

On being creative

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For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. Colossians 1:13-18

The world around us is an amazing demonstration of God's creativity. God is the great Creator!
All things were created by Him and for Him.

Human beings were one of God's greatest creations and Genesis tells us that we were made in God's image. *God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:27.* So if we were made in the image of our amazingly creative God we must also be creative!

We all have areas of creativity e.g. drawing, writing, serving, gardening, craft work, computing, sport, imagination, ministry, music..... For most of us this is really a positive part of our lives. It's what we enjoy – what we work for – how we relax – the time when we can be ourselves – how we escape from the pressures and hassles of this complex world. Expressing our God-given creativity is good for us – it's healthy. We are built to be creative and we need to express that creativity.



Let's look at what the Bible teaches us about being creative!
We'll start with Psalm 45.

Psalm 45

This is a most unusual Psalm.

¹ *My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.* ² *You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.*

No one knows who wrote the psalm. Its introduction says: "*For the director of music. To the tune of 'Lilies'. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song*". So it was probably a song – set to the tune "Lilies" – that was used as part of the pomp and pageantry of a royal wedding.

This Psalm shows how our creativity works

- We contemplate. *My heart is stirred by a noble theme.*
- We express what is on our heart into our particular area of creativity. *I recite my verses.*
- We record it so that others can be blessed. *My tongue is the pen of a skilled writer.*
- We do it for God's glory and to bless others. *Your lips have been anointed with grace.*
- We receive much satisfaction and blessing by expressing our God-given creativity. *Since God has blessed you forever.*

Being creative is a very natural human thing. Everybody does it but we are all inspired by different things, and all have different abilities to express what is on hearts.



- Contemplation of God can be a major source of our creativity. No matter where you go in the world you will find art and music that has been inspired by God and His creation. Visit a major art gallery or listen to music like Handel's *Messiah* and you will see how strongly peoples' creativity is influenced by their relationship with God. You may not be a Michelangelo or a Handel, but you will most likely have in you a similar creative urge; a desire to express your love for God in some way.
- Then there is God's creation. Pretty well anything on this earth can be a source for the expression of your creativity. *Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.* Philippians 4:8.. Anything that stirs your heart or brings out your deepest thoughts and feelings can be expressed on a way that brings blessing to you; to God or to others.



So let your heart be *stirred with a noble theme* and share your creativity generously!

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Unfortunately peoples' creativity doesn't always overflow with a *noble theme*. We live in a pretty ungodly world so the ways that people express their creativity can be pretty ungodly. Pornography, for example, is one of the world's biggest industries. There always has been an expression of the darkness of people's souls and always will be – because we must express our creativity - and that means we have a world which is increasingly being filled with creative garbage. What used to be called sin can become thinly veiled as "art" and is easily accessed through music, television, movies, YouTube and the internet. In our permissive society pretty well anything goes.

A very disturbing recent trend in this is that some so called "art" is aggressively anti God. How should Christians respond to this? Show disgust, outrage, anger? Join a protest? Write to the paper? Accept it as 'art', or just ignore it? In our anti-Christian society we can't win in this situation. If we accept it the evil gets worse, but if we protest we are portrayed as prudes, out of touch, narrow, bigoted, etc.

So here we have a dilemma

- We are all creative.
- We all must use our creativity.
- We can use our creativity so our hearts overflow with a noble theme.
- All around us other people's hearts are overflowing with themes that are a mixture of evil and good; of godliness and anti-godliness.

Psalm 45 can help us. It can serve as a model, an inspiration for our creativity. An ancient king's wedding called for the pen of a ready writer and someone used their creativity and penned the Psalm. In the same way the issues, events, incidents, and feelings of our world await our contemplation and interpretation. God has given us the creativity and the talents to express this creativity in countless different ways. We are to *let our light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.* Matthew 5:16. And we can do this our way, and for the glory of God.

Being creative

Here are some principles that might help as you seek to express your God-given creativity:

- **Have integrity.**

You have freedom to create and share whatever you like but make sure your creativity is a reflection of who you really are. Have artistic integrity..

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

- **Watch that your creativity doesn't become your God.**

As you express your creativity it can become extremely enjoyable. Pretty soon it can take over and become all consuming. Make sure you maintain your perspective and that your creativity doesn't become an end in itself. Let your creativity be a reflection of your love for the Lord so you are always seeking to glorify Him.

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon. Matthew 6:24. *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Matthew 6:21

- **Focus on the truth.**

No creative work can honor the Lord if it fails to tell the truth. Truth may or may not be pleasant but it is reality so make sure that your creativity stays relevant for the real world. And always remember that God's way is to turn darkness to light; despair to hope hatred to love and defeat to victory. If you reject this in your creative works it can help to enhance and expand the kingdom of God.

⁸*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.* Philippians 4:8

- **Honour God with your creativity**

Recognise that everything you can do, and all your talents are because God in His grace gave them to you. That's humbling – but exciting. You are a reflection of a creative God – One who created then gave life to all. You can honour God with your creative gifts by sharing them with others, enriching their lives, and showing the reality of God in your life.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. *so that in everything he (Jesus) might have the supremacy.* Colossians 1:18.

And don't be afraid to really enjoy your creativity! It is likely to be one of the best parts of your life.

Discussion questions

Read Psalm 25. The writer of this Psalm says *My heart is stirred by a noble theme*. What are some of the noble themes that are covered in the Psalm? What do you think could have inspired the writer to write the Psalm in the way that he did?

What are some "noble themes" that inspire your own creativity? Why do these themes inspire you?

Make a list of all the ways that you are or would like to be creative. What motivates you to go from wanting to create something to actually getting under way and creating it? What hinders you from this? What kinds of creativity are easier for you? Why do you think this is so?

What does *God created man in His own image* mean to you?

How do you react to creativity that honours God? How do you react to creativity that dishonours God? Should all creative endeavours honour God? Why? Why not?

How well do you follow the principles above in expressing your creativity?