

Meditation #23: The Presence Before Christmas

What does it say?

STUDY: Psalm 139

GOLDEN TEXT: Psalm 139:13 and 14 = *It was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.*

What does it mean?

Even before the first Christmas, the Lord knew “a thing or two” about the joy in birthing. Psalm 139 is an especially powerful statement of the Creator’s wonderful works and constant presence with us—in birth, life and in death. The utterly complex, splendid formation of each of us in our mothers’ wombs is certainly a prime example of the marvel of creation—and the powerful presence of the Creator. His presence is also an objective and firm motivation for loving and caring for other people of any age—and altering any behavior that may make their surroundings unhealthy and dangerous. The joy of the Lord’s presence guides us do helpful and healthful things that benefit other people’s environments.

1. In this Psalm, does the presence of the Creator everywhere motivate us to engage his living presence? How can we become more attuned to the *wonder* of the Creator and his world?
2. Does the Lord’s presence throughout the creation motivate us to do what is right? Does the Creator’s presence empower us to “improve and protect” his world?
3. Why is our individual development as human beings a special focus of the psalmist’s divine marvel? How can we best express our sincere wonder at God’s work?
4. Please read the prayer in the last two verses of Psalm 139. Will God search us, whether we ask him to or not? What is the “way everlasting”? Does that start now or only after death? Does that “way everlasting” value all that the Creator made?

What are we going to do about it?

5. “Only God can make a tree,” the poet Kilmer once wrote, when he wished he could write a poem “as lovely as a tree.” How does our awe and wonder at the Creator’s splendid “works of natural art” motivate action for protecting babies, other people, as well as trees and other living things?
6. Are you awed at the marvel of your own spirit, mind, soul and body? Do you extend that awe to the spirits, minds, souls, and bodies of other people? Does this awe lead you to have respect for your health and the good health and environments of other people?
7. Read Psalm 139 aloud the next time you go to the park or take a walk in the woods or along the shore. Does reading Psalm 139 heighten your senses? Do you see the created things with more love? Does taking someone with you deepen the experience?

Truth To Celebrate: “God-is-with-us,” Immanuel, is a relentless truth—an absolute universal constant—that we can celebrate especially at Christmas.

Advent-Action: Recycle plastics, metal and paper—as well as used clothing, computers, cars, eyeglasses and cell-phones for those in need. Be creative, and you yourself will be energized.

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