

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

Welcome: Leading up to the summer, we asked you to contribute to this series by sharing places in Scripture that are encouraging and strengthening and sustaining and ultimately shaping you to be more like Christ! And so, behind every text we look at is someone in our community saying, *“This is what God is doing in my life through His Word!”*

I don't know what you think of the Bible! I don't know if you read it or not, if you like it or not, or whether you agree with what is written on its pages! What I do know is that if this book, which we call the Bible, is indeed the spoken Word of our Creator God who has communicated with us across the span of time, culture, continent, and language, we would be wise to listen! I'm not suggesting that you need to like the Bible or that you should agree with it at this point. I'm only suggesting that if God speaks, it's probably worthy of our attention.

Now...a lot of people make judgments about the Bible without ever taking the time to read it...and I get that because there is a lot of misleading information out there about what is in here and it makes the Bible seem pretty suspect and even spooky. And if we're being completely honest, there are a lot of people who call themselves Christians that use the Bible as a kind of moralistic whooping stick! And the only time you ever hear them talk about the Bible is when they want to tell other people how terrible and evil and hell-bound they are. You know, what is horribly distorted and destructive with their approach is that while Scripture certainly talks about sin and helps us see things that are wrong in our lives, it also tells us that we're loved by God beyond comprehension in spite of our sin! And at the height of the story, Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God takes nails in his hands and feet for all the wrong we've done in order to make us right with our Heavenly Father.

So...if you're suspicious of the Bible...that's ok! But you do need to understand that at the end of the day God willingly dies for us his people. And if God was willing to die for you...He must think pretty highly of you!

Now...there are many, many places in Scripture that talk about how highly God regards us and today I want to look at one that happens to be one of the most powerful texts in all of Scripture when it comes to the heart of God for his people! **Go with me to Psalm 139...**

“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'm going to say even before I say it, Lord.” Psalm 139:1-4

Who in your life knows everything about you? A best friend...parent...your spouse?

Dating – When Beth and I first started dating we would stay up late into the night talking about life and love, our pasts and future. Today we do well to stay up until 9:30...but at the time we were young and had so much to learn about one another. And I remember thinking to myself...here is this beautiful young woman who not only knows all there is to know about me, she actually likes me!

But she didn't know really know everything about me. Not even the person closest to you knows every one of your thoughts, motives, desires, and deeds do they?

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

And yet David says, 'there is one who knows you so personally and intimately, that not even the most minute detail of your life goes unnoticed by him.'

Now, if you're familiar with David's personal life, you know that he had some very dark seasons. Early on in his reign as the king of Israel, while his armies were out to war, David noticed the wife of his army commander bathing next door. He wooed her and slept with her, she became pregnant, and after several failed attempts to cover up his actions, David sent Bathsheba's husband Uriah to the front lines of battle to be killed. His life had all the makings of an HBO miniseries.

So...knowing his past, you would expect David to say, "*God, you know everything about me...you know that I deserve judgment, so please smite me and get it over with as quickly and painlessly as possible!*"

This is what many of us think about God, isn't it? I mean, if He really knows every detail about my life, at the very least He'll want nothing to do with me...and there's a good chance He will find a way to crush me. Someone's going to slash my tires, my AC is going to break, my kids will get sick...all a sign of God's displeasure.

But notice what David writes...verse 5...

(God...you know everything about me) "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!" 139:5

"You know everything about me, and yet you don't move away from me, you draw near to me. I don't get punishment, I get blessing." And then he says something that I love... "*All of this is too wonderful and great to understand.*"

"God...it's staggering...it's inconceivable...to think that you would love us like that!"

If you think that's good...keep reading. Verse 13...

"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." Psalm 139:13-15

These three verses are perhaps the most beautiful in all of Scripture that speak of God's intimate knowledge of and care for us! In fact, to show you just how much God cares for you, David points to His involvement in your life from the moment of your conception!

Woven Together – When David writes, 'you watched me as I was woven together in the dark of the womb,' that phrase '**woven together**,' is the same Hebrew word from where we get the idea of a weaver or embroiderer who patiently and precisely forms a masterpiece.

