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Psalms Volume XI
Search Me O God
Psalm 139
Pastor Bryan Clark

Video:

Steve DeBoer: Our first child was easy, piece of cake. Everybody said, “You know, you couldn’t have had an easier child.” All of a sudden we come along, and we knew Matthew was going to have some problems before he was born. Then the birth doesn’t go well.

Dena DeBoer: He pretty much coded or arrested the first 24 hours of his life. That next day they came and told us he was going to die. And then he didn’t. He had lost about 70-75% of his brain. Most of it was fluid in there, and they wanted us to put him in an institution. And he was all of maybe 7-8 pounds as it was. And they left as we fell apart. And we prayed, and we took him home. We did. Best 8 and ½ years of our lives.

Doug Kuszak: We were high school sweethearts and got married. And at 25, we’re having our little one. We didn’t know the day he was born that he had Down Syndrome.

Stacey Kuszak: Our doctor knew that we had no clue. And so he just let us enjoy Austin, and he told us the next morning.

Doug Kuszak: And then it was like a freight train. We weren’t Christians at the time. We knew Jesus. We knew He died for us we thought. But that’s about it. We didn’t know you’re supposed to have this personal relationship with Him.

Stacey Kuszak: I just think of the way that Austin’s changed us. Like sometimes I sit and think about what would we be like if Austin hadn’t been born with Down Syndrome. And it’s just scary to think about what we would be like. God has just changed our hearts.

Susan Browne: My sons are now 28 and 26, and they go to a day center during the day. When I go in there I see 35 of the most severely disabled people in our city. They’re there with them all day. When I walk in, my heart just melts.

Mike Browne: Our boys are at the lower end of the spectrum. They have no speech, but they’re ambulatory. They can get up and walk. But it’s tough. It’s hard all day long to have one, and then to have two.

Susan Browne: For the first 10 years of our sons’ lives, we weren’t Christians. So you can imagine how difficult that was. We’re going, “What is the point of our children being this way?” And, “Why?” And searching desperately all over the world for answers which weren’t there – for a reason, I’m sure. But when we became believers, and we did have a lot of contact with Pastor Lehman at that time, and he quoted out of the Bible the verse that is about the disciples asking Jesus who sinned: Why was your son born blind? And it was for God’s glory that God’s worth would shine through him. It wasn’t for your sin. It was for God.

Mike Browne: We came to know the Lord. And when we were talking one night – just Susie and I - we were saying it’s all because of the boys isn’t it? Yeah, it’s all because of the boys. So you get back to the point of seeing these little people who perceptively to the world have no value – cast offs – and they affect everything.

Dena DeBoer: When Matthew was in the NICU, there was somebody that came to visit. And she had put on his *Isolette* Psalm 139 about being fearfully and wonderfully made. And I have it in his baby book. But it wasn't until probably he was a little bit older, and then we started to realize why he was here. We were to love him no matter what. We were to raise him and take care of him and teach him about Jesus. But his purpose was for everybody else. Every caregiver that came into his life had a need that God needed to take care of. One gal – she'd gone to a Christian school all of her life, walked away from the Lord, did a lot of things – and one time we came home, and she was sitting on the couch holding him. And she was weeping and weeping and weeping. And she said, "I always have been taught about the forgiveness of God. But I never got it until this very day." She said, "Matthew doesn't care about my past. He doesn't care about all that I have done." And she said, "I am forgiven." It was so amazing. And that's how he would connect with people. And then there were people at the funeral – there were over 1200 people at the funeral telling the same thing—story after story of life change. I felt very fortunate that God let us see why. I said, "If I can stand in front of the Father someday and have reached that many people as my son, I will feel very blessed."

Steve DeBoer: Who, according to the world's standards, couldn't do anything.

Dena DeBoer: Yeah, right.

Steve DeBoer: That's the amazing thing.

Steve Dickmeyer: We have two children – Shannon, our oldest daughter who is 29, and Drew, our son who is 26 – who were both diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome which at that time was relatively unknown.

