

OUR LONELINESS AND GOD'S OMNISCIENCE & OMNIPRESENCE

Psalm 139

Introduction: The Analysis Of Loneliness

- **Genesis 1:26a** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
- **Genesis 2:18** Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."
- **Genesis 3:8** Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

I. As Omniscient, God Desires To Know Us Intimately (1-6)

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

- A. Loneliness Struggles With Feeling That No One Cares To Know Us Intimately (Job 19:13-20)**
- B. Our Omniscient God Continually Searches Us To Know Our Heart (Isa 40:13-14; 1 Jn 3:20)**
 - God Knows All Things Perfectly (Job 37:16)
 - Gods Knows Everyone Personally (Jer 17:10)
 - God Knows Events Prophetically (Isa 46:10)

II. As Omnipresent, God Is Always With Us (7-12)

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

- A. Loneliness Struggles With Thinking People Aren't There For Us**
- B. God Is Present With Us In Undiluted, Undistracted Concentration**
 - The Immensity Of God's Presence: God is not limited in His capacity
 - Nothing Can Restrain God (Ps 139)
 - Nothing Can Contain God (1 Kngs 8:27; Acts 7:48-49; Job 38:4-6; 31-33)
 - Time Can Not Contain God
 - The Intensity Of God's Presence: God is not diluted in His effectiveness (Jer 23:23-24; Ex 33:14; Jn 14:23; Isa 59:2; Prov 15:29)

III. As Creator, God Knows Us Thoroughly (13-18)

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes

saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

A. Loneliness Struggles With Feelings Of Insignificance

B. We Were Created Fearfully And Wonderfully

IV. As Defender, God Protects Us From Our Vulnerabilities (19-24)

19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! 20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain. 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

A. Loneliness Fears Being Taken Advantaged Of By Others

B. God Vigorously Defends Us From Every Enemy

Conclusion: The Answer To Loneliness

1. Remember That Loneliness Is A Choice
2. Focus On The One Person (God) Who Will Never Leave You Alone (Heb 13:5-6; Rev 3:20)
3. Know That Christ Empathizes With Your Experience Of Loneliness (Mt 27:45-46)
4. Hand Off Your Loneliness To The Lord (1 Pet 5:7)
5. Don't Cut Yourself Off From Others (2 Tim 4:9-11)
6. Be A Friend To Others Who Are Lonely (Eccl 4:9-12; 2 Tim 1:16-18, Isa 58:10)
7. Get Involved In A Fellowship With Other Believers (Heb 10:24-25)
8. Obey God's Commandment To Love (Mt 22:37-39; Jn 13:35)
9. Avoid Acts Of Desperation
10. Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Help

Discussion:

1. Do you agree that loneliness is a choice? Why or why not?
2. Why is loneliness so prevalent today? Why might it be for you?
3. Read the listed verses above describing God's omniscience and omnipotence. Which particular points today about God's omniscience and God's omnipotence address your struggle with loneliness?
4. Which points of action in our conclusion will you commit yourself to specifically? How?

OUR LONELINESS AND GOD'S OMNISCIENCE & OMNIPRESENCE

Psalm 139

Introduction:

1. UCLA Loneliness Study

- More than half of survey respondents — 54 percent — said they always or sometimes feel that no one knows them well.
- Fifty-six percent reported they sometimes or always felt like the people around them "are not necessarily *with* them."
- And 2 in 5 felt like "they lack companionship," that their "relationships aren't meaningful" and that they "are isolated from others."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/05/01/606588504/americans-are-a-lonely-lot-and-young-people-bear-the-heaviest-burden>

- I can't think of a clearer statistic that matches up to Psalm 139 so well!

2. What Is Loneliness?

- "Loneliness is being all by yourself even when you're surrounded by people. Loneliness is a feeling of isolation even in the midst of a crowd. You feel unwanted. You feel unneeded. You feel as though there's nothing to live for. You feel as though nobody really cares anymore. That's loneliness. Loneliness eats away at the inner person. It saps you of strength. It robs you of hope. Loneliness, as it were, put a wall around you no matter how free you may be." (Warren Wiersbe, *Lonely People*, Back to the Bible, 1983)

3. Who Does Loneliness Strike?

- Students
 - Latch key kids
 - Teens trying to be accepted at school
 - Rejection – nerd, acne
 - Parents move around a lot
 - Parents are divorced and spend weekends at different homes
 - Friends change
 - Competition
 - Television, video games and MP3 players – tune out the world
 - Internet – stay behind a screen
 - Foreign students
- Singles
 - seeing so many friends marry and have children, and this desire in their hear has not been fulfilled
 - We concur with Genesis 2:18 – It is not good that man be alone
 - But what are we doing to change it?

