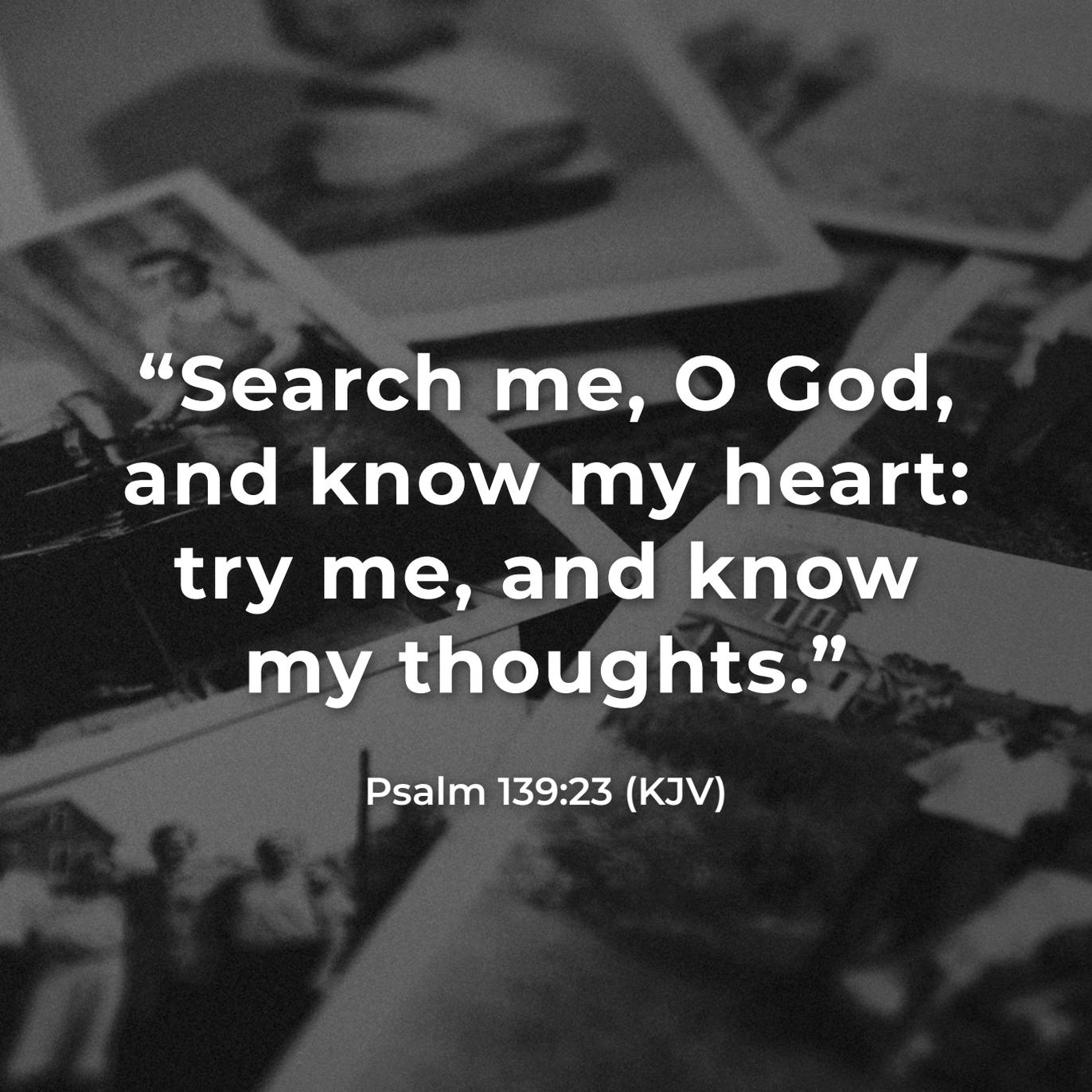


5 STEPS TOWARDS ALLOWING YOURSELF TO FEEL



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**“Search me, O God,
and know my heart:
try me, and know
my thoughts.”**

Psalm 139:23 (KJV)

1.

**Name
your
feelings
clearly.**

When you become aware of a feeling, pause. You may first notice the general tone of the emotion (either negative or positive). For example, you are feeling vaguely stressed or uncomfortable. See if you can gently name the specific emotion present without judgment (e.g. sad, afraid, ashamed, joyful, excited, delighted).

2.

**Allow
the
feelings/
sensations
in your
body.**

See if you can mindfully observe the physical sensations without judgment – how do you directly sense the feeling in your body? David describes this when he writes at one point, *“All my insides are on fire, my body is a wreck.”* - Psalm 38 (MSG)

3.

Explore what's at the heart of your feelings.

This is where we redirect our attention to investigating what is driving the emotion. Maybe you are facing a loss or something threatening in the future or having an experience of being unseen or excluded. At this point we can often default to blaming ourselves or others, but this is an avoidance move. See if you can *feel the pain without blame.*

4.

Pray your honest feelings back to God without explanations, and then pause.

You will be tempted to explain your negative feelings away but just remain still in His presence for a minute. Accept His unconditional love for you, just as you are.

5.

**Pray
before God,
bringing
each of
those
feelings
under
submission
to his
Lordship.**

This is where you choose not to allow yourself to be directed by the feelings you could be honest about, but instead choose your direction in accordance with God's will. Jesus did this when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane in Luke 22:42.



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