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

He is saying that you are a unique masterpiece. The handiwork of God Himself!

Secularism – Now...this flies in the face of modern secularism, which tells us that we are mere products of a random act of chance.

Bertrand Russell – The 20th century philosopher, mathematician and humanist, Bertrand Russell who played a leading voice in modern secularism wrote...

That man...his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of the universe in ruins. . .

Russell's premise claims that we are mere accidents; therefore our very existence is pointless and hopeless. If he is right, don't you see how it strips away our dignity, value, and self-worth? Everything we are, love, and do will ultimately be buried beneath the debris of the world.

There is nothing extraordinary about that! Nothing that will captivate our hearts and cause us to live with a sense of awe and wonder, to appreciate and love our neighbors, or to live radically generous lives!

However, Psalm 139 claims that there is undeniable and irreducible significance and value in every human being! Now...if you don't believe that the Bible is trustworthy, at least consider what the Bible is pointing us to!

David suggests, "If you want proof that there is a loving artist behind your life, visit the maternity floor at a nearby hospital and watch mini-miracles in motion."

Conception to Birth: Do you know that 22 days after a baby is conceived, the child's heart begins to beat and by week three, his backbone, spinal column, and nervous system is already forming. **By the end of the first month, that little bundle of joy is 10,000 times larger than the fertilized egg!**

Week five: The baby's eyes, legs, and hands begin to develop.

Week six: Her brain waves are detectable, her mouth and lips are present, and fingernails are already forming.

Week seven: The baby's eyes develop a retina and lens...and the major muscle system develops, allowing the baby to move for the first time.

Week eight: Bones begin to replace cartilage, fingerprints begin to form, and the baby can begin to hear.

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

(This for a little person the size of a blueberry!)

Weeks nine and ten: The baby can make facial expressions.

Week eleven: Your little man has a skeletal structure, nerves, and circulation.

Week twelve: He has all the parts necessary to experience pain, including nerves, spinal cord, and a thalamus (the part of the brain responsible for sensory perception and motor function).
By the fourth month, the baby's heart is pumping 25 quarts of blood per day and she is inhaling and exhaling amniotic fluid through her lungs.

Week 20: The baby will recognize its mother's voice.

Months five and six: Oil and sweat glands begin to function.

Months seven through nine: Your little princess uses four of her five senses. Antibodies are beginning to build up and her heart now pumps 300 gallons of blood per day.

Now...when a baby is born we cry, we laugh, and post pictures of our newborn on Face Book even though they look like shriveled prunes because we recognize that our beautiful child is a miracle worth celebrating.

Marvelous – In the same way, David, with no modern medical insight or terminology, looks at this miracle and breaks out in worship. *“God, your workmanship is marvelous! It is beyond what I can comprehend!*

“You are not an accident!”

There is an All-Powerful and All-Loving Artist behind the scenes of your life who chose to bring you into this world, placed his divine handprint on you, shaping you with a one-of-a-kind blend of personality, gifts, desires and dreams! **Keep reading in Verse 16...**

“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.” Psalm 139:16

Not only are you not an accident. There is a divine purpose and plan built into every cell and fiber of your being!

Now...if this is true, it raises several questions but ONE in particular that we must address!

If God is an All-Powerful, All-Loving Creator who is intimately involved in every detail of our lives, then why is life so messed up? Why is my family so dysfunctional? Where was God when this happened to me? Why disease, decay and death? Why suffering, war, and injustice?

Let me do my very best to reconcile the two...

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

The narrative of Scripture (Genesis 1 & 2) shows us that God created a world filled with peace, joy, purpose, and abundance!

The Apostle Paul writes in Colossians that through Jesus Christ, God created us for Himself! To know and be known by Him...to love and be loved by Him.

He is worthy of our deepest affection and we are most satisfied when we love and enjoy Him completely!

Yet, isn't it true that instead of loving God above all else, we've loved something or someone more than Him! In more ways than we can count, we've said to the One who made us, "*We don't need you! We don't want you. We don't love you. Don't tell us how to live our lives!*"

Sin: The Bible calls this sin...in fact, the sin beneath every other sin is this...we love something more than our Creator! We have a deeper affection for approval and power and money and romance and pleasure and comfort than we do for Him!