- Moms
 - Sharon A. Hersh, writing for a Christianity Today publication called MOMSense (Nov/Dec 2006), in the article "Only the Lonely + Be Vulnerable and Draw a Crowd" expresses:
 - "A Chinese proverb describes the journey of motherhood: 'Children bind the mother's feet.'"
 - "As you watch your children play, provide playdates for them and attend to all the other responsibilities of mothering, do you ever just want someone to pay attention to you, to call you or to help you? Your longing for relationships—a longing that whispers, *Ask me, notice me, enjoy me, pursue me, love me and stay with me*—is nothing to be ashamed of. Your longing to belong is a reflection of the image of God. He gave you this longing not only to transform you more into his image, but as a force to draw you to others. Your loneliness can become the ground of fruitful relationships if you recognize it, respond to it and rely on the One who created you for relationships."
(<http://www.christianitytoday.com/momsense/2006/006/6.26.html>)
- Unemployed
 - Feel like you are stigmatized, walking around with the scarlet letter "U"
 - But you are not alone – unfortunately the numbers globally are staggering
 - Positively, you are not alone, because God is walking with you through this
- Leaders
 - Harry Truman: "To be President of the United States is to be lonely, very lonely, at times of great decision."
 - Woodrow Wilson: "It's an awful thing to be President of the United States. It means giving up nearly everything that one holds dear. The presidency becomes a barrier between a man and his children."
 - Moses could acknowledge that it is "lonely at the top"

Numbers 11:14 ¹⁴ "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!"

- Jeremiah was so sick of obstinate people that he wished he could have checked into a motel and hide himself from them

Jeremiah 9:2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness – a lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, and go from them! For they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

- Paul had people desert him in ministry

2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

3. The Analysis Of Loneliness

- **God created us with the capacity to relate with Him**

Genesis 1:26a Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

- **God provided human companionship after stating it is not good to be alone**

Genesis 2:18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

- **In sin, man chose to hide from God**

Genesis 3:8 Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 4:13-14 ¹³ And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear! ¹⁴ Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* anyone who finds me will kill me."

- God created us to be intimate with Him
- God provided marriage
- It is our choice to ignore God and His provision

I. As Omniscient, God Desires To Know Us Intimately (1-6)

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

A. Loneliness Struggles With Feeling That No One Cares To Know Us Intimately (Job 19:13-20)

- *50 percent of Americans feel lonely some or all of the time, with younger generations reporting the highest rate of loneliness, according to a survey by health insurer Cigna. Using one of the best-known tools for measuring loneliness, Cigna polled over 20,000 respondents across the country. 40 percent of survey respondents said their relationships "lack companionship," "aren't meaningful" or leave them feeling "isolated from others."*

(Joshua Pease, Half of Your Church Struggles With Loneliness, May 8, 2018
<https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/325140-half-of-your-church-struggles-with-christian-loneliness.html>)

- That's why we want to form connect groups, small groups and fellowship groups to do life together (under the umbrella of Life Groups)
- In the era of **cell phones**, people know what we post about ourselves – but that doesn't mean they know us intimately
- In the degradation of interpersonal communication because of social media, we have in-depth talks or bare our souls more infrequently
- Loneliness mounts because we wonder who really knows us intimately
- The world's most popular YouTuber or Instagram Celebrity may have millions of followers but know one knows them intimately
- "Loneliness is an inner vacuum – a capacity that craves to be filled and satisfied."

Job 19:13-20 ¹³ "He has removed my brothers far from me, And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. ¹⁴ My relatives have failed, And my close friends have forgotten me. ¹⁵ Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants, Count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. ¹⁶ I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth. ¹⁷ My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am repulsive to the children of my own body. ¹⁸ Even young children despise me; I arise, and they speak against me. ¹⁹ All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me. ²⁰ My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

B. Our Omniscient God Continually Searches Us To Know Our Heart (Isa 40:13-14; 1 Jn 3:20)

But we are not alone – Never Alone!

Loneliness periscopes us up to the reality of God's omniscience and omnipresence

What Does God's Omniscience Mean?

- There is only One who is sufficient in all knowledge. God.
- Only God is omniscient.
- **Latin:** *Omni* = All; *Scientia* = Knowledge
- *Webster's Dictionary:* "Having universal knowledge; knowing all things; infinitely knowing or wise."

Isaiah 40:13-14 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?

1 John 3:20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and **knows all things**.

- God needed no tutors, consultants, professors, advisors
- God did not need to go to school
- A.W. Tozer: "To say that God is omniscient is to say that He possesses perfect knowledge and therefore has no need to learn. But it is more: it is to say that God has never learned and cannot learn." (*Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 61)
- **God Knows All Things Perfectly**

Job 37:16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced, those wondrous works of Him who is **perfect in knowledge**?

- **Gods Knows Everyone Personally**

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind

- **God Knows Events Prophetically**

Isaiah 46:10 "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'"

PSALM 139

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

- V. 1 "search" = to explore, do research
 - ie/ God does His own research and has a better search engine called "Goddle", not "Google"
- V. 1 "known" = intimate knowledge (Heb. *Yadah*)

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

- V. 2 – sit down (passive), Rise up (active, to work) – God knows the mundane things we do in life
 - Your iPhone knows how many steps you take in a day – God knows more details than that
- V. 2 – "discern my thoughts from afar"
 - Thoughts come into our minds through a series of distant, fleeting conceptions as microscopic nerves relate to one another in the brain through a complicated process of connections. Even those are known by our Lord. That is what David means by God's understanding "my thought from afar."