Jo Ann Dickmeyer: I had a supervisor once that told me that he had a couple of boys that were gifted. I explained to Steve, I said, "I've got two children too that are gifted – only in different ways."

Dana Govaerts: Sammy was diagnosed with autism when he was just a little over four. And his twin Jack is typical, that is, normal, typical whatever word you want to use for that. Sam was diagnosed with autism. And we joke about how we go buy donuts, and he tells the donut lady, "You can have all the money in the world but you know money can't buy happiness." And he starts quizzing her. "Do you know what can? Do you know what can? God. God can make you happy. Nothing else can." And I find myself standing there going, *Sam, you know you really shouldn't say that kind of thing.* No, he should be saying those things. And I should be saying those things. And he's just brought me right along with him. You know he is not ashamed to tell people anything about the Lord and the gifts that God has given him. He'll look people straight in the eye and tell them that they aren't alone.

Tim Govaerts: If you think that we're here by accident, that this is a great mystery why it is that we're here, then you take a look at my son, and you say, "Well, that's a mistake." But we know, we know that God doesn't make mistakes.

Stacey Kuszak: We still have our hard days, and it's not like having a handicapped child is all roses – because it's not. We can all see the positive things that happen, but it's not easy at all. But you know why God has done this, and you see it. And He's just totally changed the way – I mean, Bryan says that over and over again – God's ways, the things that He values, are not what this world

values. And just having a handicapped child just drives that point home everyday because you're just like, "I want my child to have friends. I want him to be popular. We have these things that we want for them which is what the world wants for them. And then you just realize that that's not what God has planned. And it's way better – what He has planned. Just having a handicapped child is just a daily reminder of what's important in God's eyes.

Steve Dickmeyer: Our love is not based on what we do; it's not based on what our kids do; it's based on what God gives us and how He's shown us His love. We try to live our life the way God loves us. And if we can instill that into our kids, and our kids can see that from us, then that's all we can do. That's all I can do. I can't love him any harder. I can't pray anymore than I have for him. I can't imagine my life without him.

Bryan Clark:

Special kids with some special needs but fearfully and wonderfully made. Our world might use words like 'tragic', 'mistake', but we would say 'on purpose for a purpose'. But of course, that's not just true of them. It's true of every single one of us. That's what we want to talk about this morning.

If you have a Bible, I'd invite you to turn with us to Psalm 139. Psalm 139 is arguably the most intimate psalm, the most intimate passage of Scripture in the entire Bible. It's really a remarkable piece of work because it brings together some of the biggest themes of God—His omniscience, His omnipresence, God is all-knowing; He's everywhere present. But it brings it down into what is perhaps the most intimate passage of Scripture in the entire Bible.

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. (Psalm 139:1; *NASB)

It's important to remind ourselves that the word 'known' doesn't mean 'you know about me' – it's not a term of information or intellect. In both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, the word 'know' is a term of intimacy. In both languages, it is the term that is used to describe sexual intimacy between a husband and wife. So, "God, You know me in a very real and intimate way."

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. (v. 2a)

The psalmist is just thinking about the most ordinary, everyday stuff of life. I would suggest to you, you don't even know over the course of a day when you rise up and when you sit down. You just don't even think about that stuff. You do it hundreds of times a day, but God knows. God knows the most ordinary, everyday stuff of your life.

You understand my thought from afar. (v. 2b)

It means, "God, You understand what I'm thinking even before I'm thinking it."

You scrutinize my path and my lying down, (v. 3a)

That word 'scrutinize' can be a little misleading. Basically what it means is, "God, You go ahead of me, and You make sure that my pathway is safe. And before I lie down, You make sure it's a safe place to lie down."

