Psalm 139: 1-17 (ESV): Where Shall I Go from Your Spirit?

Main point: God knows you and is always with you.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: A psalm of David, who wrote many of the Psalms with deep emotions.

Focus of the study:
1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
   even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.
10 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”
11 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
12 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.
13 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.
14 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
15 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
   How vast is the sum of them!
18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
   I awake, and I am still with you.

Questions:
1. v. 1-6: How well does God know us/you? (pick out words)
   a. v. 2: You, God, know when I sit down and rise up
   b. v. 2: You, God, know my thoughts from afar
   c. v. 3: God knows when I lie down
   d. v. 3: God knows all my ways
   e. v. 4: God knows my words before I speak them
   f. v. 5 God is behind me and before me
2. Who else knows you very well? (generate ideas: friends, spouses, etc.) But does anyone else know you this well?
3. v. 6: What is the feeling that the writer, David, has when he realizes how well God knows him?
   a. can’t get his mind around it – so amazing
4. v. 7-12: Where is God in relation to us/you?
   a. everywhere!
   b. v. 8: if in heaven, God is there
   c. v. 8: if in the underworld (Sheol), God is there
   d. v. 9: in the farthest sea, God is there
   e. v. 11-12: in the darkness, God is there
5. What is God doing in all of those places?
   a. v. 10: “your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me” – God is with you, holding you, leading you – you are never alone
6. v. 13-17: When did God first know you, and for how long?
   a. At the moment of conception and onward: “you knitted me together in my mother’s womb”
   b. v. 16: God knows every day of your life before they even happen
7. What about today? How does God feel about you today?
   a. v. 17: you are precious! God has more thoughts about you than you can count (picture it: how many grains of sand are there on the beach?)
8. v. 18: When is God thinking about you?
   a. When you wake up each day, God was thinking about you even while you are asleep
9. When you wake up in the morning, what are your first thoughts?
10. So I wonder what is this psalm about?
    a. God’s love: all the time, all encompassing, personal
    b. God’s presence: everywhere
    c. God’s actions: leading us, healing/holding us, forming us
11. And what should be our response to these truths?
    a. v. 14: “I will praise you”
    b. How are you able or how would you like to praise God today?

• Ask for any other prayer requests for today.
• Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
• End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

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