

Session 4 Delighting in the Beauty of God (Song 1:16)

I. REVIEW: OUR LONGING TO BE FASCINATED

- A. One distinctive use of the Song of Solomon is to see, enjoy, and be fascinated with God’s beauty. God created us with a longing to be fascinated and awestruck, filled with marvel and wonder. Without a sense of awe and delight in our relationship with God, we will live spiritually bored.
- B. The Song connects seeing the King as “beautiful” to having “delight” in the relationship with Him.
¹⁶***Behold, You are beautiful, my Beloved, truly delightful. (Song 1:16, ESV)***
- C. David was called “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). One of his lifelong goals was to intentionally look for God’s beauty. David connected seeing the Lord as “beautiful” to having “delight” in his relationship with God. David was the “sweet psalmist” of Israel (2 Sam. 23:1).
⁴***One thing I have desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (Ps. 27:4)***
⁴***Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Ps. 37:4)***
- D. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit would emphasize King Jesus’ beauty in the generation He returns.
¹⁷***Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. (Isa. 33:17).***
²***In that day the Branch of the LORD [Jesus] shall be beautiful and glorious. (Isa. 4:2)***
- E. A believer who is spiritually bored is more vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. A fascinated believer who is preoccupied with God’s beauty will enjoy God, be spiritually strong, and therefore be much better equipped to withstand Satan’s schemes—temptation, offense, difficulty, and persecution.
- F. “*Beauty is the battlefield where God and Satan contend with each other for the hearts of men.*”
Fyodor Dostoevsky

II. GOD’S BEAUTY: PRACTICAL AREAS TO SEARCH OUT

- A. **Overview:** God’s beauty, excellencies, or glory speak of all that is attractive about Him. It includes how He thinks and feels, what He does, how He looks, and the power and knowledge that He possesses. God’s beauty is displayed in creation, redemption, and in His leadership over history.
1. **God’s personality:** How He thinks and feels—how God feels about *God* (Father’s delight in Jesus and the cross and His exaltation); how God feels about *His people* (their partnership and obedient love), *creation* (earth, animals, sky, angels, New Jerusalem, etc.), and *His eternal kingdom* (the rule and leadership of Jesus, including the triumph of His kingdom on earth).
 2. **God’s power:** He is the sovereign King, creator, and redeemer, possessing all authority and infinite power (omnipotence).
 3. **God’s leadership:** He acts redemptively as He rules and directs history.

4. **God's knowledge:** He possesses all knowledge and perfect wisdom (omniscience).
 5. **God's being:** His omnipresence, His self-existence, self-sufficiency, immutability, etc.
 6. **God's appearance:** His majestic appearance (eyes like fire, face like the sun, etc.)
- B. We can see God's beauty in creation and many aspects of human life and interaction, for example:
1. **In sights**—colors, brilliance, hues
 2. **In sounds**—melody, pitch, rhythm, harmony
 3. **In fragrances**—flowers, spices, fruits, costly perfumes
 4. **In knowledge**—stimulating the mind with mathematics or with scientific information
 5. **In life stories**—stimulating the heart with biographies, novels, dramas, movies
 6. **In noble character**—acts of courage, generosity, compassion, perseverance, faithfulness
 7. **In physical abilities**—singers, musicians, athletes, actors, writers, artists, composers, etc.
 8. **In society**—when justice prevails and reconciliation occurs between races, nations, families

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GLORIFYING GOD AND DELIGHTING IN HIS BEAUTY

- A. The Lord is glorified in our life when we delight in the many manifestations of His beauty.
- B. We glorify God when *what we know of Him* awakens in us delight and enjoyment of Him. Thus, we glorify God by *delighting in* who He is and what He does, *declaring it* to others, and *embracing* His leadership in our personal lives. It includes *enjoying* our relationship with Him and His people.
- C. “*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.*” John Piper
- D. We glorify God by *celebrating* (singing) and *proclaiming* (confessing) His beauty (name) to others so they may delight (rejoice) in Him (Rom. 15:9-10).
⁹...*that the Gentiles might glorify God...* “*For this reason I [David] will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.*”¹⁰ *And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”* (Rom. 15:9-10)

IV. GOD'S BEAUTY SEEN IN CREATION

- A. God is beauty itself. All the beauty that we see in this world is a mere reflection of the source of the ultimate beauty—God. The beauty of creation reflects the excellencies of Christ. It is a faint echo, a dim foretaste, and a token of the perfect beauty that will be openly displayed when Jesus returns.
- B. “...*in seeing the natural world we are to let our eyes run up the beam of beauty to the Original...*”
John Piper

- C. I have been greatly blessed and helped by Sam Storms' book *Onething: Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*, and by Thomas Dubay's book *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. Both books trace the signature of God through the physical world, ranging from the vast wonders of the Milky Way galaxy to the wonders seen in biology at the molecular level right down to atomic particles.
- D. I recommend as a resource *The Elegant Universe*, by Brian Greene, a renowned physicist.

