



Theology of Beauty and Imagination: A Guide to Wonder with Dr. Junius Johnson

Lesson 3: How to See Beauty

Outline:

Beauty is everywhere.

- We see evil everywhere in the world and good seems so fleeting.
- How could a beautiful God allow any ugliness at all? This is a version of the problem of evil.
- Because God is beauty, all creatures are beautiful. Creation reflects His own beauty.
- To see beauty requires faith.
- Our task is to see the beauty that is right in front of us.
 - **We need to develop our eyes of faith.** Historically, it is the saints who are good at recognizing beauty everywhere.
 - How do we do this? How do we fill our eyes with God and see Him everywhere?
 - Faith is appointed by God for us to lay hold of the things of God.
 - We need a habit of looking at the world through lenses of faith rather than skepticism.
 - Faith is strengthened by recollection and exercise (the exercise of faith merits the increase of faith).
 - **Imagination is a key ally.**
 - We should fill our imaginings with the truth, goodness, and beauty of God.
 - Contuition means co-seeing. Co-seeing is a way of seeing by which two things are seen with a single act of vision. True co-seeing is the way to see the second thing by the means of the first thing.
 - The goal is not to stop seeing creatures so that we can see God instead.
 - We see God by means of really seeing the creature for the first time.
 - The truth of who I am is to be a particular, unique, unrepeatable image of Christ (if you see Francis, you also see Jesus).
 - Seeing God in each other is another way of contemplating God.



- Chesterton: There's a sense of purpose behind it all. In the peculiarity of elephants having trunks there is the beginning of making sense of God.
- Bonaventure: Every creature is a vestige of God. We are created to be clues.
- Proverbs 25:2: It is the glory of God to conceal of things, but the honor of kings to search it out.
- **The idea of beauty is a great chase. It is a great game that is meant to guide us back to the source of all beauty.**