

# A Theology of Beauty

(I found this teaching in a wonderful book by John & Stasi Eldredge, entitled, Captivating.)

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## **Psalm 27:1-6**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh- my adversaries and foes- they shall stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.*

*One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.*

## **II Samuel 16:14-23**

*Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, "See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command the servants who attend you to look for someone who is skillful in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will feel better." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me someone who can play well, and bring him to me." One of the young men answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a warrior, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the Lord is with him." So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David who is with the sheep." Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a kid, and sent them by his*

*son David to Saul. And David came to Saul, and entered his service. Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." And whenever the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him."*

I'd like to share with you a brief message about the importance and power of beauty. We need beauty in our lives. Beautiful music. Beautiful scenery, beautiful art and beautiful moments, beautiful words and beautiful sounds. God made us this way.

Why do people vacation in beautiful places? Why are we drawn to beautiful music? - beautiful artwork? beautiful words/poetry? God made us this way. God is the source of all beauty - in creation, in the arts, in words, in spirit, in love. God has filled the world with beauty because we need it. God didn't have to make the world such a beautiful place. God did not have to make oceans sparkled, birds to sing, and butterflies to flutter, and purple mountains majesty.

John & Stasi Eldredge wrote a fascinating book entitled, Captivating. In it they write, "We need large and daily doses of beauty in our lives." They have this to say about beauty.

**Beauty is powerful for these reasons:**

### **1. Beauty Speaks**

*"It is the beauty of the created order which give an answer to our questionings about God."* - Bishop Richard Harries

*"Every experience of beauty points to eternity."* - Hans Urs von Balthasar

Psalm 19 says, *"The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, night to night declares knowledge."*

The Beauty of Creation speaks the truth of a loving, beautiful God.

## **2. Beauty Invites** - it captures you.

Ex. - a beautiful garden, "commands your attention, invites you to come more deeply into it. You want to enter in, explore, partake of it, feast upon it."

Psalm 27 - *"One thing I ask of the Lord, to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord."*

Through worship he's drawn to God and wants more of God.

## **3. Beauty Nourishes** - beauty is food for our souls.

*"We do not want to merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty 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."* - C.S. Lewis

## **4. Beauty Comforts** - beauty heals.

*"Beauty says 'All shall be well.'"*

Ex. sending flowers to the bereaved. "Aren't the flowers beautiful?"

Ex. Music at funerals

Ex. Following Sept. 11, 2010 music brought comfort - "Be Not Afraid"

Ex. David playing his music for King Saul. It lifted Saul's spirit.

## **5. Beauty Inspires**

*"You make me want to be a better man."*

- Jack Nicholson to Helen Hunt in

As Good As It Gets.

## **6. Beauty is Transcendent**

*"Beauty reminds us of an Eden we have never known, but somehow know our hearts were created for. Beauty speaks of heaven to come, when all shall*

*be beautiful. It haunts us with eternity. Beauty says, There is a glory calling to you. And if there is a glory, there is a source of glory. What great goodness could have possibly created this? What generosity gave us this to behold? Beauty draws us to God."*

- John & Stasi Eldredge

So here's a fun assignment for this week & this summer: Seek out beauty. Whether it's enjoying God's Creation, studying God's Word, meditating upon the Love of Christ or enjoying the arts.

Beauty feeds the soul.

That's how God made us.

So, seek it out.

Adam, I thank you for adding beauty to our lives. It matters.

Thanks be to God, to our beautiful God.

Janet Swatski Sings - Mozart's "Alleluia!"