(Swindoll, Charles R. *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind* (p. 264). Worthy Publishing. Kindle Edition)

3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

- “search out” – “scrutinize” in NASB, lit. “sifting” in Hebrew
 - Ie/ an archaeologist sifts through dirt patiently to find a small treasure
 - God is that patient to thoroughly search out our paths and lying down
- V. 3 – path (active), lying down (passive) – Hebrew poetry
- V. 3 acquainted with all our ways

4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

- God knows what we know before we know it

5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

- “hem in” or “enclose” is a military term which is to secure the perimeters while a city is under siege
- God will block every exit to keep us from being invaded
- “behind and before” – front and back, God’s hand protects us

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

- God’s omniscience is wonderful, comforting and unachievable by human standards

II. As Omnipresent, God Is Always With Us (7-12)

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”

12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

- Alexander Maclaren (19th century pastor): “Not mere omniscience, but a knowledge which knows *him* altogether, not mere omnipresence, but a presence which *he* can nowhere escape, not mere creative power, but a power which shaped *him*, fill and thrill the psalmist’s soul.”
- Charles Ryrie: “Omnipresence means that God is everywhere present with His whole being at all times... omnipresence does not mean that God’s being is diffused throughout the universe as if part of Him is here and part of Him there. His whole being is in every place, and the presence of the Lord within every believer serves as a good illustration of this.” (*Basic Theology*, p. 46)

- Wayne Grudem: "God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 173)
- John Feinberg: "God's infinity in relation to space is omnipresence and/or immensity. Many theologians use these terms interchangeably, but others distinguish them. Those who distinguish them often use immensity to refer to the fact that God transcends all spatial limitations and is everywhere at once. As some theologians note, bodies are in space circumscriptively as bounded by it; spirits are in space definitively (they have a specific where), but God is in space repletively, i.e., he fills all of space. Omnipresence, on the other hand, signifies that God is present in the totality of his being at each point in space. Hence, there isn't one part of him at one place and another at a different place. Whether or not one differentiates omnipresence from immensity is not critical, so long as one recognizes that this attribute involves two ideas, namely, God transcends spatial limitations and so is present at all places at once in his total being." (*No One Like Him: The Doctrine Of God*, p. 249)
- **The Immensity Of God's Presence: God is not limited in His capacity**
 - Henry Bavinck: "Infinity applied to time is eternity" ... "infinity applied to space is omnipresence" (*The Doctrine Of God*, pp. 154, 157)
 - Louis Berkhof: "Immensity...may be defined as that perfection of the Divine Being by which He transcends all spatial limitations, and yet present in every point of space with His whole being." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 60)
 - Tony Evans: "*Infinitude*, or infinity, means that which is without limit. *Immensity* refers to that which cannot be contained." (*Our God Is Awesome*, p. 155)
 - Charles Ryrie: "Infinity means that God has no bounds or limits. He is in no way limited by the universe or by time-space boundaries. But it does not mean that He is somehow spread out through the universe, one part here and another there. 'The infinity of God must be conceived as intensive rather than extensive ... Sometimes this attribute is labeled immensity. It differs from omnipresence in that it emphasizes the transcendence of God (because He is not bound by space), while omnipresence focuses on the immanence of God (because He is everywhere present).'" (*Basic Theology*, p. 43)

1. Nothing Can Restrain God

Psalm 139:7-12 ⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me; ¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

2. Nothing Can Contain God

1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!

Acts 7:48-49 However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?"

Job 38:4-6 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone,

Job 38:31-33 31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? 32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?

3. Time Can Not Contain God

- God is the same in the past, present and future.
- John M. Frame: "Israel needed to learn in Egypt that God was present, not only to the patriarchs four hundred years before, but to them as well, in their current experience. God not only *works* in time, but is also *present* in time, at all times.... God is the Lord *in* time as well as the Lord *above* time.... He really exists in time, but he also transcends time in such a way as to exist outside it. He is both inside and outside of the temporal box – a box that can neither confine him nor keep him out." (*The Doctrine Of God: The Theology Of Lordship*, pp. 558-559)
- Hildebert of Lavardin: "God is over all things, under all things; outside all; within but not enclosed; without but not excluded; above but not raised up; below but not depressed; wholly above, presiding; wholly beneath, sustaining; wholly within, filling." (quoted by Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 80-81)
- **The Intensity Of God's Presence: God is not diluted in His effectiveness**

Ie/ Distance means dilution:

- When you drive up into the mountains, you lose radio reception
- The farther you live from a DSL location, your internet reception loses speed
- AT&T cellular phone and 3G reception is lesser than Verizon
- When a husband watches ESPN, he loses attention

Jeremiah 23:23-24 ²³ "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? ²⁴ Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

- God's presence is everywhere
- Yet the Bible often speaks of God being with us or being apart from us
- How is this possible if God is always present?
- The Bible uses the concept of "presence" as a figure of speech meaning "present to bless"

Exodus 33:14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

- God is said to be "far away" in the sense that God is withholding His blessing or exercising judgment
- This concept parallels God presence with blessing to God's absence with not blessing

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

A. Loneliness Struggles With Thinking People Aren't There For Us

- Elijah and his martyr syndrome

1 Kings 19:10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

B. God Is Present With Us In Undiluted, Undistracted Concentration

7 *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?*

- Answer: No where
- The Holy Spirit is omnipresent

8 *If I ascend to heaven, YOU are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, YOU are there!*

- In Hebrew, the personal pronouns for God are shockingly emphatic – **YOU!**
- There is no place in heaven and hell we can escape God
- 2 extreme locations and every where in between

• God Is Unlimited By Space (7-8)

- God is in heaven and in the depths of Sheol
- The implication is that God is there and everywhere in between (the earth being included in the in between)

- God never has an unobstructed view of us

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!"

