out our week, prayerfully meditate over the Psalm below, seeking God's forgiveness for any sin in your life, and asking Him to create in you a clean heart.

Psalm 51:1-17

Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithfulness;

According to the greatness of Your compassion, wipe out my wrongdoings.

²Wash me thoroughly from my guilt

And cleanse me from my sin.

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³ For I know my wrongdoings,

And my sin is constantly before me.

⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned

And done what is evil in Your sight,

So that You are justified when You speak

And blameless when You judge.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in guilt,

And in sin my mother conceived me.

⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,

And in secret You will make wisdom known to me.

⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;

Cleanse me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness,

Let the bones You have broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide Your face from my sins

And wipe out all my guilty deeds.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, God,

And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence,

And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

And sustain me with a willing spirit.

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¹³ *Then* I will teach wrongdoers Your ways,

And sinners will be converted to You.

¹⁴ Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, the God of my salvation;

Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

¹⁵ Lord, open my lips,

So that my mouth may declare Your praise.

¹⁶ For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;

You do not take pleasure in burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

A broken and a contrite heart, God, You will not despise.