



Face the Issue:

God loves us.

That seems so simple to say but many have such a hard time grasping that simple fact. Why is that? Part of it is that in today's world, very few have experienced true loving attention. We, as a society, have come to understand that there is a catch to everything. If someone is being nice you, chances are they want something. We do not know how to react to or even accept the fact that someone may truly love us just because we exist.

Some of you may be thinking, "My parents loved me that way." If they did, you were truly blessed. The sad fact is that many in today's society haven't experienced that. Parents are busy people. Their lives are full of anxieties about work and money and relationships. They live with a great deal of stress. They work long hours. They are tired. Sometimes they are depressed. They may have learned from their own childhoods not to talk and not to feel. So, they may not be very good at helping their children talk and feel, and can end up communicating a lack of interest in their children.

People who experienced their parents as inattentive often come to view God as inattentive as well. God may seem to be too busy with other matters to care or to listen or to even know that they exist. As a result, it may be very difficult for them to imagine that God could be intimately attentive to their daily joys and struggles of life. That He truly loves them. Maybe, you feel that way, too.

Think of experiences you have had with someone being lovingly attentive to you. What were those experiences like for you?

Reflect on the thought that God is lovingly attentive to you at all times. What response do you have to this thought about God?

Into the Word:

Read Psalm 139

Make a list of all the verbs used in verses 1-8 to describe God's activities.

Now look over your list. What does all this active involvement in our lives communicate about God's character?

What is the psalmist's response to God's attentiveness (vv. 6, 17-18)?

Looking again at your list of verbs, what is your response to these descriptions of God's active, loving involvement and attention in your life?

How does this image of God-Who-is-attentive contrast with the image of an inattentive God?

How might it affect you on a daily basis to trust that God pays loving attention to every detail of your life?

Apply The Word

Write your own brief psalm of response to God based on what you've learned and experienced in this study. You might start with the words "Oh Lord, You know me, You see me, You are with me when . . ."

At the end of each day this week, review the day, asking God to bring to your awareness the many ways that He was lovingly attending to you throughout the day.