

Search Me, O God
Psalm 139:23-24

In **Psalm 139:23-24** the man of God David prayed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

In these two verses, the man of God David expressed a three-fold request unto the Lord. First, he prayed that the Lord might search and try the character of his inner man. Second, he prayed that the Lord might reveal any wicked characteristics that might be in his inner man. Third, he prayed that the Lord might lead him in the way of “righteousness and true holiness.” Even so, with these requests David was coming before the Lord in order that they together might look back concerning what he had been and where he was at the present and might look forward concerning what he ought to be and how to progress forward. Furthermore, in these requests is implied David’s genuine burden, desire, and purpose to respond aright concerning each of the areas for which he prays. So then, in like manner we also ought to examine ourselves concerning what and where we are and to consecrate ourselves unto what and how we ought to grow.

Now, David’s three-fold request unto the Lord in **Psalm 139:23-24** serve as the conclusion for this Psalm. As such, these requests are founded upon the truths were presented earlier in the Psalm. In **Psalm 139:1-6** David recognized the truth that the Lord our God does completely know us, saying, “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” Even so, he founded his request for the Lord to search and try the character of his inner man upon this truth.

In **Psalm 139:7-12** David recognized the truth that the Lord our God is continually present with us, saying, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” Even so, he founded his request for the Lord to reveal any wicked characteristics that might be in him upon this truth.

In **Psalm 139:13-18** David recognized the truth that the Lord our God has wonderfully created us and does abundantly care for us, saying, “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also

are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.” Even so, he founded his request for the Lord to lead him in the way of righteousness upon this truth.

So then, what burden, desire, and purpose of heart do we need in order to pursue growth and transformation in our spiritual character?

I. The Need for Seriousness of Heart

In **Psalm 139:23** David expressed his request for examination, saying, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.” Herein David prayed that the Lord might search and try the character of his inner man, and thereby David implied the seriousness of his heart for spiritual growth and transformation. With this request the man of God David did not ask for some quick, surface perusal. Rather, with this request he asked for a deep, thorough examination. He did not ask simply for an examination of his external conduct. Rather, he asked for an examination of his heart and of his thoughts. Indeed, David was asking for the Lord to examine the depths and the details of his character, of who he was in his inner man. Furthermore, David asked, not only for the Lord to accomplish this search of his inner character, but also to accomplish a trial upon his inner character. He asked for the Lord both to search him and to try him. As such, David was asking for the Lord to examine the depths and details of his character and to put every characteristic of his character on trial in accord with the Lord’s own standards of righteousness, godliness, and holiness. As such, David was asking for the Lord to examine and to put on trial his every thought and his every feeling, his every attitude and his every motivation, his every interest and his every purpose, his every plan and his every decision, etc. Yes, hereby the man of God David was demonstrating a deep and driving seriousness of heart for the Lord’s reproof and correction upon his life. Yes, hereby the man of God David was demonstrating a deep and driving seriousness of heart for spiritual growth and transformation in his character. Even so, if we truly intend to pursue spiritual growth and spiritual transformation in our character, then we also need this same seriousness of heart.

II. The Need for Submission of Heart

In the opening portion of **Psalm 139:24**, David expressed his request for correction, saying, “And see if there be any wicked way in me.” Herein David prayed that the Lord might reveal any wicked characteristics that might be in his inner man, and thereby David implied the submission of his heart for spiritual growth and transformation. With the phrase, “any wicked way,” David was referring, in relation to himself, to any characteristics of selfish idolatry that was in his character, that is – to any aspect of his character wherein he arranged self as a higher priority than the Lord in his life. Furthermore, with the phrase, “any wicked way,” David was referring, in relation to the Lord, to any characteristic of sinful offense against the Lord, that is – to any aspect of his character that brought grief to the Lord’s heart. As such, David was asking for the Lord to reveal and reprove anything whatsoever at all that might be wrong in the character of his inner man. As such, David was asking for the Lord to convict and correct him of anything whatsoever at all that might be wrong in his thoughts, feelings, attitudes, motivations, interests, purposes, plans, decisions, words, and

actions. Yes, the man of God David was specifically asking for conviction and correction; and this he was doing with the specific desire to repent of those wicked characteristics and to get right with the Lord his God. This was David's submission of heart before the Lord. He was submitting himself unto the Lord's reproof and correction with the desire to respond with humble repentance. Indeed, David was submitting himself concerning anything whatsoever at all that the Lord might reprove and correct in his character. Even so, if we truly intend to pursue spiritual growth and spiritual transformation in our character, then we also need this same submission of heart.

III. The Need for Sanctification of Heart

In the closing portion of **Psalm 139:24**, David expressed his request for direction, saying, "And lead me in the way everlasting." Herein David prayed that the Lord might lead him in the way of "righteousness and true holiness," and thereby David implied the sanctification of his heart for spiritual growth and transformation. Having experience that Lord's searching and trying work upon his character, and having responded aright with repentance unto the Lord's reproofing and correcting work in his life, David then asked for the Lord to lead him in the right way, in the way that he ought to go. Indeed, David was asking for the Lord to instruct him in the way of righteousness, godliness, holiness, and uprightness concerning both his character and his conduct. In like manner, David prayed in **Psalm 5:8**, "Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face." Again in **Psalm 25:4-5** David prayed, "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." Yet again in **Psalm 143:8** David prayed, "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee." Finally, in **Psalm 143:10** David prayed, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." As such, the man of God David was asking for the Lord's direction in his life specifically in order that he might follow that direction with faithful obedience. This was David's sanctification of heart before the Lord. He was consecrating and committing himself to obey the Lord's instruction and direction. He was consecrating committing himself to follow the Lord's leading and guidance. Even so, if we truly intend to pursue spiritual growth and spiritual transformation in our character, then we also need this same sanctification of heart.