**9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.**

- **God Is Uninhibited By Speed (9-10)**

- "wings of the morning" = the rays of the morning sun
- The rays of light moving at the speed of light across the Easterly end of the Mediterranean Sea
- "Moreover, if he could fly at the speed of light (**the wings of the dawn**) from the east across the sky to the west (**far side of the Mediterranean Sea**) he could not escape from the Lord." (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*)
- The ocean is huge – even on a massive freighter you feel small in an ocean – but not to God
- In God's omnipresence, we can't outrun Him

**11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"
12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.**

- **God is Undeterred by Challenges (11-12)**

- We may fear abandonment in the night
- Some rescues are cancelled due to darkness
- God is not limited by what limits man
- The darkness might be bruising to David, but God does not call off the search team or support team because of darkness

III. As Creator, God Knows Us Thoroughly (13-18)

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

A. Loneliness Struggles With Feelings Of Insignificance

B. We Were Created Fearfully And Wonderfully

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

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- An Unformed Baby Is Known, Created And Protected By God
- "inward parts" = literally "kidneys" – vital organs
- "knitted" – Heb. *Sanak* – interwoven – circulatory, muscular, nervous, glands, organs

14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

- Fearfully and wonderfully made – awe and astonishment
- What med student takes his studies lightly?

15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

- "frame" – skeleton – body type – not a mystery to God

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

- God's eyes were affixed on our unformed substance and had a plan for us
- **God Has A Relationship With A Prenatal Person** (Ps 22:9-10)

Psalm 22:9-10 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.

- **Spiritual Characteristics Begin At Conception** (Ps 51:5)

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

- Bruce Waltke: "... in tracing his spiritual condition to the time of conception, David goes on to note that already in his fetal state the moral law of God was present in him." ("Abortion," *Christian Medical & Dental Society Journal*, Vol. VII, Num. 3, Summer, 1976)
- **A Happy Fetus Is A Real Fetus** (Lk 1:40-44)

Luke 1:40-44 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she

spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, **the babe leaped in my womb for joy.**

- **God Has A Plan For Each Person In The Womb** (Gen 25:23-24; Jer 1:5)

Genesis 25:23-24 And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

- David states how precious it is that God would define us and create us with such precision

IV. As Defender, God Protects Us From Our Vulnerabilities (19-24)

19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me!

20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain.

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

A. Loneliness Fears Being Taken Advantage Of By Others

Psalm 23:4 ⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

B. God Vigorously Defends Us From Every Enemy

- David describes various enemies and how God's enemies are our enemies
- God will take care of our enemies

Conclusion: The Answer To Loneliness

1. Remember That Loneliness Is A Choice

- Timmons: "Loneliness is not a disease. It's a decision! It's a decision to avoid the fears of the pain accompanying *identity* (companion pain of dissatisfaction), *inadequacy* (companion pain of depreciation), and *intimacy* (companion pain of detachment). Since loneliness is a decision and not a disease there is hope." (*Loneliness Is A Choice*, p. 63)

2. Focus On The One Person (God) Who Will Never Leave You Alone (Heb 13:5-6; Rev 3:20)

Hebrews 13:5-6 ⁵ Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*"⁶ So we may boldly say: "*The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*"

Revelation 3:20 ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- Peter M. Nadeau, in the article "The Gift of Loneliness," writes:
- "Loneliness is a gift from God because it's a continual reminder I'm created for so much more. Not just union with a spouse, but also a deeper connection with my family and friends—and most of all, intimacy with my Creator. Loneliness pushes me forward when I'd otherwise be tempted to settle for lackluster relationships and an isolated existence."
- "Loneliness is also an opportunity for us to ask God what he wants to let surface in our hearts. It gets our attention and consequently we're driven to ask our Father what he's trying to tell us. *What are you trying to get me to notice, Lord? What relational pattern are you trying to free me from? How am I sabotaging the good things you're trying to give me? Would marriage be destructive for me right now? What new thing do you want to do at this point in my journey?*"
(Adapted from *The Single Journey*, June 21, 2006,
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/singles/newsletter/mind60621.html>)

3. Know That Christ Empathizes With Your Experience Of Loneliness (Mt 27:45-46)

Matthew 27:45-46 ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

- Peter M. Nadeau concludes:

"I am amazed at Jesus' example during the last night he spent with his disciples. Just hours away from the most grueling, brutal suffering the Roman world offered, Jesus knew full well what lay ahead. The Evil One was tempting him away from the cross at every moment. When I'm facing a great trial, I need loving, supportive friends around me. I believe Christ needed the same that night. In fact, he told his disciples he yearned for some time to share supper with them. The end had come. There would be no more exorcisms or mass feedings for now. Jesus' predictions regarding his death were about to come true. The horror of the Passion was about to begin.

