

Loving What is Beautiful

Jim Elliff

We were made for beauty.

Our concept of beauty will vary, distorted by what theologians call “the Fall.” That is a way of speaking of the evil present within us permeating all aspects of our person. This causes one woman to long for an illicit affair and call it beautiful, or another man to crave a power over others and brag about it. The person has a way of working on his mind so that the thing pursued is reclassified as “beautiful.” He knows it is not; at least a thinking person knows it is not. But his sense of beauty is twisted according to indwelling sin.



In a sense, the fallen individual (and that is all of us apart from Christ) sees beauty from a distance. It looms there, over the horizon, in a mist—an order, simplicity, true love and caring, heaven, forgiveness, reconciliation, God Himself. He has to say he loves what is leftover, for all the really good aspects of life are taken by God. God is the originator of them, and as long as the individual chooses to reject God on his terms, he has to play with the leftovers and call them good or beautiful. He will labor to convince himself of their beauty.

To go further, consider that we are one with our desires. We are, in fact, hopelessly bound to them. We cannot love what we do not love. That strange sentence is a way of saying that we do not have the power of contrary choice—of choosing against what we love or choosing what we do not love. If then our concept of beauty is distorted and we will not love Christ, we are locked into an insurmountable difficulty.

In a powerful way this is where true Christianity makes a profound difference. Man finds himself in this miasma of desires distorted by the Fall. He chooses against God. Christ is not lovely to him. In some cases he may become a bit religious, but mere religion may be just another way of projecting himself as different than he really is. The other word for this is pride, and that is hardly the point. Or he reengineers God to be his errand

boy so that he can, again, be his own God. Man is born with this kind of disinclination to God and Christ and the way of true Christianity. “No one seeks God,” said Paul in [Romans 3: 11](#). So man’s natural desires are tragically pro-ego and anti-God.

The desire for coming to Christ is not there without a change in the pursuit of true beauty versus the artificial. And though your friend tries to make you love Christ, it does not happen unless there is something quite supernatural transpiring. The desires must change, and beauty must be redefined for you.

You are a true Christian then, if you love what you once thought little of, and supremely value what is true beauty, the highest form of beauty, Christ Himself. There are the particulars to think of as you grow in Christ, the shaping of the thinking about beauty in the smaller matters. But the big thing, the true difference between a genuine Christian and a non-Christian, whether that one is acting religious or not, is that there is a love for Christ as the most beautiful One. We may correctly ask ourselves, “Has such a change occurred?”

And the living out of the Christian life, on the basis of that love of true beauty, is to love what Christ loves. Loving Christ and loving what He loves, then, become the distinguishing marks of a true Christian.

Christ is pure beauty. If you see Him that way, then you will not hold out for any more substitutions.