

life groups

NorthStar Church

Pout It Out week 4

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May 13 & 14, 2017

Mother's Day

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is one way that your mother influenced your faith?

Name one thing your mother taught you that has been a life long lesson either directly or indirectly.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read Psalm 139:13-16.

In Psalm 139, we see a God who knows all, loves all, and is actively involved in each of our lives. As you read about God's attention to the details of your life, know this: You matter to God.

What do we learn about God's involvement in our lives from Psalm 139:13-16?

In what ways does God's all-pervasive knowledge of you and everything else comfort and assure you? Is God's omniscience unsettling to you in any way? Why or why not?

This leads us to the mother that carried us and/or raised us. Scott gave us 5 suggestions in how we can honor our mothers. As your group walks through these 5 suggestions, share with the group what this looks like for you in your life and relationship with your mother:

1. Imitate her faith
2. Take care of her needs
3. Show her compassion
4. Forgive her
5. Love her deeply

Look again at verses 13-16. What does it mean to be "fearfully and wonderfully made?" How do these verses confirm the linking of our identity to God as Creator?

David felt blessed to enjoy an intimate relationship with his Creator. The psalm reinforces God's careful, thoughtful work in the creation of each and every person. Because our identity is linked directly to our brilliant Creator God, we can be confident in who He so masterfully created us to be.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Why do you think some people are deemed to have less value than others? To what degree do you think Christians have a responsibility to promote the value of all people?

Is God's knowledge of all your thoughts and actions good or bad? How might your response to the previous question influence your thoughts and actions in the future?

Why should God's knowledge of us lead us to trust Him more and seek to know Him more?

How can you pray for, with or over your mother today? Or any mother figures in your life? How can you celebrate her today?

Pray

Close in prayer, praising God that He knows everything, including our thoughts, desires, and actions. Pray that God would transform our hearts and minds to know Him more and praise Him more. Ask God to reveal ways that we can encourage others to know Him and to trust in Him. Thank Him for knowing the needs and requests of the group and lift up those requests to Him.

Commentary

Psalm 139

139:1. The psalm is addressed to the LORD. The convention of printing the word in all upper case type indicates the Hebrew text contains the divine name Yahweh. After the Babylonian exile the Jews ceased to pronounce this name for fear of violating the Third Commandment. Instead, when reading the text, they simply spoke a Hebrew word for "Lord." The psalmist expressed wonder that God knew everything in his mind and heart. The word searched implies the careful scrutiny involved in mining operations and exploring a new country. God had assessed the psalmist and nothing remained hidden from God. He knew everything.

139:2. Standing and sitting are ordinary activities. They are so universal that frequently they go unnoticed—but not by God. Thoughts, unlike speech, remain veiled from other people but not from God. God knows every activity in our daily schedule, both extraordinary and common. The phrase from afar reflects the mystery of God's presence. As the psalmist later asserted God always is present (vv. 7-12), yet the vast difference between Deity and humanity create a false illusion that God is distant. Hence, although God may appear to be absent, He is aware of what we are thinking. God knows us indeed.

139:3. The file of divine knowledge continues. Whether an individual moves from one location to another or remains in the same place is irrelevant to God. He watches as the person travels and rests. The possessive pronoun my in this section implies the power of the individual. He or she controls the decision to travel or to rest.

139:4-5. The psalmist returned to the idea previously expressed in verse 2, God's knowledge of his thinking and speaking. Before the writer's tongue could articulate an idea, God knew it. This knowledge went beyond mere foreknowledge about the words. God understood the motivation behind the language. God knew the

speaker better than the speaker knew himself. The hand is a person's instrument of power. Here it suggests God controls the individual whom He encircles. The sense is clear. God directed the psalmist and exercised authority over him.

139:6-7. The psalmist's realization of God's universal knowledge was not an abstract, theoretical idea. His repeated usage of personal pronouns—first person for himself and second person for God— reveal a clear comprehension of the difference between himself and God. Yet God clearly cared about this mere human. That God knows all about all individuals signals they are precious to Him. The vast difference the psalmist felt between himself and God made him uncomfortable in the presence of such a vastly superior Being. Hence the psalmist was overwhelmed with a desire to flee. However, such flight was ineffective. Wherever he might go, God already was there. This psalm clearly spells out that God is omnipresent—God is indeed everywhere.

139:8. In this verse the psalmist proposed two possible destinations to which he might flee. Here heaven points to the sky. Sheol was the place of the dead. Both words suggest an infinite place. The sky appears to be endless space. Victims were continuously descending into Sheol, and yet there always seemed to be space for one more. The two destinations suggest as high as one might go and as low as one could go. One was inhabited by God; the other by the dead.

139:14. The verb praise meant to publicly celebrate one's feelings. The word fearfully means something that produces reverence and awe, whereas the term wonderfully implies being distinct or separated. As he reflected on his own human body, the psalmist developed an increased respect for his Creator. The creation of humanity was unique. So is the creation of each human being.

139:15. The verb rendered formed literally describes the weaving of various colored threads to produce a variegated cloth. The intricacy of such fabric hints at the complexity of the human body. This verse reminds the reader that God also knows the person who resides in the flesh and blood.

139:16. The Hebrew text of verse 16 is cryptic, making translation and interpretation difficult. The translators of the King James Version understood the verse to refer to the development of the fetal organs.

139:17. How vast is the sum of them denotes the superiority of God's knowledge in quality and quantity.

139:18. The sum of everything God knows is immeasurable (Isaiah 55:8). When I wake up could refer to having pondered God's knowledge all night, or to the resurrection.

139:19-22. The psalmist wished to escape the influence of wicked liars. His zeal for God and righteousness gave him a single-minded determination. Such zeal is commendable (John 2:17; 2 Corinthians 7:11), but in calmer times it is directed toward love and mercy (Galatians 1:14-16).

139:23-24. Concluding with an appeal for God to search me, the psalmist submitted his thoughts and motives (concerns) to the Lord's scrutiny. He asked God to reveal any grievous way (lit "way of hardship") in him. The Scriptures speak of two opposite ways: that of the upright and that of the wicked (Proverbs 12:28; Matthew 7:13-14).