“Yet notice Jesus' primary concern. He's intent on drawing his disciples closer. As they argue over who'll be the greatest in the Kingdom, he washes their feet. As they promise to stick by him, he promises not to leave them without a Comforter. When Jesus retreats to the mountains to pray, he doesn't go alone; he takes Peter, James, and John and repeatedly asks them to pray with him in the Garden. The Son of God seeks the intimacy and encouragement of those he came to save at the most crucial hour in mankind's history. The next day he would be executed for them. That night he just wanted to be close to them.

“I don't believe Jesus ever felt so alone during his earthly ministry as he did that night with his disciples. None of them understood what was about to happen. How could they? Instead, they asked irrelevant questions and jockeyed for position. Still, Jesus sought to serve them, encourage them, and love them. He turned his deep feelings of loneliness into an opportunity to submit to his Father and connect with his friends. There's no better example for singles struggling with loneliness.” (ibid)

4. Hand Off Your Loneliness To The Lord (1 Pet 5:7)

1 Peter 5:7 ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- Elizabeth Elliot: “I am often asked ... ‘How did you handle loneliness?’ ... I *can't* handle it. I give it to Someone who can.” ... “Offer your loneliness back to God.” (“Transforming Your Loneliness,” *Confident Living*, May, 1990)

5. Don't Cut Yourself Off From Others (2 Tim 4:9-11)

2 Timothy 4:9-11 ⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

- Get out from behind your TV, computer screen, video game and ear buds

6. Be A Friend To Others Who Are Lonely (Eccl 4:9-12; 2 Tim 1:16-18, Isa 58:10)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 ⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

- Elijah, who left Gehazi and experienced depression and loneliness was instructed to mentor and disciple 3 future leaders (including Elisha) in 1 Kings 19

2 Timothy 1:16-18 ¹⁶The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome, he sought

me out very zealously and found me. ¹⁸The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

Isaiah 58:10 ¹⁰If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

7. **Get Involved In A Fellowship With Other Believers** (Heb 10:24-25)

Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- the Bible is full of “one anothers”
- Join an existing fellowship
- Start a fellowship – we’ll help you

8. **Obey God’s Commandment To Love** (Mt 22:37-39; Jn 13:35)

Matthew 22:37-39 ³⁷ Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

John 13:35 ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

9. **Avoid Acts Of Desperation**

- Don’t get in a dating relationship just because you’re lonely.
- A relationship driven by emptiness or desperation will be a destructive and taking relationship; rather, a relationship driven by being overflowed with God’s love (fullness and contentment) will be a constructive and giving relationship.
- Emptiness and desperation makes one vulnerable to premarital sex.
- Don’t do anything to get attention for yourself that you will one day regret.

10. **Don’t Be Afraid To Ask For Help**

- Parent, pastor, teacher, counselor

Conclusion: FOOTPRINTS

*One night I had a dream -
I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord and
Across the sky flashed scenes of my life.*

*For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand.
One belonged to me and the other to the Lord.
When the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that many times along the path of my life,
There was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life.
This really bothered me and I questioned the Lord about it.*

*"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, You would walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there in only one set of footprints
I don't understand why in times when I needed you most, you would leave me."*

*The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never, never leave you during your times of trial and suffering.
When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you."*

The Story Behind Footprints:

- 1964 - Paul & Margaret Powers strolled the sandy shores of Echo Lake, Ontario as fiancé's, months before wedding
- Fearful of challenges of marriage, Margaret asked Paul if their dreams would wind up like footprints in the sand - quickly covered by the rising tide.
 - Paul assured her that marriage often face troubled waters, and when those times came, the Lord would carry them both.
- That night, the nervous bride penned a poem called "Footprints".
- She never intended on having it published, but wrote it as a wedding promise from God for her and Paul. She tucked it away in a box and that box was lost during a move in 1980.
- 3 years later she found this poem in a Christian bookstore, shocked that it was published, anonymously at that.
- But this poem began to be a source of comfort for her again.
- In 1989, their daughter was badly injured when she was swept over a 68 foot waterfall at Golden Ears Provincial Park near Vancouver.
- Paul witnessed this horrible accident and suffered a heart attack and was rushed to a nearby hospital.
- As Paul laid in the hospital, a nurse, looking to comfort him, pulled out a small card and read "Footprints" to him.
- When finished, the nurse said "I don't know the author. It's anonymous.
- Paul replied weakly, "I do. I know the author very well. It's my wife."
- God has used this poem time and time again during the greatest hurts of our life to remind us of His presence with us.

Discussion:

1. Do you agree that loneliness is a choice? Why or why not?
2. Why is loneliness so prevalent today? Why might it be for you?

