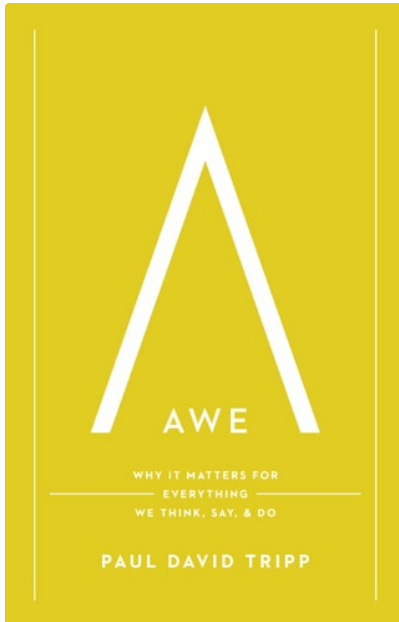


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# Awe

Why It Matters for Everything We Think, Say, and Do

by Paul David Tripp | 2015 | 208 pages

4.21 ★★★★★ 2k+ ratings

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## Key Takeaways

### 1. Awe is Humanity's Universal Pursuit

*It's something that every person who has ever taken a breath does.*

**Hardwired for wonder.** Every human being, regardless of background, age, or belief, is inherently wired for awe. This innate desire drives us to seek out experiences and things that inspire wonder and amazement. From a child marveling at snow to an adult pursuing a dream car, the quest for awe is a constant, underlying motivation.

**Awe-seeking behavior.** This pursuit manifests in various ways:

- Attending concerts, museums, and sporting events
- Seeking out beautiful places and experiences
- Collecting possessions and pursuing achievements
- Forming relationships and seeking acceptance
- Even in negative emotions like anger and bitterness, which often stem from thwarted desires for awe.

**Awe as a driving force.** This universal pursuit of awe is not merely a superficial desire; it is a fundamental aspect of our humanity. It shapes our thoughts, desires, choices, and actions, often without our conscious awareness. Understanding this innate drive is crucial for understanding human behavior.

## **2. The War for Awe Rages in Every Heart**

*Between the “already” of the sin of Adam and Eve and the “not yet” of the final redemption, a war wages over who or what will rule and control the awe capacity that God has established within the heart of every human being.*

**Awe gone wrong.** The biblical narrative reveals a constant struggle for the awe of our hearts. From the moment of the Fall, humanity has been prone to misdirecting its awe, replacing the Creator with created things, and ultimately, with self. This "awe wrongedness" (AWN) is the root of sin and rebellion.

**Biblical examples of AWN:**

- Adam and Eve's desire to be like God
- Cain's jealous rage and murder of Abel
- The Israelites' worship of the golden calf
- Nebuchadnezzar's self-glorification and idol worship
- The disciples' arguments over who was greatest

**The battle for our hearts.** This war for awe is not an external conflict but an internal struggle that rages within each of us. It is a battle between the awe of God and the awe of self, and it shapes our thoughts, desires, and actions. Recognizing this battle is essential for understanding the human condition.

### **3. Ministry's Core is Inspiring Awe of**

*One generation shall commend your works to another.*

**Awe as the central goal.** The core purpose of all ministry, whether it's preaching, teaching, parenting, or personal discipleship, is to inspire awe of God in the hearts of others. Every ministry activity should aim to reveal the awesome glory of God and connect it to the everyday experiences of people.

**Awe-focused ministry:**

- Worship services that inspire wonder and reverence
- Exegesis that reveals the glory of God in Scripture
- Theological instruction that deepens our understanding of God's greatness
- Discipleship that cultivates a heart of worship

**Protecting ministry from self.** A functional, heart-directed awe of God is the only thing that can protect ministry leaders from the dangers of pride, control, and self-righteousness. When awe of God is replaced by awe of self, ministry becomes a platform for personal glory rather than a means of glorifying God.