And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all. [Before I even say something, God knows what I'm going to say.] **You have enclosed me behind and before,** ["You go before me; You come after me."] **and laid Your hand upon me.** [That would be a poetic way of saying, "God, You have blessed me."] **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it.** (vs. 3b-6)

The conclusion of the psalmist after that opening paragraph is, “God, this is so remarkable. I can’t even comprehend it. I can’t even wrap my mind around it. How is it possible that You could know every moment of every day of my life?”

Now this would be remarkable if God just chose one person out of the billions of people on this earth to know at this level of intimacy. But this isn’t talking about God knowing one person. This is God knowing every person—billions and billions of people—at this level of intimacy. It’s what we call the omniscience of God. God knows all. But at a level we really cannot even comprehend.

I found myself as I meditated on this Psalm this week coming to the same conclusion as the psalmist. “God, I can’t even wrap my mind around this. I can’t even comprehend that You would know me at this level.” Remarkable.

I believe accountability is important. I want to make sure you don’t misunderstand what I say today. I think accountability is important. I think it’s good that we have people that we are accountable to. I think it’s good that we have accountability groups. I think we see through church history that bad things happen when people aren’t accountable. So you’re hearing that aren’t you? I think accountability is important.

But...I think one of the reasons we become so dependent upon human accountability to walk uprightly is because we do not fully understand what the psalm just said. And when our level of accountability is merely on a human level, we are at great risk. What happens when that accountability group is not there? What happens when I’m with a group who has different values? What happens when I’m all alone?

I think we all understand that who I am when nobody sees me is who I am. But I must remember in that moment, I am accountable. I am accountable to the One who’s opinion matters most. And I’m accountable to God.

Because of my role as a pastor, I am in a position of spiritual authority. And that makes some people rather uncomfortable. Whenever I’m talking to people who are not believers, I avoid the question like the plague: “What do you do for a living?” Because it always brings the reciprocal, “What do *you* do?” and at that point the party’s over.

A couple of years ago, Patti and I were at a restaurant waiting to get a table and it was a crowded waiting area. And we bumped into a classmate of mine from high school – from Lincoln High – and we had played football together. So we began to reminisce and tell stories and actually were having a wonderful time together. Over the course of that twenty minutes, I’m guessing probably three times he asked me what I do for a living. And I very cleverly avoided the question. But eventually, he pinned me down and wanted to know. I said, “Well, I’m a pastor.” You’d have thought I told him his house was on fire. You could see it in his face. The color went out of it. They’re both standing there holding beers; they’re looking at one another; they’re looking at the beer; they’re looking at me. And I’m not exaggerating, within thirty seconds, they came up with a reason to excuse themselves and went to the other side of the waiting area.

Well let’s just take that concept of spiritual authority and go with that a little bit. Let’s imagine that I was to spend an entire week at your side as your pastor – every moment of every day. I’m going to hear every word you say. I’m going to see everything that you watch on a television. I’m going to see every movie you go to. I’m going to see what you look at on your computer. I’m going to see how you treat your spouse. I’m going to see how you treat your children. I’m going to see how you

children treat your parents. Every moment of every day, I'm there. Would anything change? I think the reality is, "Yes." That's true of all of us. If one of my peers was at my side through a week, it would change me, too. You would become far more thoughtful of every word coming out of your mouth, much more aware of what you're watching on TV, much more aware of everything you're doing through the course of that week.

Now let's go from 'let's imagine' to 'reality'—that God is there. And He misses nothing. Only God isn't like me. God knows your thoughts. God knows your attitude. God knows your motives. God knows everything. God knows those words that are not said verbally, but they're said in your heart. God knows it all. That is a level of accountability that cannot be reproduced in any human relationship. And the more I process that, the more I understand that, the more it changes the way I live my life. At the end of the day, there is only one opinion that ultimately matters. And that's of One who knows you better than you even know yourself.

