

Wired for Awe

In Living Color, Part 12

Selected Scripture

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

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Human beings are wired for awe. Studies have shown that when humans are in awe of something, they lose sight of themselves. They get lost in the moment. Psalm 19:1 says that “the heavens are showcasing the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.” When we see all that God has created in and around us, we can only stop and stand in awe of who He is, forgetting ourselves and focusing solely on Him.

Discussion Points:

We all have moments where we have stood in awe of something.

- What are some of those moments or parts of creation that have made you stand in awe?
- What are some elements of creation that show us the awe and wonder of God?
- What do those parts of creation or moments in your life tell you about the attributes God?

The culture we live in encourages us to focus on ourselves and be the best “us” we can be. It’s easy to get caught up in “me, me, me” and lose sight of what is really important.

- What are some ways that culture encourages self over others?
- How does that go against the example of Jesus?
- Does a self-centered mindset hurting or helping our culture? Why or why not?

Scripture says that Christ came in humility to serve, not to be served. We might lose ourselves when we are standing in awe of something. But shouldn’t we be losing ourselves because we are searching for ways to serve?

- What is more awe-inspiring: what your family has accomplished in a day or how your family served that day?
- In what ways can we influence our culture by being selfless, humble, gracious, forgiving. What simple acts can show others that there is something different about us?

We should be overflowing with thankfulness as we are serving those around us. In what ways can you be thankful today?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Gospel Connection:

God created us to be in awe of Him. He created us and also made a way to save us – through Jesus. It is because of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection that we can spend eternity with God. Through Him, we have eternal life. It's humbling to think that the God we serve spoke everything into existence, yet He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. Creation is beautiful and causes us to stand in awe, and so should the Gospel.

Practical Implications:

Think: Do you stand in awe of God? Do you give thanks to Him for everything? Do you seek to serve instead of be served?

Pray: Ask God to help you serve others well. Ask Him to give you a thankful heart. Ask Him to help you get your focus off yourself and onto Him.

Do: Be thankful that God created you. Serve others this week. Be thankful in every situation. Glorify God.

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In my research these past few weeks for this series of messages the feeling of awe happens to be experienced by everyone.

Researchers who study the brain are discovering that Christians and atheists alike are swept into a speechless sense of awe at the sight of a beautiful sunset, listening to soaring orchestral music, standing near a thundering waterfall; looking at snow-peaked mountains; staring into dark skies packed with stars.

Sights like these inspire a sense of awe in everyone – which happens to be a part of God’s plan.

One brain study recently published their results that they could predict a consistent sense of awe by showing everyone – regardless of religious belief or unbelief – the same sights and sounds.

Everyone experiences awe – something Webster defines as – quote – “an emotion which includes veneration and wonder.”

And get this – one article revealed – this sacred sense of veneration in the face of awe inspiring sights and sounds is something everyone is now forced to embrace as reality. Unlike animals, the human being is wired for this sense of awe and wonder. Neuroscientists can now even detect its effects in the brain.

Published just a few months ago, at the latest meeting of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping, research is revealing that when a person experiences a sense of awe, their brain shuts down other areas that relate to sense of self – which is why, they explained – we lose a sense of ourselves in moments of awe.¹

In other words, when you’re standing there at some incredibly beautiful scene or at the base of a waterfall, you forget about yourself and you are swept up in the awareness of something – or Someone – far greater than you. All of this

research is simply catching up to ancient truths revealed by God’s Spirit.

As I mentioned earlier, the Psalmist David wrote it this way: ***they who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe (awe – there’s that word) they stand in awe of Your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, You call forth songs of joy (Psalm 65:8)***

One paraphrase renders it: *All of your wonders are on display in nature’s trophy room; dawn and dusk take turns calling to us, “Come and worship.”*

And guess what happens when you worship – when you stand in awe of His wonders? You lose your focus on self and get lost in a sense of God’s greatness and majesty and creative glory.

So look up . . . and look around . . . David writes, ***The heavens are showcasing the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands (Psalm 19:1).***

As we’ve studied this subject together now for several weeks – and we have a few more weeks to go – it’s fascinating to me that the more we discover about our world and universe around us, the more it substantiates the creative glory of God.

