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I AM NOT ALONE

Meditations on Psalm 139

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Anxiety can influence a deep sense of isolation and confusion. Psalm 139 addresses these difficult experiences. Read the psalm below as well as the prayers that follow each section of verses. Upon reading each section, pray a personal prayer. After you have finished reading and meditating, follow the instructions at the conclusion of this section. Discuss this homework with your pastor, counselor, or friend. Utilize this handout as often as needed as you learn to address anxiety with God in mind.

Psalm 139*

Psalm 139:1-2 “O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up: you discern my thoughts from afar.”

Prayer: *God, you are intimately aware of my most inner struggles, and you understand and care about my battle with anxiety. As I recall this, I am reminded that you are continually with me during this very difficult, often paralyzing season. You are here, right now. You, the God of all comfort is with me in this moment. I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

Psalm 139:3-4 “You search out my paths and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.”

Prayer: *You have seen my feeble attempts to control my life as a means to attain security on my own terms. You know the futile ways that I have tried to deal with my fears. You are conscious of my doubting thoughts and unfaithful confessions even before I think or speak them. I am amazed that even as I yield to such faithlessness, you remain, and you do so with a heart of infinite love and compassion for me. I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

Psalm 139:5-6 “You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.”

Prayer: *Lord, it is humbling to know that when the panic and chaos of my mind seem overpowering, when I foolishly surrender to the enemy of hopelessness, and dare to think that I am utterly doomed, that you, the infinite Lord of all, literally surrounds me with your abiding, protecting, and comforting presence. I am overwhelmed with incomprehensible awe. It is stunning to know that you gently, and intentionally lay your hand upon me to remind me to get out of my self, and to remember where my true hope lies—it is only found in you. The great I AM is with me! This is a thought that is almost too lofty for me to comprehend! I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

*This handout only covers the first seventeen verses of Psalm 139.

Psalm 139:7-10 “Where shall I go from you Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 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.”

Prayer: *God, when I am in the midst of extreme panic and fear, my perception is often distorted. I embrace the illusion that I am operating alone in the universe. I believe thoughts that make me feel like I have been cast into the very depths of hell or that I am isolated as though plunged into the deepest caverns of the ocean—confined, hidden, secluded, and even forsaken. Yet, such thinking opposes Your unfailing word that assures me, “...neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). Even when my mind is confined by the chaos of disbelief, you are holding me with an immovable grip of faithfulness, grace, and love. I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

Psalm 139:11-12 “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.”

Prayer: *When I have run to escape in an effort to acquire security I have only compounded my delusion by further convincing myself that I am bound to endure this dark night of the soul in hushed solitude. Sadly, at times I have longed to disappear from this earth just to make it all go away. This, however, is to throw myself headlong into the confused subterranean of my heart—that unknowable place the prophet declared to be deceitful and sick (Jer. 17:9). When I feel consumed and defeated by the horrors of fear, I must remember that such perception is a fallacious lie, and plead with your Spirit to help me believe the truth I am choosing to remember! While my fallen eyes may only see the gloom of darkness your divine vision examines everything perfectly, and in your light I can recall, again, there is no reason to be afraid. I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

Psalm 139:13-17 “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 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 were none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!”

Prayer: *God, my anxiety creates temporary amnesia in my mind. When I’m fixated on needing to control my life, or protecting myself, or shielding others from harm I forget your sovereign reign over every detail of my existence. I forget the simple reality that it is you who has given me life. It is you who reigns over me. I forget that this is your story not my story. I forget that you are the great Author of the story. Instead, in stunning fashion I often try to take the pen from your hand. I forget that the story has been written in full, and that my greatest peace will be found in progressively learning to trust the Author who has so graciously chosen to write me into the story. I forget that every detail in this story, even anxiety, will be used to conform me into the image of glory (Rom. 8:28-29) as I learn to address it according to your wisdom, and, by grace, mature in my faith. I am assured in Scripture that the Spirit will use even this trial as a catalyst to make me mature and complete, so that I lack NOTHING (Jas. 1:2-4). I am assured that the marvelous conclusion of this divine narrative, my final glorification, will one day—with certainty—be realized (Rom. 8:30). Thank you for revealing the truths of Psalm 139 to me. You are here, and while my struggle may persist for a while, I can know with unflinching confidence, that I am not alone.*

Take a moment and meditate on the previous section then offer a personal prayer to God.

Make It Your Own:

Once you have read through this psalm and thoughtfully considered each prayer write out your own prayer. Consider including some (or all) of the following:

1. Read back through the assignment and identify the statements/sentences throughout that most comfort you. Maybe begin with, "Lord, as I read through this psalm and the accompanying prayers my heart was comforted by these phrases:
_____."
2. Which statements are challenging for you to accept? Why are these challenging? Write this out in your prayer.
3. What emotions were evoked as you read through the verses and prayers?
4. What functional beliefs about God might you embrace that make some aspects of this psalm challenging? Share these in your prayer. Include confessions and seek God's faithful forgiveness.

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