



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

Lesson 6: Discernment, Discipleship, and Vocation

Outline:

Discernment

- Discernment is penetrative vision.
- Two things are required for Christian discernment.
 - The Christian should not take the world as she finds it. Even when we think we have good intentions, we often have bad intentions.
 - The world is not as it was meant to be, but it really is the way that it is. We see the world as it is, but we do not *take* it as it is.
- The imagination allows us to grasp a reality that is too big for us (in a physical sense and a spiritual sense).
- Goodness is damaged but not completely destroyed.
- Discerning the nature of the world and our place in it is primarily an action of the imagination.

Discipleship

- Discipleship is the Christian form of life in the world.
- The Christian is becoming more and more a clearer image of the one who is the express likeness of the Father.
- To follow Christ is to come to resemble him: Pick up your cross and follow him.
- The Cosmos is the creation. The creation groans, and yet the Cosmos declares the glory of God.
- The world is a term for the collective traits of human cultures (accumulation of power and resources for the purpose of seizing direct control over the processes of nature and bending them to our will).
- The world and the Cosmos are running in two different directions.
- Christian discipleship is a call to live against the world but with the Cosmos.
- We are stuck at the stage of being called out of the world.
- The imagination is required for developing any vision of what the possibility of this form of life might look like (to live in the culture without living according to the culture).
- The world is better enjoyed within the bounds of God's joy than outside of it. It takes imagination to see that.



Vocation

- Vocation and profession have a complicated relationship to one another.
- We need to expand our notion of vocation beyond the realm of profession.
- You are called to be you. You are called to witness and image God as only you can do.
- As a royal priesthood, we belong to God in our totality.
- The saints are examples of some ways of that Christian vocation can play out in a life. Examples help us as an intermediate step from where we are to where we want to be (a saint for every season).
- Your vocation will always be unique to you because God never repeats anything in exactly the same way.
- The saints don't show you how to live your life, they give you some clues.
- The calling is specific and we have to listen for it.
- God gives us the desires of our hearts, but often they come in a form that is hard to recognize.