

The Sanctity of Life

Lesson 3: Knit Together in the Womb -- Psalm 139:13-16

There is a moment that millions of parents never forget: the first time they see their child on an ultrasound screen. The room is dim, the technician moves the wand, and suddenly there it is, a flicker of a heartbeat, the curve of a tiny spine, a hand no larger than a grain of rice opening and closing. Parents who came in nervous leave in tears. Something in us knows, without being told, that we are not looking at a cluster of cells. We are looking at someone.

Long before ultrasound, David looked into that same hidden place with the eyes of faith and saw something even more wonderful than biology. He saw God at work. "You formed my inward parts," he says to the Lord, "you knitted me together in my mother's womb." David does not describe his beginnings as an accident or a mere natural process. He describes the careful, personal craftsmanship of God, weaving him together in the dark, stitch by stitch, where no human eye could watch.

And David takes it personally. He does not say "a body was formed" but "you knitted me together." The "me" who is praising God in Psalm 139 is the same "me" who was being formed in the womb. There is no point in the psalm where David becomes a different person, no line he crosses from non-person to person. From his unformed substance onward, he is already someone God sees, someone God knows, someone whose days are already written in God's book.

This is one of the most tender and important truths in all the Bible, and it is also, in our day, one of the most contested. If God Himself is the one who forms the child in the womb, if He sees and knows that child before a single day has been lived, then unborn human life is not a possibility waiting to become valuable. It is already precious, already known, already loved by its Maker. This lesson invites us to stand with David in worship before the God who knits us together, and to let that wonder shape how we regard the smallest and most hidden among us.

Group Discussion: Why do you think the sight of an unborn child on an ultrasound moves people so deeply, even people who say they are unsure when life begins? What does that instinctive response suggest about the truth David is expressing in Psalm 139?

Personal Reflection: Have you ever truly believed that God personally formed you and has known you since before your birth? What would it mean for your sense of worth to take that truth to heart, especially in seasons when you have felt unwanted or overlooked?

Read Psalm 139:13-16

Study Questions

1. Read Psalm 139:13–14. David says, “You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.” What does it tell us about God’s involvement in the womb that He is the one doing the forming and knitting, and what does this say about the unborn child?
2. David responds to being made by God with worship: “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” When you consider that you were personally crafted by God in your mother’s womb, how does that move you to wonder, and where do you struggle to believe you are “wonderfully made”?
3. In verse 14 David says, “Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” How does the intricate making of a human life in the womb display the wisdom and care of God, and why does this point beyond a mere biological process to the work of a personal Creator?
4. Think of how the world often measures a person’s value by what they can do, produce, or contribute. How does the truth that God lovingly formed you before you could do anything at all reshape the way you see your own worth and the worth of those who can contribute little or nothing?
5. Read verse 16: “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me.” What does it mean that God saw and knew David when he was still an “unformed substance,” and that his days were already written before one of them came to be?
6. Are there people in your life, the very old, the disabled, the unborn, the dependent, whose worth you have quietly measured by their visible abilities? How does Psalm 139 call you to see them instead through the eyes of the God who formed them and wrote their days?
7. Throughout this passage David speaks of God’s personal, knowing relationship with him from the very beginning of his existence. How does this teach that the life in the womb is not a mere potential person but a human being already known and valued by God?
8. Where do you most need to receive the comfort that God has known you, intimately and lovingly, since before you were born? How might it change your sense of being seen and valued to know that there has never been a moment of your existence that was hidden from God?
9. Trace how Psalm 139:13–16 grounds the personhood and worth of the unborn child. If God forms, knows, and ordains the days of the child in the womb, what follows for how we must regard unborn human life, and why does this passage stand against the idea that an unborn child is merely a part of the mother’s body or a life not yet worth protecting?
10. Look back over Psalm 139:13–16 as a whole. Name one specific way the truth that God formed and has always known you is reshaping how you see your own life, and one concrete way you will honor the God-given worth of unborn or vulnerable life this week.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Jeremiah 1:5, before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Job 10:8–12, your hands fashioned and made me, you clothed me with skin and flesh; Isaiah 49:1, the Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named my name; Luke 1:41–44, the baby leaped in Elizabeth’s womb for joy; Galatians 1:15, God set me apart before I was born.

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