

Resource Guide: Psalm 139

November 17-19, 2020

Introduction (5 minutes): Your small group facilitator has some “about this Psalm” notes for you.

Read Psalm 139 (5 minutes): circle/write down key or repeated words as you go.

Pray for your time together.

Reflection (5 minutes): In your notebook, write down several things God knows about you that no one else could know (this is just for your personal reflection). How do you feel about how God knows you?

Exploration (about 40 minutes):

1. For you grammar nerds: look at the first 6 verses. What is the subject of each sentence? What might that tell us about this Psalm, right from the start?
2. Share the words you think might be key words for this Psalm. (These words point to the writer’s main point or purpose.)
3. Assign each stanza to one or two group members (1-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19-24). Each person should explore her section and write in the circles. After a few minutes, share your results.

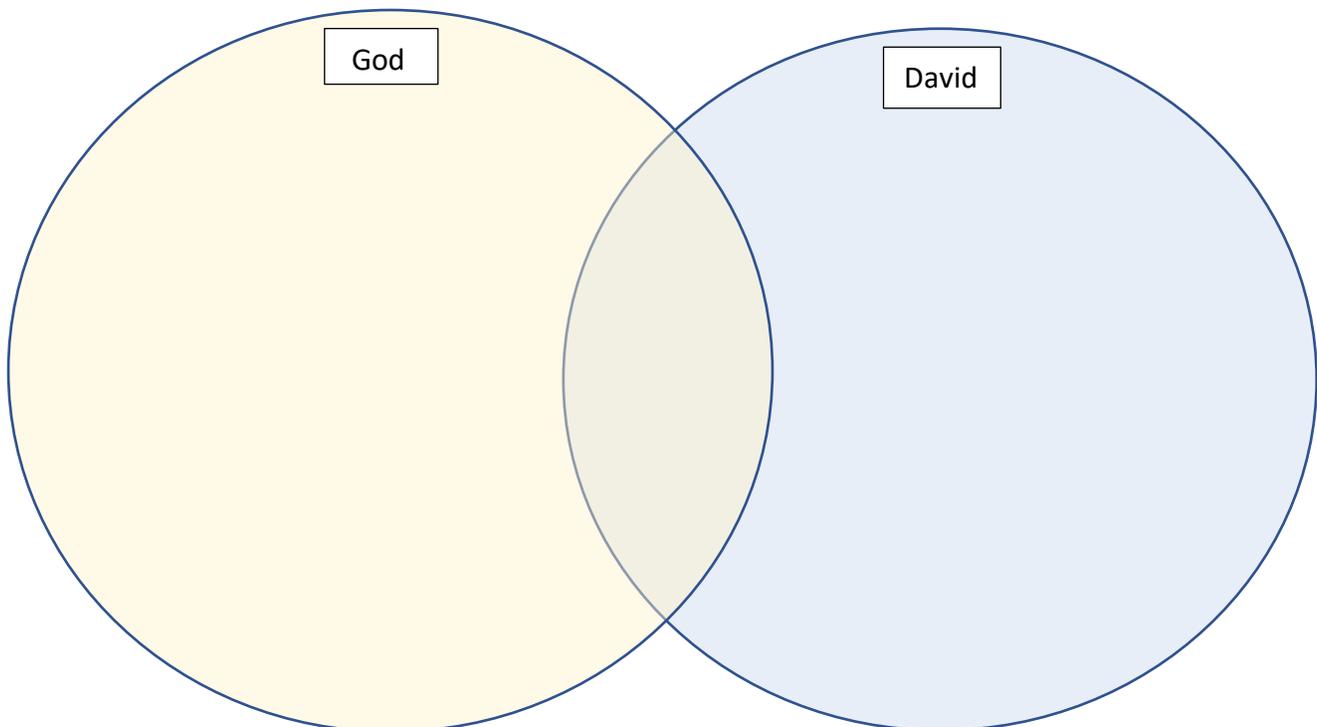


Yellow: What is one word/short phrase that sums up what the stanza tells us about God? Write these words in the circle on the left.

Blue: What words/phrases about David in each stanza correspond to what you found about God?

- *If not stated in the Psalm but suggested or inferred, put in parentheses.*
- If same/similar to God, write in center overlap.
- If different, write on the right.

After sharing together, discuss as a group: What do you conclude, based on what your diagram shows?



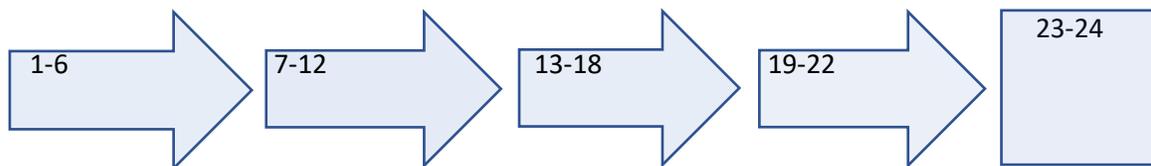
4. List three ways David responds to what he is realizing about God.

a. 14, 17-18

b. 19-22

c. 23-24

5. As you move through this Psalm, what emotions are expressed/suggested? Is there progression?



6. How might you explain the seemingly abrupt transitions to verse 19, and 23? Brainstorm ideas.

7. Look at verses 19-22. In what ways are our enemies the same or different from David's? What does Scripture add to our understanding of our enemy now, on this side of the cross? *Some verses to consider:*

- [Ephesians 6:12](#) *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
- [Romans 8:13](#) *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*
- [1 Peter 2:11](#) *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*



8. In one or two sentences, what do you see as the Psalmist's main idea?

Closing video (17 minutes) (You may want to refer to Scripture references on page 3.)

Application (5 minutes):

1. How does God's knowledge of you give you comfort? Or perhaps the opposite? How does the gospel speak into these thoughts or feelings?
2. Was your experience of this Psalm different today than in the past? How so?
3. How does this Psalm build on what we learned about God last week, in Psalm 121?
4. A seasonal question: How is God different from Santa Claus?

For Further Study:

1. **Worship:** "Indescribable," as sung by Laura Story, who wrote it. This is a beautiful video, too.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYu0Y02frO8>
2. **Meditate** on his word through song: "Psalm 139" by Mercy Me.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrYILn0KtXA&feature=youtu.be>
3. **Consider** Psalm 50, especially verses 14-15, where God calls on his people to do 3 things. In what ways do these verses parallel David's response in Psalm 139?
4. **Listen** to Jen Wilkin's talk on Psalm 139: "Reclaiming Psalm 139 from the Clutches of Coffee Cups and Picture Frames" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei8XI_l60Ow
5. **Laugh:** "The Skit Guys" work with Psalm 139.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmBLjkFrLH4&t=359s>

Scriptures referenced in closing video:

Psalm 56:8 You have kept count of my tossings (*other trans: wanderings, trouble*); put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

Gen 3:9-10 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Genesis 18:18 ...Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him...

Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet...

2 Samuel 7:13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Mt 9:3-4 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

In 2:24-25 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Mt 28:20b "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Matthew 26:39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

Luke 23:34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Zeph 3:17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

Mt 5:43-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.