

## LESSON

## 4

# God Listens to Prayer Everywhere



**P**salm 139 is one of the most majestic songs in the Bible. It acknowledges the greatness of God—His omniscience (Lesson 2) and His omnipotence (Lesson 3). It also highlights another divine characteristic that, like the others, is beyond our limited comprehension—God’s omnipresence. The psalmist asks, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? / Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (v. 7). The answer to these questions is obvious: nowhere. We cannot escape the presence of God. If we ascend on high, He is there; if we cover ourselves in the depths of the earth, He is there; and even if we could travel at the speed of light, we could not hide ourselves from Him (see vv. 8–10). He is present everywhere simultaneously.

The concept of omnipresence is difficult—if not impossible—for us to grasp. Omnipresence does not mean that God is somehow being physically

stretched throughout the universe; He is not limited by space and time as we are. God, as an infinite spiritual being, is capable of being equally present in every place without being confined to any single location (see John 4:24; Jeremiah 23:23–24).

The ever-present nature of God means that He is transcendent, separate from and above this physical, natural universe. However, the omnipresence of God also implies that He is immanent. He is, in a sense, always near (see Acts 17:27–28). Yet God longs for an even closer relationship with us, taking His universal nearness to another level—a spiritual connection. God’s promise in 2 Corinthians 6:16 expresses this desire. God says, “I will dwell in [you] and walk among [you]; / And I will be [your] God, and [you] shall be My people” (see also Leviticus 26:12). That is the level of intimacy God wants.

What about us? Do we long for a close relationship with God? The Bible encourages us to “seek the LORD while He may be found” and to “call upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6). So how do we connect with God? Prayer. This is, of course, not the only step, but it is an essential one. No relationship—human or divine—can thrive apart from communication.

Prayer is like and unlike other forms of human communication.

- Prayer is *like* other forms of communication in that God is, in a very real sense, present with us. We can speak with Him freely and directly.
- Prayer is *unlike* other forms of communication in that the presence of God is spiritual, and our communication with Him must be spiritual.

God specifically promised His people of old, “Then you will call upon Me and come and pray

to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you” (Jeremiah 29:12–14). God is not out of reach. He is near, He wants to be found, and prayer connects us to Him.

Does the omnipresence of God encourage us? Or does it intimidate us? The answer to these questions probably depends on our present relationship with Him (see Psalm 139:17–22). Regardless of our current connection—strong, weak, or non-existent—God is listening and ready to actively work in our lives—if we will open ourselves up to Him (see Philippians 2:12–13). Like the psalmist, perhaps we should start with a prayer like this: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me and know my anxious thoughts; / And see if there be any hurtful way in me, / And lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23–24; see Hebrews 4:13). This is an essential step toward experiencing the bliss of a close relationship with the omnipresent Lord.

If you are not yet a Christian, God will listen to your plea to have a relationship with Him, but He expects you to hear and obey His word to become His child (see Acts 10:1–8, 24–48; Appendix 5). Will you take the initial step today?



## Pray

Try to commit to at least five minutes of prayer daily this week. Consider beginning with these prayer suggestions.

- **Week 2, Day 5:** Thank God for always being close to you.
- **Week 2, Day 6:** Promise God that you will draw near to Him, developing a deeper spiritual connection.
- **Week 2, Day 7:** Ask God to search your heart, to reveal anything that is harming your relationship with Him, and to guide you in the right way.

## Sing

“Be with Me, Lord,” Thomas Chisholm

## Examine

Does the omnipresence of God encourage me? Why, or why not? Is there anything that is preventing me from having a close relationship with God? What can I do to draw closer to Him today?

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## Discuss

Answer the following questions. Be ready to discuss them as a group.

1. Read Acts 17:24–28. What phrases in this reading indicate that God is not confined to our universe? What limitations do we possess that make it difficult for us to grasp the omnipresence of God?

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2. Read Psalm 139. The attributes of God—omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, holiness—affect people in diverse ways. What differing attitudes and actions characterize the wicked and the righteous in Psalm 139? How does God want us to respond to Him, and what has He promised His people? (see Jeremiah 29:11–14)

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3. How might knowing that God is omnipresent affect our personal and collective prayers? (Consider the aspects of prayer that could be affected: how we pray, what we pray, where we pray, when we pray, and why we pray.)

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