


Christianity and the Arts

RPC Adult Class 2023




1

Definition:

The "arts" =

- Visual ("Fine") Art (painting, sculpture, etc)
- Performing Art (plays, film, music)
- Literature (books, poems)




2

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- Our relationship with God
- Bible is art



3

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- Our relationship with God
- Bible is art
- Lordship of Christ
- General Revelation
- Experience scriptural truth, not just know



4

“God’s desire for us is not only that we would simply know the truth of the gospel intellectually but that we would also experience the beauty of the gospel intimately. Art has the power to draw our hearts and minds into this intimate experience in more ways than mere words. Songs, music, paintings, books, sculptures, movies, photography and the like, can make this intimate experience a reality. Good art ensures we experience the gospel without minimising our understanding of the gospel!” – Adip



5

Discuss:


Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- Our relationship with God
- Bible is art
- Lordship of Christ
- General Revelation
- Experience scriptural truth, not just know
- Build our imagination



6

"Art beckons us to look higher, to look deeper – to recognize the transcendent in items as ordinary as canvas and clay.... So, be it a piece of music, a painting, a sculpture – all art should lead our eyes beyond the immediate and to the infinite, beyond the creation itself to the creator himself" Dustin Messer




7

Discuss:


Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- *Our relationship with God*
 - *Bible is art*
 - *Lordship of Christ*
 - *General Revelation*
 - *Experience scriptural truth, not just know*
 - *Build our imagination*
 - *Deepens our longings for heaven*



8

But if you confess that the world was once beautiful, but by the curse has become undone, and by a final catastrophe is to pass to its full state of glory, excelling even the beauty of paradise, then art has the mystical task of reminding us in its production of the beauty that was lost and of anticipating its perfect coming luster – Abraham Kuyper



9

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- *Our relationship with God*
 - *Bible is art*
 - *Lordship of Christ*
 - *General Revelation*
 - *Experience scriptural truth, not just know*
 - *Build our imagination*
 - *Deepens our longings for heaven*
- *Our relationship with others*
 - *Builds empathy*



10

"Literature (or any art) makes us feel more about things, and feel about more things" Thomas De Quincey



11

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- *Our relationship with God*
 - *Bible is art*
 - *Lordship of Christ*
 - *General Revelation*
 - *Experience scriptural truth, not just know*
 - *Build our imagination*
 - *Deepens our longings for heaven*
- *Our relationship with others*
 - *Builds empathy*
 - *Helps us love artists better*
 - *Helps us engage culture more wisely*



12

What is happening in the arts today is prophetic of what will happen in our culture tomorrow – Phil Ryken



13

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

- Our relationship with God
 - Bible is art
 - Lordship of Christ
 - General Revelation
 - Experience scriptural truth, not just know
 - Build our imagination
 - Deepens our longings for heaven
- Our relationship with others
 - Builds empathy
 - Helps us love artists better
 - Helps us engage culture more wisely



14

Discuss:

Why should Christians learn to appreciate art?

What are some ways Christians struggle in their engagement with the arts?


- Ignore
- Uncritically consume



15

Christianity and the Arts


RPC Adult Class 2023



16


Objectives:

- Articulate a theology of creativity, art, beauty, storytelling
- Develop an imagination and appreciation for the formative nature (both positive and negative) of the arts
- Provide a framework for discernment with the arts
- Gain skills in how to get the most out of the arts




17

Class Schedule		
Feb 26	Part 1: Creativity	Ross
March 5	Part 1: Beauty	Ross
March 12	Part 1: Story	Zachary
March 19	Part 1: Christian & Non-Christian Art	Ross
March 26	Part 1: How to Judge & Engage the Arts	Zachary
April 2	Part 2: Echoes of Eden in Plays	Zachary
April 9 (Easter)	Part 2: Echoes of Eden in Film	Ross
April 16	Part 3: Echoes of Eden in Painting pt 1	Ross
April 23	Part 3: Echoes of Eden in Painting pt 2	Zachary
April 30	Part 4: Echoes of Eden in Literature pt 1	Ross
May 7	Part 4: Echoes of Eden in Literature pt 2	Zachary
May 14	Part 5: Echoes of Eden in Music	Ross





18

Movie night: April 21



19


20

Creativity:

Creative God

1. *Creation's Beauty*

Rev 4:11 - *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*



21

Creativity:

Creative God

1. Creation's Beauty

Psalm 19

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

² *Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.*

³ *There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.*

⁴ *Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.*

*In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.*



22

...wherever you turn your eyes, there is no portion of the world, however minute, that does not exhibit at least some sparks of beauty; while it is impossible to contemplate the vast and beautiful fabric as it extends around, without being overwhelmed by the immense weight of glory. – John Calvin



23

Loizeaux's 4 aspects of creation's beauty

- 1. Perfection
- 2. Diversity
- 3. Abundance
- 4. Inventiveness



24


Creativity:

Creative God

1. Creation's Beauty
2. Bible is creative

Created in the image of God

Called to creativity
 "Fill the earth and subdue it....have dominion" Genesis 1



25

Creativity:

Creative God


1. Creation's Beauty
2. Bible is creative

Created in the image of God

Called to creativity
 "Fill the earth and subdue it....have dominion" Genesis 1

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

"doers" = Greek "poesis"




26

How to view artists/art:

Imitation (of God)

"...an author (or any artist) should never conceive of himself as bringing into existence beauty or wisdom that did not exist before, but simply and solely as trying to embody in terms of his own art some reflection of eternal Beauty and Wisdom."

- C.S. Lewis



27

Christian understanding of the arts:

1. Creative God

2. Human Imitation of God's creativity

"painting with HIS colors; speaking with HIS gift of language; exploring and expressing HIS sounds and harmonies; working with HIS creation in all its: glory, diversity, and in-built inventiveness."

Not mere "self-expression"