## **4. Misplaced Awe Leads to Dissatisfaction**

**The futility of horizontal awe.** When we seek awe in created things rather than the Creator, we are destined for disappointment. Nothing in the physical world can provide the lasting peace, rest, and satisfaction that our souls crave. This misplaced awe leads to a cycle of dissatisfaction and a constant search for something more.

**Symptoms of misplaced awe:**

- Constant complaining and grumbling
- Envy and jealousy of others
- Obsessive pursuit of material possessions
- Addiction to pleasure and fleeting experiences
- A deep sense of emptiness and meaninglessness

**The need for vertical awe.** True and lasting satisfaction can only be found in the awe of God. When our hearts are captured by his glory, we are freed from the endless cycle of horizontal desires and find rest and contentment in him.

## **5. Awe Amnesia Blinds Us to God's Glory**

*It's the sad state of yawning in the face of glory.*

**The gloryscope of creation.** God designed the world to be a "gloryscope," a tool that points us to his glory and magnifies his attributes. Every aspect

**The mnemonic nature of creation.** God has also designed the physical world to be mnemonic, a constant reminder of his presence, power, and character. The rising sun, the changing seasons, and the beauty of nature are all meant to help us remember the One who created them.

**The blindness of sin.** However, sin has blinded our eyes and dulled our senses, causing us to look at the world around us and miss God. We have become "awe amnesiacs," forgetting the glory of the Creator and seeking satisfaction in the created world. This blindness leads to self-centeredness, discontent, and relational dysfunction.

## 6. Transgression is Rooted in Awe Replacement

*When awe of anything but God kidnaps and controls your heart, you simply will not stay inside God's boundaries.*

**Disobedience as a personal offense.** Transgression is not merely a violation of abstract rules; it is a personal offense against God. It is a breaking of relationship, a turning away from the One who has loved and redeemed us. Disobedience is rooted in a heart that has replaced awe of God with awe of something else.

**The lure of self-sovereignty.** The temptation to disobey God often involves the promise of self-sovereignty, the idea that we can be like God, knowing

**Awe as the key to obedience.** True obedience is not a matter of begrudging duty but a joyful response to the awe of God. When our hearts are captured by his glory, we willingly and joyfully submit to his will and live within his boundaries.

## 7. Complaint Reveals a Heart Lacking Awe

*If praise is celebrating God's awesome glory, then complaint is antipraise.*

**Complaint as a theological issue.** Complaint is not merely a matter of expressing dissatisfaction; it is a deeply theological issue that reveals a lack of awe for God. When we complain about our circumstances, we are ultimately questioning God's goodness, power, and control.

### **The root of complaint:**

- Self-centeredness and entitlement
- A belief that we deserve better than what we have
- A failure to recognize God's sovereignty and wisdom
- A lack of gratitude for his blessings

**Awe as the antidote to complaint.** When our hearts are filled with awe of God, we are less likely to complain about our circumstances. We will be

## 8. Materialism is a Quest for Awe in the Wrong Place

*We cannot control our lust for things because our capacity for awe has been kidnapped.*

**The allure of material things.** Materialism is not simply a love of possessions; it is a misguided attempt to find life and satisfaction in the created world. We are drawn to material things because we mistakenly believe they can provide the meaning, purpose, and joy that our souls crave.

**The emptiness of material pursuits.** However, material things can never truly satisfy our deepest longings. They offer only temporary pleasure and fleeting fulfillment, leaving us constantly searching for something more. This endless pursuit of material possessions leads to debt, dissatisfaction, and a neglect of spiritual and relational priorities.

**The proper place of material things.** Material things are not inherently evil; they are meant to be used for our sustenance, pleasure, and remembrance of God. However, when they become the object of our awe, they become idols that enslave us and rob us of true joy.