V. GOD'S BEAUTY SEEN IN THE HEAVENS

- A. David exhorted us to look up to God's heavenly art gallery (Ps. 19:1).
¹**"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork."** (Ps. 19:1)
¹³**By His Spirit He adorned the heavens...**¹⁴**These are the mere edges of His ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"** (Job 26:13-14)
- B. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second—almost 700 million miles per hour, or 6 trillion miles per year. The moon is 240,000 miles from earth; light takes less than two seconds to travel from the moon to us. The nearest star to earth (after the sun) is *Proxima Centauri*—over 4 light years away.
- C. Our solar system is part of the *Milky Way* galaxy. The diameter of the *Milky Way* is 100,000 light years, meaning that it would take someone 100,000 years to cross it traveling at the speed of light.
- D. The *Milky Way* contains over 100 billion stars! The *Virgo* cluster of galaxies has more than 5 trillion stars. Astronomers estimate that there are at least 100 billion galaxies, each having billions of stars.
- E. The galaxy closest to the *Milky Way* galaxy is the *Andromeda* galaxy. It is over 2 million light years from earth (almost 15 quintillion miles—15 with 18 zeros).
- F. The Hubble Space Telescope reports a galaxy over 10 billion light years from earth (that is 78 sextillion miles—78 with 21 zeros).
- G. The star system *Eta Carinae* (composed of two stars) is 5 million times brighter than our sun, is over 400 million miles in diameter, and is over 7,000 light years away from the earth.
- H. Our sun is over 800,000 miles in diameter and is 15 million degrees Celsius at the center. In the sun, billions of billions (10 with 38 zeros) of nuclear fusion reactions take place every second—thus, more than 600 million tons of hydrogen are converted into helium every second. (The sun's energy is produced by nuclear fusion of hydrogen nuclei into helium, producing energy in the form of light).
- I. The Hubble Telescope first observed the *Pistol Star* in the 1990s. This star releases over 10 million times the power of our sun, unleashing as much energy in 20 seconds as our sun does in one year.
- J. The Lord asserted that He creates, brings out, names, and upholds these billions of billions of stars.
²⁵**"To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?"** says the Holy One. ²⁶**Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might...not one is missing."** (Isa. 40:25-26)

VI. GOD’S BEAUTY SEEN IN SUBATOMIC PARTICLES

- A. Jesus is the architect of the entire created order (Col. 1:16-18). He designed and created all things, seen and unseen, and established their purpose. The invisible marvels of creation include angels, atoms, the atmosphere (wind, heat, light), and affections (feelings of love and gratitude, etc.).
¹⁶“***For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions...All things were created through Him and for Him...¹⁷and in Him all things consist*** [hold together; NASB, NIV, ESV, RSV].” (Col. 1:16-17)
- B. Each atom has a nucleus containing electrically charged particles—protons and neutrons—surrounded by swirling electrons. There are approximately 100 million atoms in the space of a linear inch. There are 100 trillion atoms in an average human cell.
- C. Physicists identified *quarks* inside each proton and neutron in the 1960s. A quark is a tiny string that vibrates—it is 100 billion billion (10 with 19 zeros) times smaller than a nucleus. A nucleus contains up to 1,000 quarks—10 septillion (10 with 24 zeros) quarks in the space of one inch.

VII. HOW DO WE BEHOLD THIS BEAUTY?

- A. We encounter God’s beauty as we *meditate on the Scripture* to gain understanding of who God is, all that He does (in His creation, redemption, leadership), and how He designed humans to function and interact. We can also *study scientific knowledge* that God has given to scholars (physicists, astronomers, geologists, etc.) and intentionally *look for tokens* of God’s beauty in creation, history, and human interactions. We can purposefully look for beauty that many are oblivious to.
⁵***I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works.*** (Ps. 145:5)
⁸***I have set the Lord always before me.*** (Ps. 16:8)
- B. Delighting in God does not occur in an intellectual vacuum. It is the result of gaining understanding about God. Our delight deepens as our understanding of Him increases.
⁴***If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*** [including God’s beauty].” (Prov. 2:4-5)
¹⁸***Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.*** (Ps. 119:18)
- C. Beholding God’s glory, His beauty, is more than just delightful; it is transforming. It has the power to persuade and enable us to embrace love in radical commitment to our beautiful, glorious God.
¹⁸***But we all...beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.*** (2 Cor. 3:18)
- D. Beauty empowers us to realign our heart with His heart and exposes what is unworthy in our words, thoughts, and deeds. A preacher once said, “I do not want to simply *live* the Christian life, but I want to *love living* the Christian life.” We do this best as we set our heart to see God’s beauty.