The response of that level of intimacy is overwhelming. Our first instinct is to run and hide – which is exactly what the psalmist says.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, [kind of the netherlands] behold, You are there. [He's saying, "I've got nowhere to go. I can run but I can't hide. God, if I go to heaven, You're there. If I go under the earth, You're there.]" If I take the wings of the dawn, [the sunrise – that's to the east] if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, [for him, that would have been to the west. "North, south, east, west – God, there's nowhere to go." But now he begins to find comfort in that concept.] even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me. (vs. 7-10)

In other words, "God, no matter where I go, You will always be there. And You'll lead me – 'right hand' is a statement of power – You'll lead me; You'll protect me. God, I'm never out of Your sight."

If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night," even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. (vs. 11-12)

It's hard for us to comprehend in the ancient world how dark dark was. We've always got light somewhere. And if we don't have light, we always have access to light. But in an ancient culture without electricity, darkness was really dark. If you wanted to hide, it was very dark. But also if there was someone or some thing that wanted to do you harm, that was frightening in the dark. And that's what David is processing here. "God, even in the darkness of the dark, I can't hide and I'm never out of Your sight because to You the darkness is as light as the day." He's remembering the reality that God's presence is everywhere. And God sees everything. There's never a moment of your life where that is untrue.

I suppose at this point the question would emerge, "God, why are You so interested in me? God, it almost seems like You're obsessed with me. Why would You pay that level of attention to me every single day?" And the answer is because God has a vested interest in you. He has carefully made you – on purpose for a purpose – and God cares deeply about that, which is where the psalm goes.

For You formed my inward parts [my internal organs]; You wove me in my mother's womb. (v. 13)

The language here is just beautiful. You imagine in the ancient world a weaver on the loom weaving together a piece of cloth. That's the Hebrew word that's used. That God is so involved in your creation in your mother's womb that He's weaving you together as one would weave together a cloth with different textures and different colors making it exactly the way He wants it.

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame [my skeletal structure] was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret [in other words, in the womb], and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. (vs. 14-15)

Again, this is a reference to the womb. That Hebrew word 'wrought' is the word for embroidered. Again, it's a very crafty, very artsy term—that God was embroidering you together. He was stitching you together with great care – just the right color, just the right texture – making you exactly the way He wanted you as this beautiful piece of art.

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. (v. 16)

That's a remarkable verse that is in essence saying, "Before you were even conceived, you existed in the mind of God. And God had planned for you exactly how many days you would live. And God has ordained your life before you took a single breath in this world."

Now when you process that, it is really quite a remarkable concept. I could say that until it is the day that God has ordained for me to die, I am invincible. Therefore, I don't live in fear of terrorists. I don't live in fear of plane crashes. I don't live in fear of drunk drivers. My life is not a life of chance. My life is ordained by the plan and purpose of God. And God knows exactly how many days I have on this earth. I think it's important to eat right. I think it's important to exercise. But I understand there is nothing I can do to prolong my life by one single day.

When I had my heart catheterization, the day before my surgery the cardiologist came out and his exact words to me were, "Bryan, there is no human explanation for why you are still alive." I knew what he meant. He knew what he meant – strong believer. "There was a sense in which medically speaking, you should be dead, but God's not done with you."

Now there is this weird tension in all of this. Even though I believe this to be true, I still had heart surgery. I still wear a seatbelt. I don't step in front of busses. You know there's this weird tension that we experience oftentimes throughout the Scripture where we believe the sovereign plan and purpose of God, but I have my own human responsibility that I must take seriously. And somehow God works that all out together.

This section of the psalm has so many applications in our culture. But this morning I want to limit it to three. The first one is one we just simply must talk about. And that is this very emotionally charged issue of abortion. Now I'm guessing in our audience this morning, there are those of you who have had an abortion. Please understand my purpose is not to heap more and more guilt on you. You need to confess that before God. You need to accept His forgiveness. And you need to move on. There's nothing gained by going back and wallowing in the past.

But you must understand that perhaps seated next to you is someone who in the next year will be faced with that decision. And that person needs to know what God says about this issue. In my opinion the debate about abortion has nothing to do with choice. I believe it has nothing to do with privacy. Those are two rabbit trails that the culture seeks to take us down. And my counsel would

be when the discussion goes down that path, you just simply disengage because I think it has nothing to do with the topic.

