



## **A Plea for Beauty & Creativity**

Ecclesiastes 3:11 & Psalm 27:4

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### **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

### **Psalm 27:4**

One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

“If you're finding it challenging to connect the dots or apprehend the significance of what I am saying, you're in good company...our society is hell-bent on paying attention to the world primarily through the functional mode of the left hemisphere of the brain, on ‘understanding’ it in order to manipulate it. This means we end up not attuning to beauty—actively disregarding it, in fact, albeit often non-consciously—and consumed with engaging our world as a problem to be solved or a pathology to be diagnosed. Shame and fear truncate our awareness of beauty, not least as it pertains to our own lives.”

- Curt Thompson, *Soul of Desire*

“The modern disenchantment with the beautiful as a concept reflects in part a sense that while beauty is something whose event can be remarked upon, and in a way that seems to convey a meaning, the word ‘beauty’ indicates nothing: neither exactly a quality, nor a property, nor a function, not even really a subjective reaction to an object or occurrence, it offers no phenomenological purchase upon aesthetic experience. And yet nothing else impresses itself upon our attention with at once so wonderful a power and so evocative an immediacy. Beauty is there, abroad in the order of things, given again and again in a way that defies description and denial with equal impertinence.”

- David B. Hart

“The significance of the beautiful is that it indicates how an object might be outside us, facing us, and yet at the same time draw us into itself. Of all the transcendentals, the beautiful is the closest to our senses. It is, therefore, more directly present to us than are the other transcendental properties of being. The beautiful is a fully objective property of being, but it is the nature of this property to be communicative, to communicate itself to observers. The beautiful is reality under the aspect of form, known as such by imaginative intuition, just as truth is reality as best known through propositions, by the

intelligence, and goodness is reality as best known through values, by the moral sense. These ways of knowing refer to the same world manifesting itself in distinct but analogously related ways: as beautiful, true, and good respectively.”

- Aidan Nichols, *A Key to Balthasar*

### **1 John 1:1-3**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

### **Ecclesiastes 1:2**

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

### **Ecclesiastes 2:1-3**

I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be meaningless. “Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?” I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

He tries to fill his mind with knowledge.

He tries to fill his body with hedonism.

He tries to fill his pockets with materialism.

He tries to fill his conscience with ethics.

He tries to fill his spirit with spirituality.

### **Ecclesiastes 2:17, 22-23**

So I hated life...What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

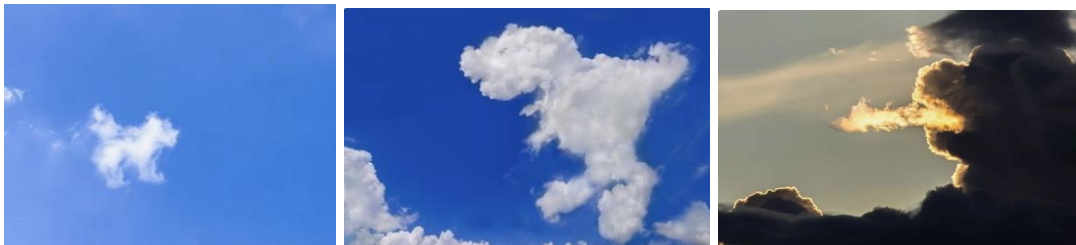
He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

“We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that bounty is enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.”

- C.S. Lewis

“If we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and that (As the New Testament insists) this has brought about the expected launch of new creation, of the ‘Kingdom of God,’ on earth as in heaven, then our present vocations really do partake of that new creation, bringing fragments and flashes of new creation to birth in the midst of the still-darkened and sorrowing world. We are, to that extent, like the spies whom Moses sent into the land of Canaan, and who brought back fresh fruit from the promised land to the people still in the desert.”

- N.T. Wright



Imagination is defined as the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses.

Imagination is the ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful.

“The imagination has been given to humans by God to perceive the divinely infused meaning of the cosmos, which provides a moral map of the world by which we might live.”

- Stephen Turley

### **1 Corinthians 3:9**

For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

### **Romans 8:17**

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

“God did not build us as survival machines that would function like clockwork; we are creatures of magnificence and imagination, made in the image of God.”

- Makoto Fujimura

### **Psalms 27:4**

One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

*1. Be Joyfully Known*

## *2. Inquire*

### **Psalm 27:4**

“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek”

## *3. Gaze*

### **Psalm 27:4**

“to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple”

“The formation and recognition of beauty, then, requires perseverance and is a process that cannot be rushed, whether in a community or in the material world. This requires our willingness to patiently allow it to reveal itself to us, even when we might not initially grasp that we are in its presence.”

- Curt Thompson

## *4. Dwell*

### **Psalm 27:4**

“that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life”

“We must put ourselves in the pathway of oncoming beauty—art, natural wonder—that requires our willingness to remain long enough for our sensing brain to adjust and receive, long enough for us to ‘be fond’ by what we encounter as much as we find it.”

- Curt Thompson

### **Ephesians 2:22**

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.