

YOUTH UNIT III: Psalms of Thanksgiving and Praise
YOUTH GENERAL LESSON TITLE: God's Promised Presence
YOUTH TOPIC: He Sees Me

LESSON 13
DATE: November 24, 2024

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139
PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 139:1-12

KEEPIN' IT CURRENT! (5 Minutes)

"I See You" – The phrase "I see you" is frequently used in Black popular culture today between friends, coworkers, and friendly acquaintances to show support and approval. The contemporary use of this phrase differs radically from how it was used in the 1980s and earlier. Adults used this phrase back then with attitude as a warning to teenagers and children that they were about to get in trouble and better stop what they were doing if they wanted to avoid immediate negative consequences. This was a time when most adults immediately followed through with promised consequences when children or teenagers disobeyed. Thankfully, the meaning and use of words can change over time, especially as an expression of our creativity and humor in the Black community.

Those in corporate America have started to use this phrase "I see you" to signal an attempt to create a more progressive way to treat employees and embrace differences in race, culture, and physical abilities. This is a major change from the 1950s and earlier when many employers wanted all employees to strive to be alike in dress, speech, hair styles, and make-up.

Another tactic used by racist people is to ignore those who are not white during meetings and conversations. By refusing to call on Black or minority students in the classroom setting, it creates a false narrative that only white people are in the room and only their contributions matter.

It has been said that the phrase "I see you" is taken from the Zulu greeting used in South Africa "Sawubona" (I see you) where the appropriate reply is "Yebo, sawubona" (we see you also). It communicates acceptance and value of the person for who they are, including their strength and their weaknesses.

KEEPIN' IT REAL! (5 Minutes)

- Discuss people in your life who help you feel accepted and valued. How are they able to communicate that acceptance to you (e.g., words, actions, attitude)?
- If a new person joined your church school class, what could the class do to make the person feel comfortable and accepted?
- Use Psalm 139:1-12 this week to pray and identify ways you feel accepted by God and ways for you to more fully accept and understand God's love for you.

KEEPIN' IT BIBLICAL! (20 Minutes)

KEY VERSE: "O LORD, you have searched me and known me."

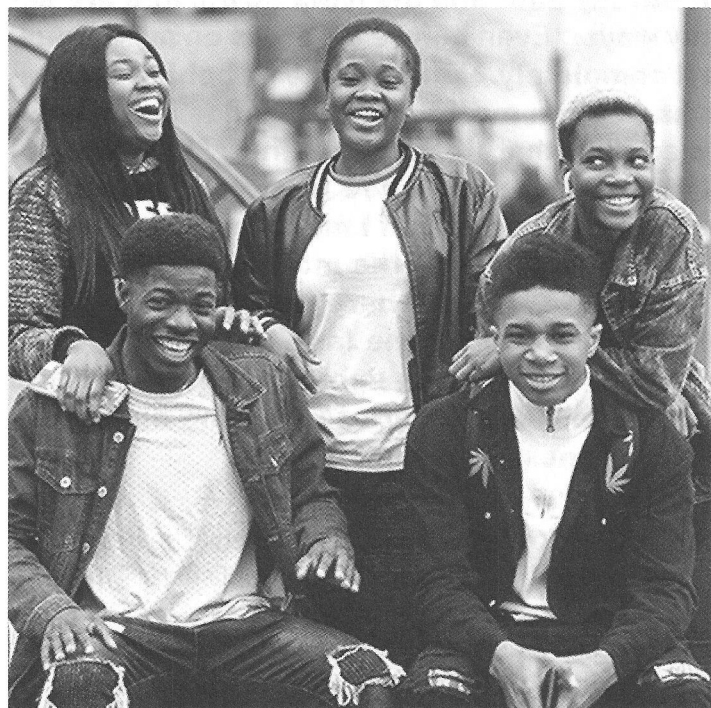
Psalm 139:1

¹O LORD, you have searched me and known me. ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. ³You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. ⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. ⁷Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 139 is described as God's perfect knowledge of man (The Holy Bible, New King James Version, page 611 (Thomas Nelson Publishers ©1994)). We as the people of God share the privilege of having a God that loves us and knows us better than we know ourselves. He uses this knowledge of our thoughts, words, habits, activities, and actions in order to work all things together for our good (Romans 8:2). David, the writer of this psalm, provides



this understanding of our God and God's care for us, which is the opposite of the relationship between followers and their gods during his time (and some now) who worshipped false gods (like the giant Goliath). Scholars who study ancient cultures have described the people who worshiped false gods as believing that their gods were hostile or indifferent to their worshippers.



God, on the other hand, uses His knowledge of believers to help them develop their skills and talents to achieve their destiny, to bless others, and for the glory of God. David goes on to describe some of the many wonders of God that are far beyond David's ability to understand or duplicate.

Finally, as this section of 139 examines reasons to thank and praise God for His promised presence and knowledge of David and the believers, David describes God's power to keep David and other believers on the right path for their life. Psalm 139 explains that believers can have other ideas about the path for their life, but the power of God (His hand) both leads believers back to the right path and holds David and believers, keeping them accountable by holding them fast to their destiny. This is reason to praise and thank God!

KEEPIN' IT TOGETHER (5 Minutes)

God takes the time to know each person on earth because of His love for us. God's attributes of omniscience (knowing everything) and omnipresence (being everywhere) allow God to know us better than we know ourselves. David uses Psalm 139 to share wisdom from God's personal experience with God teaching us that God is here and present in every moment, with us, and God is "for us" like a shepherd. God "sees us," loves and values us, and understands our joy and our pain. God believes in us, sees our potential, and is working out all things together for our good.

In our communication with God (prayer), we do not have to "catch God up" on what is going on with us, so we can start by thanking and praising God, and then skip straight to pouring out our heart to God. The privilege of prayer allows us to ask God for understanding, guidance, to supply our needs, and for the desires of our heart any time of day or night. God is present, waiting to hear from us, and God does not forget about us or get bored listening to us. These are reasons to thank and praise God on Thanksgiving, this Thursday, and every day.

iTHINK! (5 Minutes)

- Do you believe that God knowing and understanding your thoughts (see verse 2) is important? Why?
- What are some reasons (e.g., negative thoughts, disobedience) that someone might want to flee from or avoid God? This week consider ways you have tried to run away from God and write a prayer asking for God's forgiveness. After you pray, tear up the prayer and praise and thank God for forgiving you.