



Links Players

CONSIDERING BEAUTY

Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! ...When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? (Psalm 8:1-4 NIV)

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to play Pebble Beach. As I approached the first tee, I was intent on scoring well. I wanted to test my skills against the course I had seen so many professionals play on television. What I did not anticipate was by the time I arrived at the 7th hole all performance concerns would dissipate. At some point between the 7th and the 8th I was entirely lost in the beauty of my surroundings. My competitive round of golf was transformed into a pilgrimage through the splendor of God's creation.

When the Psalmist sees and considers God's creation in Psalm 8, he recognizes God's majesty, while at the same time wondering why the Lord is mindful of him. He is both

awed and humbled. He looks to the heavens above and worships: *Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!* And then, being dwarfed by it all, can't help but ask; "why me Lord, who am I?"

Contrast the Psalmist focus and disposition with your own in day-to-day life. If you're like me, you are often numbers-focused and in control. You mostly quantify things; it's statistics, comparison, measures, and scores. You keep up with budgets, income, interest rates, investments, your weight, kids SAT scores, golf handicaps, age, and even the Joneses. The numbers are monotonous and never-ending. Linear, with a past, present, and future. And there is no beauty in raw data. Though informative, data commands our attention while its presentation is cold and sterile.

Beauty on the other hand is awe-inspiring and life-giving. Take a moment and visualize your bride on the day you married her. Revisit the image of your newborn grandchild in your daughter's arms. Remember the stars at summer camp, yard of full of maple leaves in the fall. Reflect on the first long look you took of the Pieta, or when you stood at the Grand Canyon's edge. Beauty, it warms the heart and stirs the soul; It strikes deep, giving pause. Beauty softens our exterior and disarms us. In the presence of beauty all

the calculating and counting ceases; we are lost in the moment. Beauty suspends time and allows us a small taste of eternity.

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Pulitzer Prize winning writer Annie Dillard notes: *“The answer must be, I think, that beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there.”* Much of the spiritual life is being there; being present. It’s just simply showing up for life’s performances.

Performances that are all around us all the time. The Psalmist stops, looks up at the galaxies, and is overwhelmed by its enormity and intricacies. An obsessive golfer forgoes scorekeeping to survey and endless sea with deep gratitude. And Jesus, who never missed any of his Father’s exhibitions, calls the little children to come to him. Beauty and grace. Everywhere. All the time. The least we can do is try to be there. And even more, we can exclaim; *Oh Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Prayer: Lord, the beauty in the world testifies of your majesty and power. Thank you for considering me. My mouth is filled with your praise, and with your glory all day (Psalm71:8)

Boo Arnold

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