Let me see if I can illustrate that. Let's imagine that we're talking about a three-year old child. Is there anybody in the city of Lincoln that believes that any mother has the moral choice to take the life of that three-year old child? And I'm guessing across our city there would be a hundred percent unanimous decision that that mother does not have that moral choice. The same question: But okay what if it's done in private? Does that make it okay? And again we would get a unanimous decision. No. She does not have that choice, and it's irrelevant whether it's done in private or not.

So let's just back it up about three years. The discussion is really whether or not that fetus in the womb is or is not a human being, is or is not a child. If the fetus is a child, choice and privacy are as irrelevant then as they are with a three-year old. Eight inches of birth canal does not change the essence of what that child is.

Now there are different ways in our day and age to try and make the case for whether or not that fetus is indeed a human being, a child. One of those would be medically. That is not my area of expertise, and so I'm not going to go down that path this morning – there are people that do that far better than I could – other than to say that we know without a shadow of a doubt that that child has a heartbeat, has brainwaves and all of its genetic structure before the mother even knows she's pregnant. In my opinion, the scientific evidence is overwhelming that it is indeed a child.

But for those of us who are followers of Christ and those of us that believe in the authority of Scripture, it's important for us to understand what God has said. Now this isn't going to convince your unbelieving neighbor, but it should be significant to us as followers of God what God has to say. And if you read through this text, it is a bit of a theological slam dunk. There is no wiggle-room here. It is absolutely clear.

Within the womb of a mother, God is involved in weaving, in embroidering, in fearfully and wonderfully making this magnificent creature on purpose for a purpose that is one hundred percent human - a person that God has a plan and a purpose for. There is no person that has the right to destroy, to take the life, of one whom God has fearfully and wonderfully made. In the opinion of God, there is no difference between that three-year old and that child in the womb. You are destroying God's intended creation. And I understand there is a lot of confusion out in the culture. But there is only one opinion that matters at the end of the day. And it's good to know where God stands on this issue.

But it isn't just about this issue of abortion. It's about these wonderful children and children like them that we saw in the video. Fearfully and wonderfully made – they're not a tragedy; they're not a mistake – on purpose for a purpose. I understand that there are medical explanations for what's happening with these children, but does anybody in this room think somehow God's sovereignty is limited by medical explanation? If God didn't want them that way, He could have easily addressed that. It's part of God's plan and purpose.

I tend to think of these children as special forces. Just like the military has special forces, I think God does too. And I think these children are among the special forces with special assignments. We tend to look at these children with their limitations and think that their limitations in terms of their relationship to God are such that they somehow connect with God at a lower level than we do. I've watched this for years and years and years. And I would suggest to you, I don't believe that's true. As a matter of fact, I would suggest to you I think it's very possible that they connect with God at a level most of us will never experience. There is something going on with these kids in a connection with God that goes beyond our ability to explain.

Of those stories in the video, the one I'm most familiar with would be the story of Matthew DeBoer because of our friendship with Steve and Dena. A child who by the world's standards really had nothing to offer, was restricted to a bed or a wheelchair, couldn't see, couldn't hear, couldn't talk. For all practical purposes seem to have nothing to offer, and yet in some unexplainable way touched life after life after life. I'm not sure that I would believe this or I could even say this this morning if I had not been at the hospital the last week of Matthew's life. It was during the Christmas season, and the doctor was saying that these were the final hours. So I went up to spend those hours with Steve and Dena.

But what started as a couple of hours turned out to be pretty close to a full week while we waited for Matthew's slow passing. But it was a remarkable week. Again, I'm still not sure I would believe it if I hadn't been there. Person after person after person – almost every one of them medical professionals – walked into that room, politely greeted Steve and Dena, but they were there to talk to Matthew. And one after another after another would tell Matthew how he changed their life. And to be honest with you, I'm sitting there dumbfounded wondering what is going on here. I have no framework to even explain this apart from the mystery of God.

