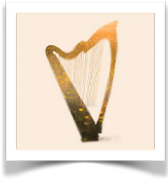


Study Guide for *Dangerous Songs: The Psalms and a Gloriously Disrupted Life*



Awe

Chapter 7

Pages 129-144

First Words of Awe

- “...most of our society values solid facts, efficiency, and smarts— things of no use in our experience of wonder and awe.” How does one live in awe? Is it possible to sustain it all the time?
- The author has suggested that both joy and awe may be connected to the experience of discovering one’s life by losing track of self-consciousness (Matthew 10:39). What do you think of that? When are moments you consistently do not think about your needs, your appearance, or your unique, personal quirks?

The Awe of Holy Presence

- Read Psalm 23. Then read this section. Then read Psalm 23 again. What does it mean to you today that the spotlight center is “You are with me?”

Holy Overwhelm

- Listen to ***I Am Ever Mindful*** (Psalm 16). Sing along as you desire.
- The words across page 131 could be adapted to use as a group meditation. Here’s one way to do it: Learn the chant from the song. Each person in your circle takes a turn sharing a time or place they desire to know God’s presence. The group responds by singing the chant.

Calling For Ceasefire

- What current movement in politics or war could be engaged in prayer using Psalm 46?

Enthralled with Creation

- What is your relationship to the sky? Are you more a “microscope” person or “telescope” person? That is, do you tend to see the forest or the trees?
- Listen to ***If We All Belong to God*** (Psalm 8). Discuss what you notice.

- As part of creation, are you most attracted to earth, sky, or sea right now? What gift does it bring you?

A Different Way of Moving Through the World

- Listen to **The Earth is Full** (Psalm 33) or **watch the lyric video**. What words or phrases are important to you?

Living in a State of Awe

- Listen to **The Earth Has Yielded its Harvest** (Psalm 67). Reflect and discuss.
- Describe your relationship to food. Everyone on earth needs it to live, so there's potential for food issues to bring us together.

The Beauty of Universal Order

- What is your favorite flavor— either food or beverage?
- Listen to **It's a New Day** (Psalm 104). How would life feel if we understood that everything good emanates from God "from whom all blessings flow?"
- Listen to **Yachal** (Psalm 147) or **watch the lyric video**. Discuss the specific images in the verses.

Fear and Submission in the Psalms

- Have you ever felt afraid of God? Where did that fear come from? What theology is behind the idea of a frightening God?
- Listen to **Glory to You in the Storm** (Psalm 29). In the psalm, the psalmists imagine God as a powerful king of the world with the power to destroy. How is this a helpful or not helpful model of God for the 21st century?

Drawn to Mystery and The Delight of the Chase

- What are you curious about these days? What fascinates you about human nature right now?
- Listen to **Let Our Hearts Rejoice** (Psalm 105). When is a time you felt lost and worried about your faith? (It could be right now!) Searching God out and experiencing God as hidden is all over the Psalms and all over Jesus' parables, so you're in holy company.

Compelling Curiosity

- What intangible part of your own life are you curious about right now? Try a sentence that begins, "I am curious why I..." or "I wonder how my mind..."

The Existential Shrug

- The Psalms can disrupt our illusion of control. Try the exercise at the bottom of page 142, taking a picture of yourself shrugging, "I don't know and I don't have to know". Maybe take a group picture with all of you shrugging for when you need company in uncertainty.
- Surrender is part of every great religious tradition. Listen to **Into Your Hands** (Psalm 31) and relax as you imagine yourself letting go of worry over being in charge of everything.
- If you're a person of faith, how do you define and describe faith at this moment in your life?
- Listen to **You Remember** (Psalm 106) and discuss the lyrics and music.