

## Psalm 139: 1-16

*(New International Version)*

O Lord, you have searched me  
and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.  
Before a word is on my tongue  
you know it completely, O Lord.

You hem me in – behind and before;  
you have laid your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,”  
even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you because I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.

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,  
your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.

*(The Message)*

God, investigate my life;  
get all the facts firsthand.  
I’m an open book to you;  
even from a distance, you know what I’m thinking.  
You know when I leave and when I get back;  
I’m never out of your sight.  
You know everything I’m going to say  
before I start the first sentence.

I look behind me and you’re there,  
then up ahead and you’re there, too –  
your reassuring presence, coming and going.  
This is too much, too wonderful –  
I can’t take it all in!

Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit?  
to be out of your sight?  
If I climb to the sky, you’re there!  
If I go underground, you’re there!  
If I flew on morning’s wings,  
to the far western horizon,  
You’d find me in a minute –  
you’re already there waiting!

Then I say to myself, “Oh he even sees me in the dark!  
At night I’m immersed in the light!  
It’s a fact: darkness isn’t dark to you;  
night and day, darkness and light,  
they’re all the same to you.

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside then out;  
you formed me in my mother’s womb.  
I thank you, High God – you’re breathtaking!  
Body and soul, I am marvelously made!  
I worship in adoration – what a creation!

You know me inside and out,  
you know every bone in my body;  
You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,  
how I was sculpted from nothing into something.  
Like an open book, you watched me grow from  
conception to birth;  
all the stages of my life were spread out before you,  
The days of my life all prepared  
before I’d even lived one day.

A craftsman in medieval times would work for months on a special piece that displayed his finest artistic skill. Finally, when the work finished, he would present it to the craftsmen's guild in hopes of achieving the rank of master. The work was called his masterpiece. In Psalm 139 we see God the master craftsman, lovingly at work on his masterpiece. The psalm can have a profound impact on the way we view ourselves.

Do you think of yourself as God's artwork, masterpiece? Why or why not?

According to this psalm, what specific things does God know about us? (vs. 1-6)

The psalmist declares that God's knowledge of him is wonderful. (vs. 6) Yet why do you think he also feels an urge to flee from God's presence? (vs 7-12)

What words are used to describe God's activity and artistry in making us? (vs 13-16)

How do you hide your true self from God? What can you do to open up more to God?

How do you hide your true self from others? What can you do to open up more to each other?

How does this psalm help you feel more loved and valued by God?