



In Pursuit of Awesome

We all want to be great, but are we willing to do what it takes?



By Brother Dan McNamara

If you want to see something awesome, check out a bird of paradise. There are 41 species, and each one looks more awesome than the last. For example, Wilson's bird of paradise has a multicolored body with a turquoise helmet and what looks like a feather mustache for a tail. Do birds need to look like this to live? No. But is it awesome? You bet.

God made us awesome. He wants us to be awesome. I know you hear a lot about gifts and talents when it comes to fulfilling your potential, so I want to go deeper than that by talking about something that seems simple: your personality and lifestyle. Personality is a combination of your attitudes, emotions, and response patterns. Lifestyle is your daily habits.

The Awesome Parts of You

Let's take personality first. At this point in life, you may or may not know who you are. Perhaps you're in college or you're working your way through high school. You might be thinking about picking your major for a future career, or perhaps you're focusing on your SAT. Whatever your current goal, let me ask you a question: What type of your person do *you* want to be?

I suggest you be an awesome person.

Guess what. When God made you, He gave you a personality like nobody else's. He hard wired you with awesome characteristics. Some of you are naturally generous. Others of you keep your cool in crazy situations. And there are those of you who know how to make even the most boring task fun.

So, remember that bird I mentioned?

He may not even know just how awesome he is. If you haven't found what makes you awesome and you are still choosing who you want to be, that's OK. You know what? Awesome takes time, work, and effort. If you're wondering what your awesome is, ask your mom/dad/best friend/dog. OK, your dog might not answer coherently, but you bet he loves you. Your loved ones know all the best things about you. Sometimes it's good to find out what others think is awesome about you. Don't get a big head, but humbly discover what others think so you can use your awesome to make an impact.

Now, God gave us all kinds of awesome personality-wise, but we're still in the flesh, and there are certain things about our personalities that we

have to overcome, don't you agree? Some of us are born with a short fuse. Others may be prone to depression or negativity. *All of us* are self-centered. In order for the awesome parts to really shine, we have to discipline ourselves and reign in the junk that clutters up our awesome.

Awesome God

Now, let's take a moment to look at the most awesome (awe-inspiring) person to ever live.

When Jesus Christ walked with His disciples, people heard about Him throughout the entire region of Israel, without newspapers or the Internet. His awesomeness spread like wildfire. He cared for the sick and feeble. He helped us understand how beautiful it is to forgive. He showed us how to embrace God's will in our lives and overcome ourselves in our pursuit of awesome. That's right, our *pursuit of awesome*. In Alma, it says that this life is a time to prepare to meet our God (42:10-13). I believe that this preparation includes learning all we can about Jesus and doing our best to be just like Him. When we do that, we find our inner awesome, we get rid of the bad stuff, and we have the strength to hold on with all we have until we meet Him.

Living an Awesome Life

Now let's talk about lifestyle. Lifestyle isn't necessarily the traits we're born with but it's the behaviors we *choose*. Remember the bird? Some birds of paradise perform elaborate dances and even keep their area clean of clutter. When we think about our lifestyle, we all have traits that differentiate us. Maybe some of you are neat freaks. Some are singers. Some play sports. You always

want to make sure that your lifestyle is conducive to your awesome.

It might not be the best idea to sit around and watch TV after class instead of getting your HW done or studying. It takes hard work to create an awesome lifestyle, but I have to tell you a secret. Most awesome people have good habits. They build their awesomeness into their lifestyle. They choose what is right, even if it's not the easiest or it doesn't come naturally. That could mean changing the way you communicate or the way you treat others. It may even mean cleaning your room. *Now* is the time to create the lifestyle habits that are conducive to an awesome life.

Don't forget, awesome is different for everyone. When you look down the pew at church, don't expect everybody to be the same kind of awesome. Our differences are what make the whole church body awesome (Ephesians 4:16).

Maintaining Awesome

It's August, and you're almost ready to go back to school, if you haven't already started. Here's some food for thought before you integrate yourself back in with your friends. Being a child of the King is awesome. Being a part of The Church of Jesus Christ is awesome. You are a part of the kingdom of Christ! Remember who you are, and don't let go of that when you're around your friends and buddies. You might feel like it's tough to hang on, but don't forget — that's what makes you awesome.

We are in this world, but we don't have to be part of this world. God *does* have something in mind for each and every one of you. Try not to get hung up in who the world thinks you should be, conforming your life

to its standards. Do you remember Samson? God gave him awesome strength, and he was able to defend Israel. But the moment Delilah became more important than that, he lost it all, including her. Not so awesome.

Ultimately, how you think (personality) and behave (lifestyle) affects how far you can go. You really do set your own limits. If you believe that God wants all men to give their best and serve Him with all of their heart, mind, and soul, then you might be on the right path to finding your awesome. If you believe that fitting in, being cool, and making friends is the most important part about GMBA campout and your schooling, you should look for a little more guidance to awesome.

Awesome is within your reach. You are capable of great things, and the Lord is always looking for more laborers in His vineyard. Be Christlike, and behave in a way that's pleasing to Him, and your awesome will shine like never before.

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