



The Ethics of Elfland with Dr. Junius Johnson

Lesson for The Ethics of Elfland

Outline:

Dr. Junius Johnson offers some passages and commentary of the Ethics of Elfland by G.K. Chesterton.

- He is offering an alternative vision of what the world can look like if the world is a magical place.
- Ordinary stuff is more valuable than the extraordinary. The ordinary is extraordinary. We have the two flipped, out of order.
- In terms of a democratic outlook on the world, look to the things that all men hold in common.
- Tradition is the democracy of the dead. Tradition brings forward the voices of the dead. Our age is greatly outvoted.
- We have to make sure we get right what is most true. What if all the stuff that we are told that adults should be concerned about is not the first thing? The first thing is the stuff that we actually learn first, which are fairy tales.
 - Children are wonder machines, in part because they are seeing everything for the first time.
- Does God love you because you are fundamentally loveable?
 - When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- The people who are committed to fairyland are the most reasonable of all creatures.
- If students are reading David Hume, there is a good point of contact for the constant conjunction of things is often mistaken for causality.
- The logic of fairyland is narrative.
- Science is not the science of meaning, philosophy is the science of meaning.
- What fairy tales do is try to remind us how enchanting the world is. Boys like romantic tales, but babies like realistic tales because they find them romantic.
- Everyman has forgotten who he is. We have all forgotten our names. We have all forgotten what we really are.
 - Chesterton wants to teach us that the journey of discipleship is a journey of remembering your name.
 - We really are creations.
- The logic of orthodoxy is the logic of fairy tales.
- One elephant having a trunk is odd, but all elephants having trunks looks like a plot. Someone is doing something. There is some intention behind this.
 - This is an autobiographical natural theology.
- Connections to various parts of the curriculum:
 - Look for the fairy element in your literature.