

# "SEARCH ME" // Psalm 139:23-24 //

## Series: Dangerous Prayers

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### Introduction

- **Illus.** Tasha Eurich, *Insight* (2017)
  - Conclusion: about 95% of people think they are self-aware, but only 15% are
    - Several other studies confirm that we tend to over-inflate our own attractiveness, intelligence.
      - **Bias of self is powerful.**
  - We are happier creating a "cult of self"
    - Goal: External self-awareness

### Transition

- In a similar way, this morning our dangerous prayer is a prayer of **yielding to God** for:
  - What we understand about ourselves
  - What he wants to do in us

\*\*\*Read Psalm 139:23-24\*\*\*

### Roadmap

- MAIN IDEA: "**SEARCH ME**"

- Three aspects:
  - Show me who I am
  - Show me who I'm not
  - Show me how to change

### Exposition // Psalm 139:23-24

#### Context

- **David is reflecting on God's omniscience.**
  - Which essentially means that God **knows & sees everything.**
- He opens in the first 6 verses, writing:
  - *God you know when I stand up and sit down, you know my words before I speak them, and you know every path I'll take.*
    - **You see it all & know everything and because you see all and know all, I'm asking you to "show me".**

### SHOW ME WHO I AM

v.23 "search me, O God, and know my heart."

- This is an invitation for God to grant us **discovery – to see who we are.**
  - He says "search me" –
    - In other words, "**God, investigate me.** Take a closer look at my heart. You can see more than I see, you

*know everything I want, all my thoughts, so examine me."*

- And "know my heart"
  - When we think of heart, we think of it as the center of our emotions and feelings –
    - But when we see "heart" in the Bible: "center of self" **not "how I feel" but "who I am"**
- But here's the predicament we are in: *We are fascinated with ourselves, but don't always know and judge ourselves the best.*
  - We are fascinated with ourselves:
    - Look on social media
    - Personality tests
      - **We are obsessed with the idea of "who we are".**
  - But the problem is that we don't always judge ourselves the best.
    - ***We might be self-centered, but that doesn't make us self-aware.***
      - We tend to walk with a limp called confirmation bias — ***where we gravitate towards only a version of ourselves we like best.***
        - *Why do we do that?*

- **Because if we see who we truly are, we might find parts of ourselves we don't like.**
  - Highlights the good
    - Strengths, successes, etc.
  - Highlights the bad
    - *Unflattering side – heart motivations, sin struggles.*
- ***That's exactly why "search me" is a dangerous prayer.***
  - When we pray "search me", we are asking God to "show me who I am"
    - — ***Not just the good, but all of my faults, also.***
      - Here's why that matters —>
- ***We can't expect to live lives surrendered to God unless we are honest about who we are.***
  - We have to be able to have a view of self that is grounded in reality —
    - **We can understand who God is calling us to be –**
      - ***But without understanding who we are now, we won't know what it takes to move from here to there.***
- Question to you: *Are you ready to seek and ask God to show you the real you?*
  - ***To pray this dangerous prayer we have to be ready to be known.***

## SHOW ME WHO I'M NOT

### v.23 "try me and know my thoughts"

- In this aspect, we are asking God to **test what I think I know about myself** —
  - David prays: "try me"
    - In other words, "***test me and see if what I think I see about myself really holds up.***"
  - And "know my thoughts"
    - This sounds the same as asking God to "know our heart", but it's actually slightly different.
      - This word for "thoughts" is often translated as "cares" – *the things we are anxious for and long for.*
    - In other words, "***Beneath what I can see on the outside, show me where my heart truly is.***"
- **Illus.** stress tests on bridges
  - Similarly, this is a prayer of yielding to God to run a stress-test on our lives.
    - *Where we think we are without sin, we are asking God to show us what we might be missing.*
- ***This is challenging: this dangerous prayer asks God to show us where we are frauds.***

- What makes David's prayer so bold is the humility to say he might think he's better than he truly is.
  - *He's saying, "God, I don't see anything going on in my life, but I invite you to show me where I think I'm something that I'm not."*
    - ***David is inviting God to deconstruct His image of himself so that it doesn't get in the way of who God is calling him to be.***
- Here's why that's important:
  - ***In order for us to be honest before God, we have to become aware of where we might try to "cover up" our faults.***
    - *And we have to be particularly watchful because you and I are professional image-builders.*
      - ***We know how to maintain a certain image, even if isn't reflective of reality.***
- We have to be aware that we aren't doing the same thing in our lives, spiritually —
  - We are sometimes content to maintain a certain image of "righteousness" as long as it can fool ourselves and others —
    - ***never facing what's in our hearts.***

- But this dangerous prayer of “search me” teaches us a different **posture**:
  - It trains our hearts not to place stock in what we see because what we see might be deceiving.
    - ***Instead, this prayer postures us to always be asking God to do away with any image of ourselves we might be working to maintain —***
      - And to ***try us***, really show us what we might be missing.
- Question for us to consider: ***Are we willing take on this posture of asking God to show us the cracks in our lives?***

