

# Strengthening Oneself in God

## Psalm 139

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| 1-6   | You, God, You know me completely – more than I can fathom, and this is wonderful.                                      |
| 7-12  | You, God, You are with me in every possible place – Your grip on me is firm  |
| 13-18 | You, God, Your hands formed my flesh and my personality with skill – this is too precious; how can I thank You enough? |
| 19-22 | Your enemies, God, they defame You and I am against them. Slay them, God.  |
| 23-24 | O God, keep searching my heart. Guide me forever   |

### 1Samuel 30:3-6

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| (3) When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. | Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.   | (7) Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David.  |
| (4) Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep.                                | (6) Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. | (8) David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue all." |
| (5) Now David's two wives had been taken captive,  |  |   |

### Under pressure from godless adversaries ...

#### I. David takes comfort from his security in God

A. He rehearses God's intimate knowledge of his thoughts, words and deeds. God's care envelopes him.

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| For the choir director. Psalm of David.   | A | (3) You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. | (5) You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.            |
| • O LORD, You have searched me and known me.  |   | (4) Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.                | (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. |
| (2) You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. |   |   |  |

#### I. David takes comfort from his security in God

B. He rehearses God's constant presence with him and is strengthened to recall that God's grip is firm. God will continue to lead even in dark and dismal circumstances.

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| (7) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?                | (9) If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, | (11) If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,"                         |
| (8) If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. | (10) Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. | (12) Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. |

#### I. David takes comfort from his security in God

C. He rehearses the careful and personal way that God fashioned his being; he is encouraged to recall that God suited him for this difficult path to the throne. God has not forgotten him.

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| (13) For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.  | (15) My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;                    | was not one of them.   |
| (14) I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. | (16) 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 | (17) How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!            |
|  |   | (18) If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You. |

## Under pressure from godless adversaries ...

### II. David prays for the destruction of wicked foes, opposing them as enemies of God

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| (19) O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. | (21) Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? | 1 Samuel 15   |
| (20) For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take Your name in vain.         | (22) I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies.                             | (2) "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.'" |

## Should a New Testament believer pray like this?

1. We should not take personal revenge or call on God to carry out our own vengeance. (Rom. 12:17, 19)
2. We should always love our enemies in the sense of having compassion for them and an active desire that they be saved. (Mat. 5:44, 45)
3. There is a kind of hate for the sinner that may coexist with pity and desire for their salvation. This is a moral revulsion, not personal vengeance.
4. "There may come a point when wickedness is so persistent and high-handed and God-despising that the time of redemption is past and there only remain irremediable wickedness and judgment. For example, Jesus speaks of unforgivable sin (Matthew 12:32) ... And Paul says, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed" (1 Corinthians 16:22). ... There comes a point of such extended, hardened, high-handed lovelessness toward God that it may be appropriate to call down anathema on it."

See Piper on Psalm 139:19-22

## Under pressure from godless adversaries ...

### III. David urges God to search his heart, that his motives might be pure when acting as God's instrument of justice.

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

## Two Applications

1. When you have the responsibility of being God's instrument of discipline, do it with humility and seriousness, asking God to search your heart and motives.
2. When you are in distress, strengthen yourself in God, by speaking Biblical truth to the Lord in prayer.