

Reflections and Meditations on Psalm 139:1-6



Introduction: *The Knowledge of God*

In this portion of scripture, which I entitle, *The Knowledge of God*, David rejoices in two fundamental qualities of the divine essence -God's *omnipresence* and God's *omniscience*. The first six verses of Psalm 139 explore *what God knows* about David, His omniscience, while introducing *where God is* in relation to David, His

omnipresence. Verses 7-12 transition neatly into a development of the theme of God's omnipresence -a theme which I entitle, *The Nearness of God*.

Concerning the first six verses David reflects on the knowledge of God as he extols the virtue of God's familiarity with his works, his ways, and his words. The NKJV suggest seven categories of the knowledge of God that easily fall into this subheading -sitting and rising (v.2a), thoughts (v.2b), [my] path and [my] lying (v.3a), ways (v.3b), words (v.4a).

This particular Psalm, as is characteristic of the Psalms, is in reality a very compact theology. It serves as a platform from which to peer into and consider the beauty of God's nature and His activities. As such the Psalms require special treatment. On one hand there are 150 Psalms penned in the Psalter -and that requires time and effort on behalf of the reader to sort through each of them. On the other hand, we cannot rush through the Psalms because they are not meant to be consumed in the same way that we would read through a chronological narrative -for example the story of David's life or a history of the kings of Israel and Judah. We are to slowly comb through them and take the time to consider or meditate on what the author is trying to convey.

A balanced approach to a Psalm is to begin to read through it in its entirety beginning a familiarity with the flow of thought and the content as a whole. This helps us to know *what the Psalm says*.

Next, we begin slowly sifting through phrase by phrase considering what each word may mean in its context. I have found it a profitable exercise to consult a Hebrew to English Lexicon to get the sense of what the Hebrew behind the English translation means (we'll take a closer look at this as we visit each verse). As we allow the words and phrases to simmer gently in our thoughts our understanding is aided in beginning to comprehend *what the Psalm means*.

As with any theology our goal should be for the formation of a *practical theology*. In other words, "*Now that I begin to understand what this means, how do I apply it to my life?*" We don't read the Bible simply for content; we read it for encounter -and for transformation. As we journey together through Psalm 139:1-6 we will focus on what David's words tell us *about God* and then we will move into an application in which we set the stage for encounter *with God* through His word and by His Spirit.

My genuine hope is that this content will serve as a fruitful tool in aiding your understanding and approach to an incredibly beautiful God who is worth every endeavor we can make to behold His glory!

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Romans 12:2a