

## Psalm 139 (NET)

*For the music director, a psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, you examine me and know.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I get up;  
even from far away you understand my motives.

<sup>3</sup> You carefully observe me when I travel or when I lie down to rest;  
you are aware of everything I do.

<sup>4</sup> Certainly my tongue does not frame a word  
without you, O LORD, being thoroughly aware of it.

<sup>5</sup> You squeeze me in from behind and in front;  
you place your hand on me.

<sup>6</sup> Your knowledge is beyond my comprehension;  
it is so far beyond me, I am unable to fathom it.

<sup>7</sup> Where can I go to escape your spirit?  
Where can I flee to escape your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I were to ascend to heaven, you would be there.  
If I were to sprawl out in Sheol, there you would be.

<sup>9</sup> If I were to fly away on the wings of the dawn,  
and settle down on the other side of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> even there your hand would guide me,  
your right hand would grab hold of me.

<sup>11</sup> If I were to say, "Certainly the darkness will cover me,  
and the light will turn to night all around me,"

<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not too dark for you to see,  
and the night is as bright as day;  
darkness and light are the same to you.

<sup>13</sup> Certainly you made my mind and heart;  
you wove me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing.  
You knew me thoroughly;

<sup>15</sup> my bones were not hidden from you,  
when I was made in secret  
and sewed together in the depths of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw me when I was inside the womb.

All the days ordained for me  
were recorded in your scroll  
before one of them came into existence.

<sup>17</sup>How difficult it is for me to fathom your thoughts about me, O God!  
How vast is their sum total!

<sup>18</sup>If I tried to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand.  
Even if I finished counting them,  
I would still have to contend with you.

<sup>19</sup>If only you would kill the wicked, O God!  
Get away from me, you violent men!

<sup>20</sup>They rebel against you and act deceitfully;  
your enemies lie.

<sup>21</sup>O LORD, do I not hate those who hate you,  
and despise those who oppose you?

<sup>22</sup>I absolutely hate them,  
they have become my enemies!

<sup>23</sup>Examine me, and probe my thoughts!  
Test me, and know my concerns!

<sup>24</sup>See if there is any idolatrous tendency in me,  
and lead me in the reliable ancient path!

Read Psalm 139, and then conduct interviews with the following people. Each member of your group will interview two people, so that together your group has interviewed someone from each category.

1. A science teacher or professional scientist
2. An English teacher, or other person deeply engaged with poetry/literature
3. An art teacher or someone involved in the visual arts
4. A parent (not necessarily your own)
5. A physical education teacher or a doctor, nurse, physical therapist, or other medical professional
6. A Bible/religion teacher, or a pastor or other church leader

Explain to the person whom you plan to interview that you are investigating how different people respond to the same Psalm, and that you will only need fifteen minutes of this person's time. As you conduct the interview, consider how your behaviors can communicate respect and careful listening. Show active interest in what your interviewee is saying, and use expressions of interest (such as "that's really interesting, can you tell me more about what you mean by...") to draw out more detailed answers.

Ask the interviewee to read Psalm 139 silently, and allow enough time for the person to do so. Then ask for the interviewee's responses to the following questions and take good notes on the responses:

1. What is your first reaction to this Psalm?
2. What most stands out to you in this Psalm? What seems particularly important in it?
3. What do you think this Psalm has to say to you as a (science teacher/artist/parent/etc.)? How does it connect with your concerns?

You will discuss your findings in class. After the class discussion, compose a two-page written report from your group that:

- Summarizes the similarities and differences that you saw in people's responses.
- Discusses why you think the various people read the Psalm the way they did.
- Draws some conclusions about how the Psalm can speak to us in our various callings.