

Psalm 139:1-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-139/psalm-1391-4/>

God has taken the time to know His creation intimately and understands everything about His people. There is not an action we have done or will do that could surprise Him.

David begins Psalm 139 by calling out to God: *O Lord*. The word *Lord* that David uses is the Hebrew word Yahweh, which is the proper name of God, taken from the name He gave Himself when Moses asked His name. It means “to exist.” God is the essence of existence. When Moses asked God His name, He answered “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). David is specifically speaking to this God, the one who simply *IS*, existing outside of space and time. He has been, is, and always will be.

David marvels how this God, who is the essence of existence, has *searched me and known me*. He is *intimately acquainted with* our actions (when we *sit down* and *rise up*). This picture of extremes, *sit down and rise up*, includes everything in between. In other words, God knows all about our every activity. He also knows our thoughts (*understand my thought from afar*), our plans (*my path*), and our habits (*my lying down; all my ways*). There is nothing we think, say, or do that God does not know about at an intimate level.

The Hebrew word translated *known* in the phrase *searched me and known me* is used in Genesis to describe sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1). The picture here is that God knows us completely, intimately, from the deepest part of our soul to the hairs on our head. He also knows us at all times, no matter what we are doing.

He sees the actions everyone else sees, and also the ones they don't see. He knows the thoughts that cross our mind, and the thoughts we choose to dwell upon. He pays special attention to our *path* and the way we make it. Regarding God's total knowledge of everything, David writes *You understand* and *You scrutinize* all that we think and do. God is intimately *acquainted* with us. David is painting a picture of a very personal God—one who pays attention to the individual details of the lives of every person He created.

However, God is not confined to just knowing about things that are happening or have happened in our lives. Yahweh, who exists both inside and outside of time, is omniscient (all-knowing) because He is able to have all knowledge, outside of its chronology. Thus, *even before there is a word on my tongue*, God already knows it.

This means that there is nothing we can do that surprises God or that is not already known by Him. This means that His love is entirely unconditional, because He already knows everything we will do. Notwithstanding, God chooses to love each of us, and the entire human race (John 3:16). Even though God knows so much about us, He still chose to love us and pursue us.

It's important to note that God's knowledge of what we will do does not mean that we do not have responsibility in our choices. Because time does not confine God's knowledge or existence,

He is able to know about all things, even before they happen. However, that does not mean our choices are not real. In order for us to be deserving of praise or blame in our actions, we have to be held responsible for our choices.

We are given the stewardship of our choices, so that *we* can actively choose to obey or disobey God (Genesis 2:16-17). However, since God made all things and is over all things, He has simultaneous knowledge about all things and He foreknows what we will do. This foreknowledge exists outside of chronological time, permitting God to know about the past, present, and future at the same time. Thus, there is nothing that happens that was not already foreknown by God. We can be reassured that the choices we make are entirely our own, but God *knows it all* and has chosen to love us anyway.

Biblical Text

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

**2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
You understand my thought from afar.**

**3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down,
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.**

**4 Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O Lord, You know it all.**