

Psalm 139:1-17 (NLT) -

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!"

Hebrews 6:18-19 (NLT) - So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. ¹⁹ This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary.

Study Guide

This last week we spoke about what it can look like to pray in the midst of things not working out how we would like and how to persist despite that. Is there any area of your life where you have prayed for something for a very long time and it has not seemingly changed as you think it should? How do you navigate that? How does it shape the way you relate to God?

It can be very difficult to reconcile examples of when our lived experience doesn't seem to match what we are taught about God, prayer, and His will for our lives. This can be hard to navigate, and it can even be tempting to pull away from God in the process, but that is exactly the opposite of what we should be doing. Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. What does this scripture tell us about Paul's struggles and what his response is to not having his difficulty removed?

Paul summative thought at the end of his reflection is: "That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong." It is a remarkable thing to see God manifest even more fully through our lives as he sustains us through difficulty and it can truly be an even greater testimony of who He is. As you look at the times in your life where things have been challenging, where have you seen God's strength come through?

Take some time to pray for each other, for both relief from what is not as it seems God would want it to be, and for His strength to sustain us while we navigate the challenges of life