The one that I remember most clearly was a nurse that came in. she was telling her story directly to Matthew. I'm just overhearing it. When she first met Matthew, she was an unwed single parent, full of despair, wondering if life was even worth living. But somehow in Matthew she sensed the presence and reality of God which sent her on a spiritual pursuit where she ended up trusting Christ as Savior. This was a couple of years previous to this moment. And she said, "Matthew, I just want you to know that today I'm a part of a Bible-teaching church, and every weekend I teach Sunday School to the children. And I just wanted to say, thanks."

I mean, come on, how do you explain that other than the mystery of God? There's something going on there that goes far beyond our ability to explain. How do you explain that Matthew's funeral was one of the largest if not the largest we've had in a 45 year history? And I'm telling you, most of those people were not there for Steve and Dena. They were there to say goodbye to someone who had touched their lives – on purpose for a purpose.

But of course we understand that isn't just true of these special needs' children. It's true of every single one of us. Now be honest with me. When we read through the psalm and he says, "fearfully and wonderfully made," isn't there something in your spirit that kind of rolls your eyes and says, *I don't know*. We just don't think of ourselves that way. As a matter of fact, we spend a tremendous amount of energy in our lives trying to be something that we were never intended to be. Wishing we were somebody else, wishing we were something else – *I wish I was taller; I wish I was faster; I wish I was smarter; I wish I had hair; I wish I was prettier; I wish I was skinnier* – we spend a lot of time and energy trying to be something else.

One of the challenges of being a parent is trying to understand who God has created my child to be and celebrating that. I think a mistake a lot of parents make is they're trying to make their children into something different than what God intended. We need to understand that every single one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. You are the way you are because God wanted you that way. When He was weaving, when He was embroidering, He had a smile on His face and said, "This is exactly the way this person's going to be. And I'm making you on purpose for a purpose." If we took that energy out of trying to become something else and put it into understanding: *Who am I with my talents, with my gifts, with my opportunities and how can God use that for His glory?* – we would have a whole lot more fulfillment in life.

The psalmist is overwhelmed with these realities, and that's where he goes in this psalm.

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You. [He's just saying, "I am overwhelmed at how much God thinks about me and knows me and how intimately involved God is with my life.] **O that You would slay the wicked, O God; depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. For they speak against You wickedly, and Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies.** (vs. 17-22)

We read that and we kind of say, "Whoa! Now where did that come from? Everything was so nice and intimate and then you get to this section of the psalm." As a matter of fact, so much so that when this company did the video that we watched this morning of the psalm, they just decided to leave it out. They got to this part and apparently they thought, *We don't know how that fits with the psalm so we'll leave it out.* I don't know if you noticed. It wasn't in there.

But we can't do that. We have to talk about it. It's a difficult part of the psalm to deal with. We like to say, "Love the sinner. Hate the sin." That's not exactly what David just said. You say, "Now wait a minute. Jesus said, 'Love your enemies.'" Yes, He did. It makes this text a bit of a challenge. A couple of things you have to process. One is to understand in both the Hebrew and the Greek, the Old and the New Testament, the terms love and hate, especially when they're contrasted, are really just that. They're not terms of emotion. They're terms of contrast. They're terms of commitment.

When Jesus says, "Love your enemy," He doesn't say, "Feel good about them." It's rather a commitment to love them as He has loved them. We were enemies of God when Jesus died for us. It's saying that we should desire that our enemies come to know Jesus as Savior and not respond to them the way the world does. But respond to them in a way that they would come to know Jesus.

