

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, I invite you to meet me in your Word in whatever way you desire. Search me."

MEDITATE

Read the passage twice, taking your time to focus on each phrase.

*1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.
 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.
 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.
 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.
 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.
 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
 (Psalm 139:1-6)*

REFLECT

Being known, truly known, can be reassuring or be a threat. Much of this depends on the person to whom our lives are being exposed. Being known can be dangerous. Many of us have had experiences of being "outed" by someone either at work or among friends. It can change our standing, our reputation, our relationships.

We are in an age where videos catching people in the act of something others consider unacceptable are circulated for all to see. Tweets that expose someone's words or thoughts that are against public opinion become daily bait. In an environment such as ours, it begins to affect our ability and willingness to be known by anyone.

The more we are closed up the more we are closed off. This often results in depression, anxiety, and isolation.

This passage reveals the intimate level of God's knowledge of each of us. Even with this knowledge, He sent Jesus to save us and bring us home to the Father. This is His heart for each of us. It feels like a dangerous prayer to have God search our hearts, the hearts we often work hard to protect. The antidote is to know God. To know Him is to love Him. Once we understand His love, grace, and mercy through Jesus for each of us, the freer we are to allow Him in. How is this passage encouraging you to be open?

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Take this time to share with God any fears or past experiences that are keeping you closed off from Him. Ask Him to heal any hurts or misunderstandings. Celebrate with Him the ways you have allowed Him to love you and ask Him for more!

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, I invite you to speak to me and make yourself known to me through your Word and prayer."

MEDITATE

Read the passage twice, taking your time to focus on each phrase.

*7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.
 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,
 for darkness is as light to you.
 [Psalm 139:7-12]*

REFLECT

Hide and seek is one of our 4-year-old grand-daughter's favorite games to play. Hiding is exciting, but being discovered brings forth giggles and screams of joy and surprise. It is being found that gives her the greatest delight.

These verses from Psalm 139 reveal the beauty of God's presence. He is a seeker. A finder. We can try to hide, to avoid, to distance ourselves, but God will not rest until we are found.

Adam and Eve began the hide and seek game with God. One of the saddest passages in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:8-10

8 "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." God's desire is for connection and intimacy with us; it is often our shame and fear that causes us to try to hide from His presence.

Jesus further describes God's heart as He speaks of God's passion for the lost among us: He will leave the rest of the fold just to restore the one lost sheep. (Luke 15) Jesus was the Father's answer to ending the hide and seek game once and for all. He sacrificed his life so that we are free from sin and shame, no longer separated from the Father but welcomed to His throne room. *Hebrews 4¹⁵ "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* May we respond in childlike wonder and delight for we have been found!

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father, I ask you to tear down every hindrance that stands in the way of intimacy with you. Search me out from wherever I may be hiding. Quicken my heart with joy for you.



THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, give me an understanding of your creativity and power."

MEDITATE

Read the passage twice, taking your time to focus on each phrase.

*13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
 I know that full well.
 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
 when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book
 before one of them came to be.
 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!
 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—
 when I awake, I am still with you. [Psalm 139:13-18]*

REFLECT

You are on purpose. Brought into being by the divine creative, God the Father. He designed and determined you in complete holiness. Untainted by the world, you were created. Untouched by the darkness, birthed by the Holy Spirit. Your eternal destination is in unhindered unity with the Father, untouched by sin and complete in Him.

You are on purpose. Only He knows the completely unblemished you. Only He knows every unique and perfect thing about you. Only He can restore you to a complete and holy existence through Christ.

You are on purpose. God determined you were needed. The universe needed you. For there is no other like you.

You are on purpose. God revealed Himself in and through His creation of you in His image. You bear His likeness in a unique way.

You are on purpose. It delights God to create. It is His essence. He has the power to create anything, anywhere, at any time and He created you for this place, this time, for His reason. And He delights in His creation.

You are on purpose. Deftly molded by the Master Potter, a masterpiece of His glory and reflection.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father, help me to grasp the incredible reality of your creative power in me and those around me. Awaken my heart to see Your divine imprint in myself and in those you bring into my life. Free me from my fear of being known by the One who knows me best.



DAY 11

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Father, search my heart, my motives, and my true feelings toward others. Lead me to freedom."

MEDITATE

19 O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers! 20 They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name. 21 O Lord, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you? 22 Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies. [Psalm 139:19-22]

27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. [Luke 6:27-28, 32-36]

REFLECT

David was wrestling with his true feelings as he faced enemy after enemy. Moving from our outrage for injustice to loving like Jesus taught us to can be a huge leap. It requires surrender, trust, and obedience.