And the effects of sin are catastrophic...it tears apart the fabric of God's creation...replacing peace, wholeness, and life with brokenness, decay, and death!

You might ask... "Well...if God is truly a loving and all-powerful God, why doesn't he do something about sin and all of its effects in our lives...and in our world?"

Even here, in Psalm 139, we begin to see hints that God is going to do something to deal with our greatest problem.

"I can never escape 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 ocean, 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."

Psalm 139:7-12

How is it that David, a deceiver, adulterer, and murderer can confidently say to God, "*I can never escape you...no matter how hard I try or how far I run or how well I hide. Still you're there, waiting for me!*"

Psalm 51: Earlier in his life...when deceit and blood still covered his hands, David cried out to God...

"Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin...Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." Psalm 51:1-2, 7

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

At the lowest point in his life, when all hope seemed lost, David experienced the God who redeems our broken pasts...who restores our fractured lives...and recreates in us a heart to know and love Him...

And here's the thing...David didn't even know what we know!

800 years later, from David's own bloodline, a True King...Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, came into our world to do for us what we could not do for ourselves!

Jesus lived in perfect obedience to the Father, He was rejected and unjustly condemned to die! He alone deserved the blessing and protection of God, yet He suffered so we could be set free!

"He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed." 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus Christ not only knows you personally because He created you...He knows you personally because He carried your sin and died for you!

When you understand that God loves you that much, you won't possibly see yourself as unloved or unworthy or unimportant! The gospel reminds us that God carried our sin, covers us with his mercy, and calls us His children!

Getting a glimpse of this perfect love...David comes to the climax of his Psalm and writes...

"How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!"

Psalm 139:17-18

Bedtime: At night...when my children are sound asleep, I often go in and watch them! And no matter what kind of day it's been (and because I'm a pastor, most of our days in the Mullenix home are problem-free)...no matter what kind of day, I look at them and smile at the masterpiece they are!

David is saying that God does this a billion times over! If God created you so intimately and intricately, and if He was willing to give His very best, Jesus, when you were at your very worst, you can be sure that nothing in this world can separate you from His love!

When things go wrong in our lives – get bad news from the doctor, marriage falters, kids make heart-wrenching choices, or we need to hear God's voice but he remains silent. Or, when we look at all the heartache and suffering in the world – we tend to think, 'God either doesn't see...or He doesn't care!' David reminds us that God sees...

That decision you made that no one else knows about. God saw it coming...it surprised you, but not Him, and yet He loves you.

God-Breathed
Part 2: When God Thinks of You
July 19th 2015

That relationship you walked away from. God knew it would happen, and he didn't walk away from you!

The regret and shame you're carrying around for that decision. God sees it, and yet He hasn't abandoned you yet!

That harsh word spoken that you wish you could take back, God heard it...and yet He hasn't spoken harshly in return.

That heartbreaking loss you faced...God held you through it...

Not only does God see and care; He knows what you feel. Only Christianity says that God knows what it means to be rejected and oppressed, and to experience loss, heartbreak, suffering and death!

He is present in the valley and on the mountain...in our joy and in our pain...in our gain and our loss...in our celebration and our mourning...He's there!

Remarkable...that in one moment God says, *"I know everything about you...and in the next He says, and I love you."*

The Hound of Heaven: He is the God who C.S. Lewis described as *The Hound of Heaven*. For much of his life, Lewis (atheist) wasn't even interested in God and only wanted to run from Him; yet, God stayed on His heels.

For some of us...God has been on our heels for a long time, hasn't he? We've tried to run but He's faster; we're stubborn, but he's more persistent; we're proud, but He's gracious! Will you stop running for a moment and at least consider whether there is a God who loves you as deeply as this?

For some of us...we've been walking in Christ for a very long time, but our heart doesn't beat for Him as it once did! Run to him...the hound of heaven...and let your heart be captivated once again!

Scripture Resources: No better way than to rest in God's presence than to read and rest in His Word. We've provided resources to help you do this. Go into the café...get a Bible from our back shelf...let's delight in the One who delights in us!

Pray!