

The Omniscience of God

Omniscient means “all-knowing” and thus the omniscience of God means that God knows everything.

William Phelps taught English literature at Yale for forty-one years until his retirement in 1933. One year just before Christmas he was marking an examination paper, Phelps came across the note: "God only knows the answer to this question. Merry Xmas". Phelps returned the paper with this note: "God gets an A. You get an F. Happy New Year."

Psalms 139:1-6

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.

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

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

1) God knows us intimately

- Psalms 139:1-2 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.
 - God knows everything about us – he knows our basic routines of life – when I sit and when I rise
- However, He knows us more intimately than our daily routines. He perceives our thoughts from afar
 - He knows what we’re thinking and He knows what’s in our hearts.
- I hear a lot of people telling others not to judge them as God knows their hearts.
 - God knowing our hearts and thoughts is a daunting matter as many of us would prefer to keep our thoughts to ourselves
- There are times when we can rest in the knowledge that God sees the good in us, such as when He chose David to be king
 - 1 Samuel 16:6-7 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.” But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”
- However, God also sees the wickedness within us, which should fill us with fear and trembling.
 - Luke 16:14-15 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.
- God not only knows what’s in our heart but He also knows the motives of our hearts.
 - Proverbs 16:2 All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.
 - Sometimes our actions seem good to us and to society, but God knows why we’re doing them.

2) God knows our actions

- Psalms 139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.
- God knows our every action, seen and unseen by people
- Nothing that we do is hidden from him – positive and negative
 - Our business dealings – whether we’re doing business with integrity or corruptly
 - What we read, watch, and listen to
 - Places we go
 - People we hang out with
 - Our devotion to Him, or lack thereof
- Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

3) God knows our words

- Psalms 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.
 - God knows what we're going to say before we say it
 - God knows the effect of our words, whether they're going to be destructive or constructive
- He's going to hold us accountable for everything that we say
 - Matthew 12:36-37 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.
- What we talk about merely reveals the state of our hearts
 - Luke 6:43-45 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
 - Seeing that God knows our hearts, He knows what will come out of them
 - Sometimes we try to deceive God by empty promises and holy sounding words, but God is not deceived for He knows all things.

4) God's knowledge is eternal

- Psalms 139:5-6 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
- When we think of the words "you hem me in behind and before" we think of God being physically behind us and in front of us, but what it means is that He knows our past and He knows our future, besides Him knowing our present
 - He knows everything that we've ever done and He knows everything that we'll ever do
 - He knows our past circumstances and He knows our future circumstances – nothing takes Him by surprise
- Knowing that God knows our past, our actions, our thoughts, our words and still loves us should fill us with gratitude at His love that reaches beyond our frailties and shortcomings
 - Of course, it should also fill us with the fear of the Lord that causes us to live lives that are right with Him knowing that as much as He loves us, nothing is hidden from Him and He will uphold His holiness and justice.