## 9. Spiritual Growth is the Recapture of Awe



*Spiritual growth is about recapturing your awe.*

**Sanctification as a process of awe reclamation.** Spiritual growth is not merely about acquiring knowledge or following rules; it is about the ongoing process of having our hearts captured by the awe of God. It is a lifelong journey of being transformed from self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

**The role of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit works within us to reclaim our hearts for God, freeing us from the bondage of self-worship and enabling us to live for his glory. This process involves a constant battle against the desires of the flesh and a growing desire for the things of God.

**The fruit of a heart captured by awe:**

- Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control
- A life that is increasingly shaped by the character of Christ
- A heart that is more and more devoted to God and his kingdom

## **10. Awe of God Shapes a Biblical Worldview**

*If awe of God is not at the center of your worldview, you will look at nothing properly.*

**The lens of awe.** Our worldview is the lens through which we interpret and understand the world around us. A biblical worldview is one that places God at the center, recognizing his awesome glory and sovereignty over all things.

**The danger of a God-absent worldview.** When we fail to see the world through the lens of God's glory, we are prone to misinterpret our circumstances, misjudge others, and misdirect our lives. We become self-centered, anxious, and easily discouraged.

**The comfort of a God-centered worldview.** A worldview shaped by the awe of God provides true and lasting comfort, hope, and courage. It enables us to see our lives in the context of God's grand plan and to trust in his goodness and faithfulness, even in the midst of suffering and difficulty.

## 11. The Church is a Community of Awe

*The church (by which I mean the people, not the institution) doesn't first have a people-mobilization problem or a people-training problem. The church of Jesus Christ has an awe problem.*

**The church as a body of believers.** The church is not merely a building or an institution; it is a community of believers who are united by their shared awe of God. It is a place where we come together to worship, learn, and

**The problem of consumerism.** Many Christians treat the church as a place to attend rather than a community to belong to. They shop for the best programs, the most entertaining services, and the most convenient locations, rather than committing themselves to the work of the kingdom.

**The call to ministry.** Every believer is called to be an active participant in the life of the church, using their gifts and talents to serve others and build up the body of Christ. This requires a commitment to relationships, a willingness to learn, and a heart that is captured by the awe of God.

## 12. Parenting is About Cultivating Awe of God

*Your job is to be used of God to help your children move from natural rebels against any authority but their own to those who are in awe of God's authority.*

**The heart of parenting.** The goal of parenting is not merely to produce well-behaved children; it is to cultivate hearts that are captured by the awe of God. This requires more than just rules and discipline; it requires a consistent effort to point our children to the glory of God in all things.

**The lies of autonomy and self-sufficiency.** Children are naturally prone to the lies of autonomy and self-sufficiency, believing that they can live life on their own terms and that they do not need God or anyone else. These lies

**Parents as ambassadors of God's authority.** Parents are called to be ambassadors of God's authority, representing his character and love in the lives of their children. This requires a commitment to living in submission to God's will and a willingness to model his grace and mercy.

*Last updated: January 29, 2025*

## Review Summary

★★★★☆ 4.21 out of 5

Average of 2k+ ratings from Goodreads and Amazon.

**Awe** by Paul David Tripp received mixed reviews. Many readers found it insightful and transformative, praising its focus on redirecting awe towards God. They appreciated Tripp's application to various life aspects and his transparent writing style. However, some critics found the book repetitive, lacking practical steps for cultivating awe, and overly simplistic in attributing all problems to misplaced awe. Despite these criticisms, most readers agreed that the core message was valuable, even if the delivery could have been more concise.

## About the Author

Paul David Tripp is an author, pastor, and speaker born in 1950 in

Westminster Theological Seminary. Tripp has served in various pastoral roles, including church planting and counseling. He founded Paul Tripp Ministries in 2006, focusing on connecting Christ's transformative power to everyday life. A prolific writer, Tripp has authored numerous books on Christian living. He resides in Philadelphia with his wife Luella, where he continues his ministry work and pursues painting as a hobby.

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