3. Read the listed verses above describing God's omniscience and omnipotence. Which particular points today about God's omniscience and God's omnipotence address your struggle with loneliness?
4. Which points of action in our conclusion will you commit yourself to specifically? How?

Appendix 1: How Is God Omniscient?

A. God Knows All Things Perfectly

Job 37:16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced, those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?

Isaiah 40:28 "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable."

1. God Possesses Exhaustive Knowledge – God knows all things

- ***Scientia libera*** = free knowledge – God knows all things because of who He is. There is no learning or outside education that God receives.
- ***Scientia necessaria*** = necessary knowledge (perfect knowledge of Himself)
 - We will spend an eternity in heaven getting to know God, but God already completely knows Himself.

1 Chronicles 28:9 "For the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts"

Psalms 33:15 "He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works."

Psalm 139:2-3,6 "You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it."

Psalm 147:5 "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite."

2. God Possesses Detailed Knowledge – God knows little things

Matthew 10:29-30 ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

- Famed preacher, Robert G. Lee, said: "God is the only One who attends a sparrow's funeral.

Psalm 50:11 I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

B. God Knows Everyone Personally

1. God Knows Who We Are – There's no use being phony

1 Samuel 16:7 For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

1 Chronicles 28:9 As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind

2 Corinthians 11:11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

- God called the religious leaders "whitewashed tombs" – look clean on the outside, but dead on the inside (Mt 23:27)
- We can not hide from God behind the thin veil of religion and religious observances.

2. God Knows What We Do – There's no use trying to hide things from him

Psalm 139:1-6 ¹ O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ² You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ³ You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. ⁵ You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

Psalm 33:13-15 ¹³ The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. ¹⁴ From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵ He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

2 Corinthians 12:2-3 ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³ And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows

3. God Knows Why We Act – There's no use thinking we can get away with sin

1 John 3:20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Hebrews 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Ie/ If you are going to be tried for a crime and you are guilty of it – you are hoping that the judge, jury and the prosecuting attorney won't find out the truth. But if God is

the Judge, Jury and the Prosecuting Attorney, you won't have a chance in the final judgment.

- Charles Spurgeon: *What wilt thou think, O sinner, when thou art brought before God, and God shall say, "Thou didst so-and-so," and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night when no eye was there? You will start back amazed, and say, "Oh, heavens! how shall God know? is there knowledge in the Most High?" He will say, "Stop, sinner; I have more to startle thee yet;" and he will begin to unfold the records of the past: leaf after leaf he will read of the diary he has kept of your existence.... You are thunder struck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear. You are amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the great white throne, and to hear a voice saying, "Rebellion at such a time; uncleanness at such a time; evil thoughts at such an hour; hard thoughts of God at such a period; rejection of his grace on such a day; stiflings of conscience at another time;" and so on to the end of the chapter, and then the awful final doom.* (Sermon "Omniscience," Sabbath Evening, June 15, 1856)

C. God Knows Events Prophetically

1. God Possesses Eternal Knowledge – God knows all things past, present and future

- ***Praescientia*** – "knowledge before"

Isaiah 41:21-23 21 Set forth your case, says the Lord; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. 23 Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified.

Isaiah 42:9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.

Isaiah 46:10 "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'"

Isaiah 44:7 And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, let them show these to them.

Acts 2:31 "He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ"

Ephesians 1:11 Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will

2. God Possesses Contingent Knowledge – God knows what man will actually and potentially do ahead of time

- ***Scientia de futuro conditionata*** = conditional knowledge of the future
- John Frame: “God knows not only what is actual in the past, present, and future, but also what is only possible. He knows not only what is, but also what is not, but could be. And of course he also knows what could not be.” (*The Doctrine Of God*, p. 500)

Jeremiah 26:3 It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds.

- Ie/ NCAA March Madness tournament brackets – no one can get the perfect bracket
- But God knows all the possibilities

ie/ What if the government had knowledge to prevent the terrorists on 9/11?

Ie/ What if the doctor caught the cancer earlier?

Ie/ What if my dad did something about his cancer earlier?

Ie/ What could have been better if you stayed sexually pure before marriage?

Ie/ What if I did see that car coming towards the intersection that ran the red light and hit me?

- It’s the questions of “What could have been if...”

Matthew 11:21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

- God knew Tyre & Sidon would have repented had they seen Jesus’ miracles in Bethsaida & Chorazin (Mt 11:21)

1 Samuel 23:11-13 ¹¹ “Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.” ¹² Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will deliver *you*.” ¹³ So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

- God knew the town of Keilah would betray David to Saul (1 Sam 23:11-13)

3. God Prophecies Free Actions By Men

- Genesis 9:24-27 – Noah prophesies that his grandson Canaan would be a slave to his sons Shem and Japheth
- Genesis 15:13-16 – God prophesies how Abraham’s descendants would be enslaved by Egypt

- 1 Samuel 10:1-7 – Samuel prophesies how Saul will meet specifically two men near Rachel’s tomb (v. 2), what they would say and what would happen. This entails future free actions of men.

Psalm 139:4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

Psalm 139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Appendix 2: The Inquiries About God’s Presence: What about ...?

