



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Culture Wars

January 19 - 25

Psalm 139:13-16

Things to Know

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Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder. Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

Sermon Recap

Every human life has inestimable value because it is formed, known, and loved by God from the womb.

In a culture that treats life as accidental, disposable, or self-defined, Psalm 139 reminds us that human life is sacred because it originates with God Himself. David reflects on God's intimate involvement in every stage of human life, especially in the hidden place of the womb.

1. God Defines Every Life (vv. 13-14)

David declares that God is the intentional Creator of every person. Life is not self-defined or culturally assigned—it is God-given. From our deepest inward parts to our physical formation, every life begins with divine purpose.

2. God Determines the Value of Life (vv. 14-15)

Because God is the Creator, human worth is intrinsic. Life is “fearfully and wonderfully made,” meaning it is sacred, marvelous, and deserving of protection. Value is not based on ability, age, health, or usefulness, but on God’s workmanship.

3. God Directs Every Life (v. 16)

God’s sovereignty does not stop at conception. Every day of every life is known, written, and directed by Him. Life is not random—it is authored.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see culture challenging or redefining the value of human life today?
2. Why is it important that God defines life rather than individuals or society?
3. How does believing that God determines your worth affect insecurity, comparison, or pride?
4. What does Psalm 139 teach us about God’s presence in places we cannot see or control?
5. How should the belief that God directs every life shape the way Christians speak about and live out the sanctity of life?

Read

Read Psalm 139:13-16 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
- What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
- Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
- What do you need help understanding about this passage?

Scripture

Psalm 139:13-16

13For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.[a]
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
Psalm 139:13-16

Living on Mission In Community

Believing that every life is fearfully and wonderfully made changes the way we live, speak, and love. To affirm the sanctity of life is not only a conviction we hold—it is a mission we live out together as the people of God.

Live with Gospel Conviction and Gospel Compassion.

We must hold firmly to the truth that life begins in the womb and is sacred to God, while also extending grace to those who carry wounds, regrets, or guilt related to abortion. Our posture is not one of condemnation, but of Christlike compassion and redemptive hope. The same God who forms life also forgives sin and restores the broken.

Be a Voice for the Vulnerable.

God repeatedly calls His people to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Living on mission means advocating for the unborn, the marginalized, and the forgotten—through prayer, support, generosity, and presence. We do not remain silent in the face of injustice; we respond with courage rooted in love.

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

Leader Resources - January 19-25

Small Group Curriculum - Psalm 139:13-16

1. Session Overview

Psalm 139:13-16 confronts one of the most pressing cultural and moral issues of our time: the value of human life. In a world that defines worth by autonomy, productivity, or preference, Scripture declares that **every human life has inestimable value because it is formed, known, and loved by God from the womb.**

David's words are not abstract theology; they are a deeply personal confession of God's intimate involvement in creation and providence. This passage reminds us that life is not accidental, disposable, or self-defined. It is authored by God and therefore sacred.

As leaders, our role this week is to **guide discussion with courage and compassion**, grounding the group in biblical truth while creating space for grace, healing, and hope. This is a sensitive topic, and many may carry personal pain. Lead with clarity, gentleness, and confidence in the gospel.

2. Opening

Prayer:

“Father, You are the giver of life. You formed us, You know us, and You love us. As we open Your Word, give us eyes to see the beauty and value of every human life. Where our hearts are hardened, soften them. Where there is hurt or shame, bring healing and grace. Lead us into truth that produces love, conviction that leads to obedience, and hope that points us to Jesus. Amen.”

Icebreaker question:

Break into groups of 2-3.

Ask:

“What is something you once saw as ordinary but later realized it was far more valuable than you once understood?”

3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Psalm 139:13-16 out loud.

4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

1. God Forms Every Life (v. 13)

God is not distant from creation—He is personally involved. David says God “formed” and “knitted” him together in the womb, language that communicates intention, care, and design. Human life begins not with chance, but with craftsmanship.

Theological Insight:

God is the Creator of both body and soul. Life begins under His authority and image-bearing purpose (Gen. 1:26–27; Jer. 1:5).

Pastoral Insight:

If God formed us, then our identity is received, not achieved. This confronts both cultural autonomy and personal insecurity.

2. God Determines the Value of Life (vv. 14–15)

David responds to God’s creative work with worship. To be “fearfully and wonderfully made” means human life is sacred and marvelous. Value is intrinsic—not dependent on stage of development, health, ability, or circumstance.

Theological Insight:

Human dignity flows from the image of God, not from cultural approval or usefulness.

Pastoral Insight:

Comparison, shame, and self-hatred lose their power when we understand that worth is given by God, not measured by others.

3. God Directs Every Life (v. 16)

Before David lived a single day, God already knew them all. Life is not random or meaningless—it is authored by God with purpose and direction.

Theological Insight:

God's sovereignty extends beyond creation to providence. Every life has a God-written story.

Pastoral Insight:

This truth brings comfort in uncertainty and courage in obedience. We can trust God even when the future feels unclear.

5. Discussion Questions

1. How does Psalm 139 challenge the way culture defines personhood and value?
2. Why is it dangerous for society—not God—to decide which lives matter?
3. How should this passage shape the way Christians speak about abortion and life issues?
4. What does it look like to hold truth and compassion together in conversations about the sanctity of life?
5. What is one way God may be calling you to live more intentionally in light of this passage?

6. Application

Psalm 139:13–16 calls us to live as people who protect life, speak truth, and extend grace. The sanctity of life is not merely a belief to defend, but a mission to live out. As followers of Jesus, we are called to value life at every stage and to proclaim both the worth of life and the hope of redemption found in Christ.

Encourage the group to consider how God may be calling them to respond personally—through prayer, advocacy, generosity, support, or gospel-centered conversations.

7. Closing Reflection and Prayer

Reflection:

Where have I allowed culture, fear, or silence to shape my view of life more than God's Word? How is God calling me to live as light in this area?

Prayer:

"Father, thank You for forming us and giving our lives meaning and value. Help us to be people who honor life, speak truth with love, and reflect the heart of Jesus in a broken world. Where

there is pain, bring healing. Where there is confusion, bring clarity. Use us to be a voice for the vulnerable and a witness to Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

8. Memory Verse

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” – Psalm 139:14

9. Leader Notes

- Emphasize that the sanctity of life is a gospel issue, not merely a political one.
- Be mindful that some participants may have experienced abortion personally—lead with sensitivity and grace.
- Keep the focus on biblical truth, redemptive hope, and practical obedience, not debate.
- Encourage the group to leave with conviction that leads to love, not guilt and fear.

