

# Psalms 139:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

## Analysis

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**How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!** David's response to divine omniscience (vv. 1-6) and creative providence (vv. 13-16) is wonder, not terror. Precious (רָקָר, yaqar) means costly, weighty, honored—God's thoughts toward His people have infinite value. **Thoughts** (רָעִים, re'im) can mean purposes, plans, or intentions—not mere abstract ideas but active divine concern.

**How great is the sum of them** (רָשֵׁיָהֶם, rasheihem) literally means 'their heads' or chief parts—even counting only the main categories of God's thoughts would be overwhelming. This verse bridges the psalm's first half (God's knowledge) with the intensely personal application: God's omniscience is not cold surveillance but caring attentiveness. Every thought of God toward you is precious, purposeful, and innumerable.

## Historical Context

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The Hebrew concept of God's 'thoughts' differs from Greek philosophical abstraction—these are covenant thoughts, relational intentions. Jeremiah 29:11 echoes this: 'I know the thoughts that I think toward you.' For David, fleeing enemies (possibly Absalom or Saul), this was profound comfort.

## Related Passages

## James 2:17 — Faith and works

## **Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith**

# Study Questions

1. How does knowing that God's thoughts toward you are 'precious' rather than condemning change your view of His omniscience?
  2. In what specific area of your life do you need to trust that God's innumerable thoughts toward you are good and purposeful?
  3. How should the preciousness of God's thoughts toward you shape how you think about others?

## Interlinear Text

עַצְמוֹ מֵה אֵלֶיךָ רְאֵת יְהִי אֶל מִתְהִלָּה בְּזָרְךָ וְאֶל מִתְהִלָּה

רָאשִׁים  
is the sum  
H7218

## Additional Cross-References

**Psalms 40:5** (References God): Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

**Jeremiah 29:11** (Parallel theme): For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

**Psalms 36:7** (References God): How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

**Psalms 92:5** (Parallel theme): O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

**Psalms 31:19** (Parallel theme): Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

**Proverbs 8:31** (Parallel theme): Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

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