

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES**

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ are confident that God knows and pursues them.

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 139

SERMON OVERVIEW

The first step in students understanding their identity in Christ is knowing that God created them, knows them, and wants a relationship with them. He is not just some distant figure who is out of touch; he's close to them and sees every detail of their lives. Students will discover that knowing and believing this truth motivates them to respond to the love of Christ by following him. In this lesson, they'll read Psalm 139 and see how the same God who created, knew, and pursued David does the same for them today. By looking at real-life examples, students will understand that their Creator knows them and wants to be in relationship with them.

OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- Who knows you better than anyone else? How does it make you feel knowing they know you so well?

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ PSALM 139

POINT 1: God created us

In this Psalm, David said that God was the one who created him. David wasn't an accident. God uniquely created him, and this led him to praise God. God also created you and everyone else you know. When God creates humans, it's not like some science experiment in a cold, sterile laboratory. It's also not like God waves a magic wand, and then you appear somewhere. No, when God creates us, he does so with intention and intimacy. David uses the phrases "knitted me together" (v. 13) and "intricately woven" (v. 15) to describe how God creates. God cares deeply about what he creates and ensures that every detail is exactly how he intends. In the words of David, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (v. 14). Praise God!

POINT 2: God knows us

God knows us better than anyone else can or ever will. Throughout Scripture, we read about a God who knows his Creation in a special and unique way. This often leaves people in awe and desiring to know him in return. In addition to creating him, God also knows David better than anyone else does. David said God knows his

every move and thought. He also points out that there is nowhere he could ever go to escape God's presence. These things are not just true about David, they are true for us as well! God created each of us and knows us each personally. He's closer to us than anyone else can ever be.

ILLUSTRATION: Melba Beals volunteered to be one of the nine Black students chosen to integrate at the then all-White Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. These brave students endured racism and prejudice, paving the way for other Black students to receive the quality of education that was previously only available to White students. Melba says one of the things that helped her get through this challenging and scary time was her belief that God was with her and would protect her. She says her grandmother would often remind her of the following phrase: "God is as close to you as your skin."¹

No matter what we're going through or where we are in life, we can be assured, just like Melba, that God is with us and knows us better than anyone else. He is truly as close to us as our skin.

POINT 3: God pursues a relationship with us

David's language throughout this Psalm is all about relationship. God isn't just his Creator who knows him really well. God is his friend who sticks close to him and will never leave him. This depth of relationship between God and David is the same type of relationship God wants with us. God created us to be in relationship with him, and he relentlessly pursues us to establish and grow that relationship. And it's a relationship that will never end—God promises to not only pursue us and establish a relationship with us but also to stick with us forever. It's truly amazing that the God who created us and knows us wants a personal relationship with us!

ILLUSTRATION: For most of us, our parents know us very well and probably better than we would like to admit. At times it may seem like they don't get us or understand us, but, in reality, they know us very well. They often know how we will act even before we do anything. They often know how we are going to respond to something before we give a response. When we're struggling and don't know what to do or say, they can often help sort through our feelings as if they know exactly how we feel. This may be an odd and frustrating experience for you as a teenager, but the reason it happens is because our parents know us so well and have known us since we were born. They have been close to us and have always pursued knowing us more and more.

Just like parents pursue relationships with their children because they love and care about them, God pursues relationships with his children out of love and care. God created you, God knows you, and God wants to be in relationship with you. These truths form the foundation of your identity in Christ. You can have confidence in who you are because of who God is.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- Come up with a phrase or something to remind you that God knows you, loves you, and is always with you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does it make you feel to know God created you, knows you, and pursues you?
- Why do some people believe God is distant and uninvolved in their lives?
- God created you, knows you, and pursues you. How does knowing that truth motivate you to worship and know him in return?
- Does God's intimate knowledge of you cause you to want to run toward him or away from him? Why?
- How does it help you to know that God knows you and is with you?
- Is it easy or hard for you to believe that God is close to you? Why?
- Knowing that God knows you and sees every detail of your life, what areas of your life do you need to change and grow?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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¹ Melba Pattillo Beals, *I Will Not Fear: My Story of a Lifetime of Building Faith Under Fire* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 36.