Each one of these statements has to be understood within the context in which it's made. With that in mind, we come back to Psalm 139 and what David is saying. I think David is saying this – because God knows him so intimately and because God knows every attitude, God knows his heart. God knows every thought. God knows everything about David. And God is so intimately involved with David and has made him and created him on purpose for a purpose. David's response is he wants to be that intimate in return with God. And part of his response of that is he's saying to God, "God, I want to be offended by the things that offend You. I want to hate those that oppose You. God, I want to be grieved by the things that grieve You." Because what David knows is that God knows his heart. And, "When I'm around people that are breaking God's heart, God sees my heart." And David's response is, "God, if that breaks Your heart I want it to break my heart because I love You."

Think of it this way. Let's imagine that there was a group of people that made it their mission in life to wound my wife Patti as deeply as possible. Everything they say, everything they do, their mission in life is to make her life miserable and to wound her as deeply as they possibly can. What level of relationship could I have with those people? It would be significantly limited. It would be impossible for me to just pal around with them as if there is no problem because what grieves her, grieves me. What wounds her, wounds me, because I love her. I could not possibly pretend like nothing happened. I am all about having relationships with unbelievers. I think that is very, very important. But I also understand the level of relationship is going to be determined by the level of offense. And the more bent a person is on offending God and grieving the heart of God, the harder it is for me to have a significant level of relationship.

I do believe there are many Christians whose ultimate motive is just to be friends with the world. And they do it under the umbrella of evangelism. But we need to understand something. When we

are pursuing relationships with lost people, it must be very hard. It must be one of those things in our lives that brings grief and sorrow because every time they grieve the heart of God, my heart must grieve. And every time they offend God, I must be offended. Every time they seek to offend God, my heart's offended because I love God. And when God looks at me, I want God to see that my heart grieves by what grieves Him, that I'm offended by what offends Him. Therefore my relationship with unbelievers, which is very important, is very hard. I find my heart is consistently sorrowful because I know what grieves the heart of God, and it grieves me because I love Him.

That's what David is saying. David is saying, "God, You are so intimate with me, and You look deep into my heart. And I want to have such a love relationship with You that when something grieves Your heart, I want it to grieve my heart. When something offends You, I want it to offend me. God, I want You to know how deeply I love You." He finishes the psalm really in the only way it could possibly be concluded.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (vs. 23-24)

This is really the only way this psalm could end. David has said, "God, You know everything about me. You know my thoughts. You know my motives. You know my words. You know my behaviors. You know every single moment of every day. And I understand I can run but I cannot hide. There is no way to escape You knowing everything about me. I also understand that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and You've made me on purpose for a purpose. I put all of that together and the only logical conclusion, God, is I want You to come in. And I want You to search me. Since I cannot hide and I cannot run, my only option is to walk uprightly before You."

"I understand at the end of the day there's only one opinion that matters. And that's the One who knows me better than I know myself. God, I understand that what You want from me is life. You've made me on purpose for a purpose. And You just want me to find that and experience the life that You have for me. So God, come on in. I need You to clean house. I need You to brush away the cobwebs. I need You to sweep the dirt out of the corners. I need You to look under the bed. I need You to go through the closets. I need You to inspect every single corner of my life. And whatever is there that's offensive to You, I need You to show me that. And I need to clean up my act. I need to have a clean house before You."

In just a moment I'm going to close in prayer, and Mike's going to come back up. And we're going to give you just a couple of minutes at the close of the service to process this before God – to offer this prayer to God. "God, search me. God, I need You to come in and look under the bed and go through the closets. Check out every area of my life and if there's anything there that's offensive to You, God, I need to know. And I need to clean it up. And I need to walk uprightly before You."

Our Father, we're thankful this morning that You are unimaginably interested in every moment of every day of our lives. Lord, we can't even begin to comprehend Your level of awareness of every second of every day that we live. To live in fulfillment of our purpose, our calling, is the essence of why we're here. Lord, the only way that's going to happen is if You come into our lives, search our hearts, convict us of our sins –that we might walk uprightly before You. So in these quiet moments Lord, I pray that our hearts would be open to Your presence as You bring to mind those things in our lives which need change that we might walk uprightly before You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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