

## Welcome to the Fall semester at Concordia!

**Enough** is our Concordia University Texas theme for the 2023-2024 academic year.

As you begin this journey, we want to begin by giving you a life hack (ok, it's more of a tip): It is impossible for humans to read minds. We never know what is going on inside of someone's head. You can't read your professor, roommate, spouse, or boss' mind. What they are thinking is not put on display for us to immediately understand. However, by observing facial expression, body language, and tone, we usually can piece together a basic sum of what someone else might be thinking. And if you really know someone well—like a sibling, best friend, or a parent—it becomes easier to decipher the signs of their thought process.

Along with knowing what someone might be thinking, sometimes over time we can see the character of someone's heart.

*Who is the kindest person you know?  
Who is the most genuine person you know?  
How do you know they're kind and genuine?*

The answer lies within the fruit they bear that you have watched over the course of knowing them. What if this person does something that is opposite to their normal actions? Do you immediately rebuke them and assign them as "bad?" If you answer yes, congratulations, you're human. If your answer is no, then you might know where this next point is going.

### READ

*Psalms 139:1-14* and answer these questions:

- 1.** Do you truly believe you are loved by God? How does that make you feel?
- 2.** Think about someone who knows you best. How does that contrast to how God thinks of you?
- 3.** How can you apply what God says about you? How do you think about yourself in a more truthful way?

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God perfectly knows our hearts. He knows and understands your mind and the way it works. He created it. He created you. Your personality, your interests, your passions and your little quirks that others might not fully get—He divinely orchestrated into your life. He knows what you think before a thought even begins to surface and knows what you will say before you start to form a sentence (Psalm 139:4). He intricately wove you together and knew exactly the plans he has for you before you took your first breath (Psalm 139:13). He made you fearfully and wonderfully (Psalm 139:14) with the kind of excitement and passion one gets when creating something of utmost interest. And, despite the evil thoughts that may creep into our mind and the missteps we take leaning on our own power, He still absolutely adores us. We are even becoming more and more into the likeness of His Son Jesus who died in our place in humility and divine grace. God’s love is unshakable and never-ending (Psalm 136).

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. <sup>11</sup> If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. <sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>4</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.

- Psalms 139:1-6

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**PRACTICE:**

I want to invite you to do a practice that the early church did every day as they were learning to follow Jesus, make the sign of the cross on yourself to remind you God’s shield of faith is upon your created body, mind, spirit, and soul. Take a few fingers and touch your forehead, and then your belly button, and then your right shoulder, and then your left shoulder. You just made a cross. While you make the sign of the cross, say, “God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, has created me, me!”

**DIG DEEPER**

(now, later, alone, in a group):

-  **1.** Read over Psalm 139:1-14 again. Find what sticks out to you the most and really meditate on this.
-  **2.** Take a look at Psalm 139:14. What about you and/or your life can you thank God for
-  **3.** Think about the fact that God created you with an intended purpose (Romans 8:28). How can this truth help you live a more meaningful life this semester?

**PRAYER:**

*Lord, help us this semester in moments of weakness and struggle to know that your grace is more than enough for us. We are created by you, brought into a right-relationship by grace through faith, given a family of believers, and sent on mission with you to share the good news. Thank you for placing me at Concordia, and that is enough for me. In Jesus name, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen. In the next few minutes (if possible) give somebody a high five and let them know they are loved.*