

Day 2: Redefining Awesome

The Passage: Psalm 68

The Focus: *“Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens. You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!” (Psalm 68:34, 35 NIV)*

The Meditation: **“You, God, are awesome. . . . You give us power and strength.”**

Empowering Truths: “Our God is awful.” It is fascinating how the meaning of words can dramatically change over time. “Nice” used to mean “foolish or silly,” while “silly” originally meant “blessed.” Our “awful” God used to mean “worthy of awe.” No longer. I don’t suggest you teach your kids to call God “awful.”

One word that means basically the same but became impotent through dilution of meaning is “awesome.” It used to be used for sites like the Grand Canyon, Milky Way, and the northern lights. Today it’s used for pizza, lattes, your new shoes, or your favorite hamburger.

God’s picture should be in your dictionary beside the word “awesome.” “Awesome” is what Moses saw on Mt. Sinai, what Elijah saw when he was whisked away, what Isaiah saw in the temple, or what Peter saw on the Mount of Transfiguration.

We will probably never see the awesomeness of God in one of those ways, but we can encounter the awesomeness of God through faith. And it is essential that we do so. Why? Because the revelation of his awesomeness opens us up for the impartation of his power.

To “walk in the fear of the Lord” is a daily recognition of the grandeur, majesty, wisdom, glory, authority, and greatness of our God. It is to be freshly overwhelmed by God’s beauty and his “otherness”—his divinity contrasted to our humanity.

As Psalm 68:34–35 declares, his “power is in the heavens” beyond our comprehension. He breathed out trillions of stars and named each one as they formed. He is the star-breathing God. Yet this awesome God “gives power and strength to his people.”

The early church lived with a sense of awe of God. They probably didn’t know the theological words “transcendent” (infinitely above us as humans) or “immanence” (personally with us). Yet this is the powerful balance in which they walked. He wasn’t their “good buddy in the sky,” yet he was “the friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

We think and live differently when we are overwhelmed by his awesomeness and amazed by his nearness. May these 21 Days expand the size of God in our minds.

Power Truth: Living in daily awe of God positions us for the daily power of God.

Our Prayer: *Lord, you define awesome. You are infinitely above who I can imagine you to be. Forgive me when I do not revere you as such. Forgive me when I diminish you due to unbelief, self-centeredness, familiarity, or religion. Open my eyes daily to your mind-blowing majesty and your heartwarming personalness.*