

Monday

God's Beauty and Godly Beauty, a Beautiful Partnership

God's Beauty: A Beautiful Invitation

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Today's Treasure

Your eyes will behold the King in His beauty.

Isaiah 33:17

As I write these words, I am in the midst of moving my 87-year-old, widowed mother into an Assisted Living facility because she fell and broke her shoulder and needs care around the clock. Mom lived in one home for 55 years, and I am faced with the task of distilling that life down to its essentials in order to fit it into a 400-square-foot room. Aging is a series of little deaths, mile markers along the road to our final death, and Mom will grieve the loss of her former home and will be tempted to believe that her happiest years are behind her. Knowing this, I am measuring furniture, choosing what to keep and what to give away, shopping for new towels, pillows, and flowers in Mom's favorite colors, designing her room to welcome her, to invite her to live in the present, to remind her, that as a daughter of the King, her best is yet to come. Because of her health, she is not able to participate in these preparations, and she will not see her room until the day I pick her up from the nursing facility where she has been recuperating and drive her over to her new home.

Feeling the weight of this task, I had become edgy and irritable, convinced that I couldn't think or write about beauty because I was distracted and exhausted until a friend invited me to see the beauty of God's design in this moment. This morning, before I even opened my eyes, I was already mentally arranging the placement of Mom's furniture to make the most of the small space, when I realized that God had arranged the placement of this specific task for me at this specific time because He is giving me the opportunity to work out my theology as I write about it. I smiled as I felt some of the pressure dissolve because I saw that, far from not thinking about beauty, I have been focused on it. Why am I devoting so much time and energy to making Mom's new home beautiful? Is beauty my goal? Well, yes and no. I am chasing so hard after

beauty because I want Mom to like her new room. I want her to be happy, to walk through the doorway of beauty into delight.

King David proclaims in Psalm 27:4:

One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Why does he long to see the beauty of God? Is beholding beauty David's goal? In an episode of "Ask Pastor John," author Jonathan King says, "Pleasure or delight associated with beholding the beautiful is its own end . . . beauty evokes a delight, but you don't use that delight to then do something more. It [delight] is its own end." Theologians call the seeing of God the "beatific vision," the "happy-making sight," and saints throughout the ages have longed to see God face-to-face. Jonathan Edwards writes, "After they have had the *pleasure* of beholding the face of God millions of ages, it will not grow a dull story; the relish of this *delight* will be as exquisite as ever" ("The Pure in Heart Blessed," Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 2, emphasis mine). What happens when we see beauty? Edwards says we are designed so that we experience pleasure and delight when we behold beauty. Beauty is invitational. It invites us to delight. ([Reference desiringgod.org](http://Reference.desiringgod.org))

When my children were little they began to call my mother "Darling," a name which delighted her! For the past twenty-five years, our family has referred to mom as "Darling." In searching the scriptures for a way to pray about, not for, my mother's death, I found these words: "Arise my darling, my beautiful one, and come with Me. See! The winter is past." (Song of Solomon 2:10,11 NIV) Beauty Himself invites us, made beautiful by His love, to delight in His beauty forever! When I meditate on this verse, I smile as I think of my mother, hearing the voice of her Beloved one day calling her Darling as He invites her into her eternal home with Him, a home which he has lovingly prepared for her, a home whose beauty is designed to delight her. (John 14:3)

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

My mother was seventy years old when she asked me to pray about her death, and I was a bit taken aback by her request until I realized that the Bible speaks to all of life, including death. Perhaps you are caring for an elderly relative or someone whose health is failing. If you are at a loss for words at the thought of praying about their death, use God's words. Join me in seeking out scriptures that speak of death, like Psalm 116:15 and Luke 2:29, then pray those words back to God, asking that your loved one may hear and accept the beautiful invitation to follow Jesus, both now and throughout eternity.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for designing us to be delighted by beauty! Help us to seek out, recognize, cultivate, and encourage true beauty so that others will see You and be delighted.