

The Psalms of David

*Franklin Christian Church
Fall 2017 Life Group Study*



Psalm 139 (Week of Nov. 12)

Introduction: 2 Samuel 21 features David's final adventure on the battle field. He fails to defeat a Philistine warrior, and David's soldiers vow to keep him off the battle field "so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished." While we may think of David as a warrior king, Psalm 139 grounds David's identity firmly in God. We can think of this Psalm as one of the primary examples of personal relationship with God, and how that works out in our lives and identities.

Have a group member read the psalm aloud. Group members with Bibles can follow along and note anything that stands out.

1. The opening sentence of Psalm 139 helps define David's attitude throughout the song. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and David seems comforted by this idea. Reflect together on what this idea means to you. Is it important to be known? What is your gut reaction to the notion that God truly knows you? Is there anyone in your life like this other than God; perhaps someone who knows what you'll say before you do (verse 4)?

2. Read verses 7-12 again. David uses several metaphors to describe God's freedom and presence. "Up to the heavens" and "on the wings of the dawn" could be good places, while "in the depths" and on the "far side of the sea" (ocean water is equated with chaos in Hebrew thought) seem like bad places. David stays aware of God's presence in the good and bad. What are some good and bad times in your life where you have stayed aware of God's presence? Has it been difficult or easy?

3. Verses 13-18 help to locate David's perception of himself. Before anything else, he is a person lovingly made by God. How could this idea affect his self perception, for example, when he is asked to leave his final battle? How could this God-grounded identity affect our own lives?

4. Verse 19 marks a change in tone which reminds the reader that David's God oriented identity is what sets him apart from those around him. At the same time, it can harken back to David's early days defeating Goliath and other military adventures. How can we actively remember that our identities belong to God before our professions, children, or pasts? What is difficult about keeping God first?

5. Verses 23-24 return us to the theme of the Psalm from v. 1. This request is a natural outcome of the close relationship with God that David explores in the text- not fearing condemnation but seeking more closeness. How can we follow David's lead and seek closeness with God? Can we seek the same closeness with the people around us? What would that look like?

6. What does this psalm reveal about David's heart? What about God's heart? What has this revealed in your hearts?