

Psalm 139:13-16

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-139/psalm-13913-16/>

God had a direct hand in David's creation, putting every part of him together in his mother's womb. Thus, David knows that his existence is very valuable. Nothing about him is unknown to God; not what he has done, is doing, or will do.

David has spent Psalm 139:1-12 establishing that the character of Yahweh is as the One who exists outside of space and time, as omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (in all places at the same time), and as omnipotent (in control over everything). Now David turns to consider what the implications of God's character are for us.

With all of His power, God is not impersonal in His relationship to His creation. Rather, David says that *you directly formed my inward parts and wove me in my mother's womb*. The imagery of God weaving His people together in their *mother's womb* is powerful. In order to weave a tapestry, the weaver has to begin with a pattern in mind, a design. This infers a purpose, and a plan. From there, the weaver must carefully weave every string in such a way that the individual threads create the picture he has in mind. If even one thread is out of place, it is noticeable.

Thus, David is painting this image of God beginning with a picture of us in mind long before we existed and carefully placing every part of our being in our mother's womb so that the result is exactly what He pictured. The New Testament states clearly that God created each person with a specific purpose in mind. In fact, God prepared specific deeds for each person to do. There is a job He desires each of us to accomplish:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
(Ephesians 2:10)

When a tapestry fulfills the purpose for which it was created, that is its glory. In a similar manner, when we accomplish the purpose for which we were created, we gain the absolute most fulfillment available to us.

The fact that God had a plan and a purpose for David, and formed him in his *mother's womb* demonstrates that babies in the womb are known by God as the person He created. They do not become people only after they are birthed. They are already children known by God from the *womb*. This means for women who experience miscarriage, the grieving is appropriate and real.

It also means that destruction of a baby in the womb is destruction of a human being made in the image of God. Throughout the Old Testament, societies are considered to have reached a maximum point of wickedness when they begin sacrificing children (Jeremiah 19:4-7; 32:35). Caring for and protecting the most innocent lives is at the very core of living justly.

All of this intentionality in our creation leads David to say that he will *give thanks to God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*. Nothing about him, or us, was made without purpose. The Hebrew word “Yareh” translated here as *fearfully*, can also be translated to “reverently.” With that in mind, we can read David’s words as saying that God, the creator of the universe, made us with reverence and wonder! It gives special value to every human life knowing that every person was created with such sentiments.

The wondrous nature of God’s *works* is not something David just feels; it is a truth and his *soul knows it very well*. In Romans 1:19, the apostle Paul writes that men have no excuse for not knowing truths about the world because “that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.” When we consider the complexity of the human mind and body, and the unique factors necessary for our existence, we can understand the truth that someone had to make it all. If we are willing to see, this leads us to acknowledge God as our creator. The truth about God’s personal hand in His creation is something that resonates as true in David’s soul, and something that can resonate in ours as well.

With all of God’s knowledge, our *frame was not hidden from Him*, even though we were *made in secret*. Before anyone knew we existed, God had already begun to form us, and He *skillfully wrought us in the depths of the earth*, a place beyond any human presence or understanding. Although David was not literally made in the depths of the earth, the process of his formation in his mother’s womb was just as mysterious. David seems to revel in how God worked on him in places and ways unknown to men, seeing his *unformed substance* long before it came into being.

Since the existence of God is outside of time and space, He knew everything about how we would be and how we would live before a day of our lives had begun (Ephesians 2:10). God is telling a grand story that every member of His creation gets to take part in. In His story *book were all written the days that were ordained* for us to live out, even *when as yet there was not one of them*. God is sovereign over all, and has written all of history before it began.

This creates a paradox. David acknowledged in the first part of the psalm that God knew David and was present with him as David made choices throughout life. Here we learn that God has ordained all things. From our perspective, we cannot conceive how both of these things can be true at the same time. But this psalm also provides the answer: God is beyond our understanding. The answer to this paradox is faith in our eternal creator, the One who made us, who gave us the stewardship of making choices, yet who has ordained all things.

Later on in this psalm (vs. 21-22), David will emphasize his moral responsibility in the choices that he makes. The rules of time that we live by don’t apply to God, and He is not bound by our limited perspective or knowledge. Our choices are real, as is God’s sovereign hand. We can take confidence that He chooses us and loves us as we make mistakes, because while they may surprise us, God has known about them from a long time before.

Biblical Text

**¹³ For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother’s womb.**

**¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.**

**¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;**

**¹⁶ Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them.**