David uses a word later on in Psalm 19 that has intrigued me for several years. If you have your Bibles, turn to Psalm 19 and write into the margin next to verse 4 a note.

David is referring to the stars and the planets in the universe, and he writes in verse 4 of Psalm 19 – David writes that ***Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:4).***

The word translated ***line*** – their line has gone out through all the earth – the word line can be translated sound or chord – a reference to a musical chord. You might write into the margin the words musical chord.

The Greek translation of the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, uses the Greek word here that refers to **a musical note – or a musical sound.**

In other words, David is saying, God's creation is singing songs – music that can be heard throughout the universe.

Now what David didn't know back then was that one day there would be an entire field of science known as bioacoustics which would verify his inspired declaration.

Bioacoustics and the data collected by orbiting satellites reveal that in space and even throughout this planet, we are literally surrounded by billions of musical notes.

One article put it this way; a single hydrogen atom emits 100 frequencies – it is more musical than a piano which only has 88 frequencies; undulations of light waves are making music; the electron shell of the carbon atom produces the same musical scale as a Gregorian chant; the smallest plants around us are emitting tones; even earthworms are beating out percussion sounds; meadowlarks have a musical range of 37 octaves; even ordinary flies hovering over meadows are buzzing in harmony; massive planets are emitting musical notes and staccato beating sounds.

We are surrounded by the music of creation. Imagine, one day, the Lord might allow us to hear the music of orbiting stars and spinning planets which are actually making harmony with other heavenly bodies – and as they change locations in their orbits, the key changes and the music from a billions stars creates a spectacular crescendo of musical harmony and glorious song.

And what is their music all about? David tells us – The heavens are telling – they are broadcasting – they are making music to the glory of God.

Here's where you lose your sense of self – and get lost in the amazing splendor and worship of almighty God.

One of the distinguishing marks of the believer that sets us apart from the unbeliever is that all of this leads us to thank the Lord for what He created.

Think of it this way: if an atheist and a believer are watching the same incredibly beautiful sunset – both are filled with a sense of awe – the only difference is, the atheist has no one to thank!

But it's actually worse than that – **Romans 1:21** says that the unbeliever actually, intuitively knows better – that there must be a Creator – but he suppresses the truth of God's creation and, Paul writes in that text, **they refuse to honor God or give Him thanks!**

Just yesterday, a news article popped up on my iPhone news app – this is from a secular news source which has reported on what it's calling one of the most provocative studies of the year – a scientific team made up of individuals from the United States and Switzerland have made an astonishing discovery that all humans alive today are – and I'm quoting – all humans alive today are the offspring of a common mother and father.

Based on the study of mitochondrial DNA and samplings from millions of DNA, they have also concluded that ninety percent of all animal species alive today come from parents that all began giving birth at roughly the same time, less than 250,000 years ago. Sounds like we're getting closer to Genesis chapter 1.

This scientific team from the Rockefeller University and the University of Basel reached this conclusion after analyzing the DNA "bar codes" of five million animals from 100,000 different species.

One of the scientists said on record, "This conclusion is very surprising and I fought against it as hard as I could."ⁱⁱ I fought against it . . . as hard as I could . . . why?

Because of the implications of a much younger population of humans and animals; the evidence that we all came from the same original parents . . . evidence that is now going to have to be somehow reinterpreted and – may I suggest – suppressed.

But not for us! We have Someone to thank! Our Creator God.

- not only created us, but became one of us in order to redeem us;
- Our Creator God not only instilled in us a moral law, but came to die for us and pay the penalty for our having broken the law;
- He not only spoke the universe into existence, but speaks mercy and forgiveness and grace into our hearts;
- Our Creator God not only created life, but came to give His life so that we could have eternal life with Him.

And so, on this Thanksgiving Weekend, we've come today – because we have Somebody to thank . . . our Lord Jesus . . . for His cross and His death and His sacrifice for our sin and our guilt and our salvation.

In fact, we've come today to essentially forget about ourselves . . . and to stand in awe of Him and remember Him – and focus on Him – and thank Him for all that He is.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 11/25//2018 by Stephen Davey.

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i Avery Foleyon, *Wired for Awe*, March 1, 2018

ii Michael Guillen, *Did A Mysterious Event Precede Adam and Eve?* Fox News, 11/24/2018