

Chapter 3: Relationship with God

Part 17: Anxieties about God

Begin with a prayer of desire for openness with God. Share some experiences of prayer during the week. Where do you feel you are in your unconditional acceptance of yourself? (20 minutes)

Anxiety about God

The dominant theme in Psalm 139 is the Lord's intimate knowledge and love for David and his tireless efforts to help David to realise this. The first movement, which runs from verse 1 to 6, is of David's amazement at God's close involvement in every part of his daily experience. God is there in his thoughts and inner responses as well as in his directions and actions.

David feels totally encircled and tenderly touched, and yet he has this awe which is almost dismay, virtual disbelief. Can it be? Is this the case for us too, where we know in our minds that this is so, and yet have this apprehension in our hearts? Can it be that God is so close to us? Why do our thoughts condemn us and speak louder than our desire for him? What causes the feelings we have?

David feels pursued and 'hemmed in', and when at last he is forced to acknowledge God, he feels overwhelmed. How do we experience this 'fleeing' from God's presence? (v. 7) What are the emotions and pressures that arise in us, as we face God?

'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' (v. 14)

- Can we see in ourselves the wonder and complexity of God's creation?
- Do we feel his care and concern that all should be well?

Exercise

As a comparison with Ps 139, reflect on Psalm 103 for 15 minutes, looking especially at what holds us back from God.

What makes us fearful or apprehensive when we are in his presence?

Write in your journal and then share in the group. (30 minutes)

At home this week

Stay with Ps 139 and look deeper at your response to it. Try to identify the words in you that say you cannot accept this love from God. What are they saying?

How does this inability to accept God's love fully make you feel?



Sergio Milandri has a Masters in Personal Formation and has been a relationship mentor in South Africa for over 25 years. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Hout Bay, Cape Town, and run the Sans Pareil Retreat Centre from there.

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