## SHOW ME HOW TO CHANGE

v.24 “And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting”

- As we ask God to reveal to us the true self – to show us *who we are* and *who we aren't* –
  - This final aspect is ***yielding to God to change in us what needs to change.***
- It says show me any “grievous way” and “lead me in the way everlasting”
  - In other words, “***God lead me in the way I know you've called me to and show me where in my life I contradict that way***” –

- *Show me where I grieve your way.*
- **This is fundamentally our disconnect, right?**
  - *Even if we come to a place of recognizing the sin that is in our lives, we still have the mountain to face of **actually changing.***
    - This has been the story of God's people for all of time. *We might know the right way in this life, but we don't always follow it.*
      - ***That's why this dangerous prayer asks God to make what we know in our heads match our lives.***
- All this begins with an honest understanding of ourselves and a recognition of our sin –
  - And recognizing who we are and where we fall short is important. **We have to start there... but we can't stay there.**
    - We have to **start with** *an honest acknowledgement of our sin, but the grace of God doesn't leave us there.*
- Because we believe in **Romans 8:29**, that by God's grace we are being **conformed into the image of Christ** –
  - ***We believe that the trajectory of God's work of grace isn't stagnation in our sin***
    - ***It's transformation to look more and more like Jesus.***

- So, when we pray this dangerous prayer of “search me”, *show me how to change* —
  - **We are posturing ourselves – *not just for God to point out our sin – we are asking Him to transform our lives.***
    - ***We are placing ourselves in line for Him to do what He said he would - to mold us into the image of Jesus.***
- But this might be a challenging prayer for us to pray sometimes for a couple of reasons:
  - **ONE, you’re not ready to give up on sin**
    - If we’re honest, we have a little bit of trouble motivating because we’d rather hold on to the sin in our lives
      - *We have trouble praying this dangerous prayer because it’s going to come at much to high a cost of what we value most.*
  - **TWO, it feels like a burden.**
    - *When we think about God showing us the sin in our life, it doesn’t sound life-giving. It sounds exhausting.*
      - *We recognize the love & grace of God, but when it actually comes to Him changing us, it’s uncomfortable.*
- And maybe that’s where you are this morning. Maybe you’re not so eager to ask God to show you the real you or show you or show you how to change ***because you know you need to and it’s not pretty***
  - You see a mountain of change that’s going to have to happen for you to be obedient to God and it’s daunting.
    - *But let me invite you to shift your perspective so that you see the good news of the gospel more clearly.*
- You’re here and you’re worn out because you might recognize there’s some junk in your life and you say:
  - You’re right. **Jesus wants me to change.**
    - *I know what he’s called me to, I know he’s asking for me to be obedient in this area of my life or be more generous, or patient, I know he’s telling me to give up on this or that. I know I need to change.*
      - Let me just say: if you’re here and you’re recognizing where you need to change, **you are almost there.** *In fact, you’re only one word off.*
- The gospel isn’t “Jesus wants me to change”
  - The gospel is **“Jesus wants to change me”**

- We don't believe in a "pick yourself up by your bootstraps gospel" —
  - *The gospel of Jesus Christ is that **the work of grace in your life is totally and completely a work of God.***
- **Ephesians 2:1-9** says you were *dead* in your trespasses and sins, but God **made you alive** with Christ.
  - **You were a rebel from God living for yourself, completely turned from God.**
    - You didn't have a "revelation" one day that you needed to change. God, in his mercy, showed you your sin, He gave you a new heart to be broken and grieves him, He gave you the faith to turn to Him, **how much more will he not carry out His work of grace in your life and bring it to completion (Phil 1:6).**
      - God didn't begin a work of grace only for you to finish what he started. **God will finish what he started.**
- We pray for God to help us see the "real us", to show us where we need to change –
  - But this isn't just so we can *know something*. **No, this dangerous prayer**

**"search me" is us posturing ourselves & yielding to God's work of grace in us.**

- So we boldly pray: **God show me how to change & lead me to do it**

## Application

- In closing, I want to invite you to do exactly that this morning.
  - ***The dangerous prayer of "search me" is a prayer of yielding to God.***
    - Maybe for you, you need to yield to God's truth about yourself.
      - ***The invitation for you is to wade into the uncomfortable territory of asking God to really show me "me"***
    - Maybe you need to yield to God in some area of your life where you need His grace to change you.
      - ***The invitation for you this morning is to make yourself ready for what God said He will do by His grace.***
- Keep in mind that ***the prayer of "search me" is a posture, not just a request.***
  - We are boldly asking God to give us the wisdom to know and see who we are –

- *But we actively place ourselves in line to live according to His commands, praying that God would "close the gap."*