A small group Bible Study met for a year, the couples were close and enjoying rich fellowship. The women went on a weekend retreat. After the retreat one of the women began slandering me and even went to the Pastor with untrue accusations. Because of her attack many relationships were hindered, and I was left feeling so betrayed and angry. I spent months praying and after a few months the Lord had me write her a note and let her know I was praying for her. I continued and a few months later I was to send another note with a little more heart, and again a few months later, and so on. Each time the Lord had me wrestle out another area of my heart that was hurting and angry. I could not send the note unless it was honest. The small group had a 1 year reunion and I did not want to go. Something unexpected happened as I walked into the kitchen, the woman who had accused me ran into my arms sobbing and asking for forgiveness. Everyone stood and watched and, in that moment, I cared only for this woman's brokenness. When we allow God to transform our outrage to love and trust Him with justice, extending the mercy He has given us, reconciliation and freedom are the result. There is much to be angry about in this world today but love always wins.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father show me how to love as you have loved. Expand my heart to be a person of mercy as you have shown me mercy.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, search my heart."

MEDITATE

Reflect on the change in David as he transitions from anger to humility.

19 O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers! 20 They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name. 21 O Lord, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you? 22 Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. [Psalm 139:19-24]

"It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this I-know-better-than-you mentality again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your own part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor." [Luke 6:42]

REFLECT

There is an amazing painting found in many doctors' offices. It is a surgeon in the process of operating on a patient. The nurses and technicians are all in place, the patient is sedated, and the intensity on their faces reflects the seriousness of performing surgery. The artist then depicts Jesus standing behind the surgeon with His hands on the doctor's, guiding his every move. This painting gives great comfort to one who is in the waiting room about to be the next patient on the operating table.

If Jesus is not in the picture, we may still feel confident in the doctor's training and ability. How confident would we be to have a surgery performed by a doctor with diminishing eyesight? Or a doctor who, prior to surgery, was in a windstorm outside and had debris in his eyes making it difficult to focus?

How confident would we be trusting Jesus to search our hearts if He were not without sin? If He were not compassionate?

Our ability to perform spiritual surgery on our family, neighbor, or church is hindered by our own obstructed sight. It requires humility to acknowledge our own disparity in judging others' faults. It has also been one of the greatest obstacles in spreading the Gospel. Christians are often seen as hypocrites. Our sincerity in humility is the greatest tool in sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Paul is a great example, ¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." [1Timothy 1]

May our walk reflect our gratitude for the mercy and grace we receive daily from our Lord.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Pray with David his dangerous prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.



THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Lord, give me eyes to see as you see. Give me a heart that reflects your heart. Lead me by your Spirit into all truth."

MEDITATE

Hear Paul's prayer for Believers:

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. [Ephesians 4:16-19]

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. [Philippians 1:9-11]

REFLECT

Have you ever seen the reaction in a child that has been quiet for some time? Upon inspection, they are found knee-deep into something they know they should not be into. It is an immediate response of shame. They try to hide or bow their head, not wanting to look you in the eye.

Shame is a powerful feeling that can become our reality. We can begin with guilt over an act and, if not checked, it can become constant shame in our lives. We can begin to believe and live as one who is shamed. This shame is what caused Adam and Eve to hide from God and it is the same for us today. We are to reject shame and embrace love.

To the extent that we believe in God's love, and experience this loving relationship, is to the extent that we will allow God to truly know us, to search us. God's searching is not to catch us in the act. He is not out to condemn us, but to transform us. He desires to impart His love to us in such capacity that we become free from all that would cause us to feel and believe in shame.

Paul prays for powerful truth and revelation of God's love to become our reality. To live in God's love is to live in freedom.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Pray the prayers of Paul for yourself and for those in your circle of influence (insert your name in the scriptures above). Lord, reveal the depth of your love for me that I may reveal your love to those who do not yet know you.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS | SEARCH ME

PRAYER OF INVITATION

"Speak to my heart, open my heart, lead my heart."

MEDITATE

Read the passages twice, what is the Lord making you aware of?

***26** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. **28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
[Romans 8:26-28]*

*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. **11** For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. [1Corinthians 2:9b-11]*

REFLECT

Texting has created interesting and embarrassing moments for all of us as Siri has taken over at times! Texting can leave us frustrated, angry, or even hurt by the incomplete and often misleading messages that come across. We have learned to utilize and rely on emojis with various expressions to clear up any confusion over our message. Hello! Hello? hello... h..e..l..l..ooooooo

They are all the same word, but each one communicates something different. We are always somewhat guessing and reading between the lines.

It is so refreshing to communicate with a God that not only searches and desires to know your heart, but also searches His own heart! The Spirit searches the deep things of God and as a Believer, the Holy Spirit dwells in you! Do you desire to search the heart of God? Do you desire to know the depths of God? It is possible!

We are not in a relationship that is intrusive, and God is not on a search-and-destroy mission with your inner thoughts and secrets. We are not in a one-way relationship where you share everything, and God shares nothing. If we allow ourselves and ask the Holy Spirit to show us God's heart, we will find the Word of God and our prayer time pulsating with new life and vitality. God not only wants to know you, He wants to be known.

DANGEROUS PRAYER

Father, I desire to know your heart. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who knows your heart fully. Please lead me and teach me, I want to know you Lord, not just know about you. I ask for a true heart connection with you. I long to know you more.