A. If God Is Omnipresent, How Is He Located In Heaven?

Psalm 11:4 The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

Psalm 14:2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

1 Kings 8:30 And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

- David Hocking: “If He is in heaven, how can He be everywhere at once? The answer that seems most plausible is that God is not everywhere present in the same sense. He is able to manifest Himself in special ways in different places. His presence in one place is not the same as His presence in another place, although we are not told what that difference is.” (*The Nature Of God In Plain Language*, p. 103)
- God revealed Himself in a pillar of fire at night and a cloud in the day while Israel was in the wilderness.
- He appeared as a burning bush.
- These were symbols of His presence.

B. If God Is Omnipresent, How Does He Distance Himself From Those In The Lake Of Fire?

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Revelation 14:10 he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

- Ryrie points out: “Omnipresence does not mean that the immediacy of His presence does not vary. It does. His presence on His throne (Rev. 4:2), in Solomon’s temple (2 Chron.

7:2), or in the believer (Gal. 2:20) certainly differs in its immediacy from His presence in the lake of fire (Rev. 14:10). Though in the lake of fire people will be separated from the face-presence of God (2 Thess. 1:9, *prosopon*), they will never be separated from Him who is omnipresent (Rev. 14:10, *enopion*). There is obviously no presence of fellowship (for His face will be turned away from the wicked in the lake of fire) as exists when He indwells believers." (p. 46)

C. **If God Is Omnipresent, How Did Satan Flee The Presence Of The Lord?**

Job 1:12 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

- Satan left the visible manifestation of God in heaven.

D. **If God Is Omnipresent, How Did Jonah And Cain Flee The Presence Of The Lord?**

Genesis 4:16 Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Jonah 1:10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

- Jonah & Cain can't flee God's presence
- Jonah & Cain were rebelling from God and the phrase is a figure of speech describing the fact they shut God out

E. **If God Is Omnipresent, How Could God Dwell In A Physical Body?**

Colossians 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Colossians 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

- The totality of the Second Person of the Godhead was contained in Christ's body

Appendix 3: How Does God's Omnipresence Affect My Life?

A. **If You Are Sinning, You Can't Hide From Him**

- You Can Run, But You Can Not Hide

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Amos 9:1-4 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, and break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of

them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, and he who escapes from them shall not be delivered. ² "Though they dig into hell, from there My hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down; ³ And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from there I will search and take them; Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them; ⁴ Though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I will command the sword, and it shall slay them. I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

B. If You Are Rebelling, You Can't Run From Him

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

C. If You Are Tempted, He Is There To Support You

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

D. If You Are Alone, He Is There To Comfort You

Revelation 21:3 Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

E. If You Need Help, He Is There To Assist You

- "Immanuel" = God with us

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

- Christ's incarnation is another manifestation of God's plan to be with us
- God came to be with us "in the flesh"
- Salvation

Matthew 28:20 And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Ie/ A pastor is on an airplane breaking out in a cold sweat because he's afraid of flying. A stewardess, who knows that he is a pastor, asks him why he is afraid. She said "After all, when you're flying, wouldn't you be closer to God." The pastor responded by quoting Matthew 28:20 in that "God has said the 'Lo, I am with you always.'"

Jude 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy

F. If You Are Weak, He Is There To Uphold You

Hebrews 1:3 [Christ is] upholding all things by the word of His power

G. If You Are Discouraged, He Is There To Uplift You

Psalm 16:11 In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

H. If You Are Fearful, He Is There To Strengthen You

Psalm 23:4 I will fear no evil; for You are with me

I. If You Are Away, He Is There To Be Worshipped By You

John 4:20-24 ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.... ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Appendix 4: Is God Too Big To Care About Little Ol' Me? (The Doctrine Of Immanence)

- "Transcendence" = God is superior to and above anything He created (immensity)
- "Immanence" = God is intimately present and involved with His creation (intensity)
- God is both transcendent and immanent
- Deism believes that God is transcendent but not immanent
- Pantheism (God is in everything) emphasizes God's immanence, but not transcendence

Acts 17:28 For in Him we live and move and have our being

- The following passages demonstrate both God's transcendence and immanence:

Isaiah 57:15 "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Isaiah 66:1-2 "Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,'" Says the Lord. But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

- Terrell Owens vs. Jerry Rice – 2 of the greatest receivers in the NFL. Jerry Rice transcends all receivers and perhaps all players (respects to Jim Brown) as the greatest that played the game. Yet upon meeting him at Costco, he was kind, polite and interactive. But Terrell Owens, at a local Sportsmart autograph session, wouldn't even look up, say hello or acknowledge anybody. People walked away saying how impolite he was (more impolitely). Someone can think they are so great that they don't need to be close to little people. Someone else can be great and yet be affable. God is transcendent (great) and immanent (close).

A. Marvel At Who God Is: God Who Transcends All Things (Psalm 113:1-5)

1. A Response Of Praise – Because God’s Greatness Is Recognized (1-3)

¹*Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord!* ²*Blessed be the name of the Lord From this time forth and forevermore!* ³*From the rising of the sun to its going down The Lord’s name is to be praised.*

- “Praise” = *halel* = the whole community of believers rejoiced
- “The Name of the Lord” = all that God reveals about Himself to us
 - names reveal ones character
- v. 2 – eternal duration of praise – for eternity
- v.3 – earthly duration of praise – all day

2. A Reason For Praise – Because God Transcends All Creation (4-5)

a. He’s Greater Than Anything On Earth (4a)

The Lord is high above all nations,

b. He’s Greater Than Anything Above Heaven (4b)

His glory above the heavens.

c. He’s Greater Than We Are (5)

Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high

1) God Is Greater Than We Can Grasp

Psalm 145:3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

1 Corinthians 2:11 Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God

- “Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the triune God!” (John Wesley)

2) God Is Greater Than Anything In Comparison, Thus Unequaled

Isaiah 45:21 And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me.

3) God Is Invisible, Thus Is Beyond Visible Comprehension

John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

4) God Is Infinite, Thus Beyond Our Finite World And Comprehension

1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!

5) God Is Eternal, Thus Beyond Our Comprehension Of Time And History

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arm

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth

B. Marvel At What God Does: God Chooses To Love Us (Psalm 113:6-9)

1. Though God Transcends All Creation, He Humbles Himself To Have A Relationship With His Creation (Immanence) (6; cf. Isa 57:15; 66:1-2; Jer 23:23; Col 1:17, Heb 1:3)

Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?

- God Is Both Transcendent And Immanent Simultaneously

Isaiah 57:15 "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Isaiah 66:1-2 "Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,'" Says the Lord. But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Jeremiah 23:23 Am I only a God nearby....and not a God far away?

Colossians 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Hebrews 1:3 ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- Men limit God with their worldviews
- The deist claims that God is transcendent but not immanent
- The pantheist claims that God is immanent but not transcendent
- The atheist claims that God is neither immanent or transcendent
- But the Bible claims that God is simultaneously immanent and transcendent

2. **With The Greatness Of God Intimately Close To Us, We Are Lifted Up By Him (7-9)**

⁷He raises the poor out of the dust, And lifts the needy out of the ash heap, ⁸That He may seat him with princes — With the princes of His people. ⁹He grants the barren woman a home, Like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!

a. **Because The Transcendent God Is Immanent (Near) To The Poor, We're No Longer Left In The Dust (7a)**

He raises the poor out of the dust,

b. **Because The Transcendent God Is Immanent To The Needy, He Makes Us A Prince(ss) (7b-8)**

*And lifts the needy out of the ash heap, That He may seat him with princes—
With the princes of His people.*

- God takes those in need
- "ash heap" – garbage dump
- the very poor, the castaways, the homeless lived in the ash heap
- He exalts them to a place of high rank

c. **Because The Transcendent God Is Immanent To The Rejected, He Becomes Our Reason For Joy (9)**

He grants the barren woman a home, Like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!

- It was a stigma to be barren in the Jewish culture
- They would look at a barren woman and think "What is wrong with her?", "Why is it that she is cursed?"
- There was great sorrow for not being able to have children
- God takes us from "disgrace" to "grace"

C. **Marvel At How Close God Is To Man: God Is Closer Than We Realize**

1. **God Is Immanent In His Essential Involvement With Man**

Acts 17:28 For in Him we live and move and have our being

2. **God Was Ultimately Immanent With Man When Christ Came As God Incarnate**

John 1:1-2,14 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 3:16 ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

3. **God Is Immanent In Blessing And Judging Man**

Amos 9:1-4 ¹ ... I will slay the last of them with the sword. ... ² "Though they dig into hell, from there My hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down; ³ And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from there I will search and take them; ... I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

4. **God Is Immanent Through His Involvement With Miracles**

- Creation (Gen 1)
- The universal flood (Gen 7)
- Speaking to Moses through a burning bush (Ex 3)
- 10 plagues on Egypt (Ex 7 ff)
- Various military defeats in the OT
- Elijah fed by the ravens (1 Kings 17)
- Daniel protected in the Lion's Den (Dan 6)
- Jesus feeding the 5,000 + with 5 loaves and 2 fish (Mt 14; Mk 6; Lk 9; Jn 6)

- Deist Thomas Jefferson redacted the miracles from his Bible version (*The Jefferson Bible*) because he doesn't believe that God is involved with man

- Thomas Jefferson, dismissed the miracle of the Virgin Birth by saying: "The day will come when the account of the birth of Christ as accepted in the Trinitarian churches will be classed with the fable of Minerva springing from the brain of Jupiter." (cited by N. Geisler, *Miracles And The Modern Mind : A Defense Of Biblical Miracles*, Baker, 1982, p. 8)

- If miracles didn't exist, Christ would not have been born.
- If Christ was not born, He would not have died and risen again.
- If there is no resurrection, there is no Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 ¹²Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶For if the

dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

5. **God Is Immanent In His Invitation To Us**

Matthew 11:28-29 ²⁸Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Isaiah 55:1-3 ¹Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. ²Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.

6. **God Is Immanent In His Love For Us**

Romans 8:31-35 ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ... ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?