

Reflections on Our Life's Artistry

An estimated 107 billion people have lived with approximately 7 billion still alive. On a relatively small sphere (about 7,900 miles in diameter) it is amazing we have not destroyed or exhausted its resources! And this especially in light of the fact that no person, out of the 107 billion, has ever created anything – we can only use and “rearrange” what we find.

Farmers, probably more than anyone, show how some things grow (and how we can cooperate with and enhance this) but, again, the farmer only plants seeds; we have yet to learn how to create from “scratch.” And like the seed (we cannot create) we cannot make anything grow either. One of the great proofs of an active and caring God is that billions of people (currently 7 billion) eat multiple times a day, day after day, without any of us (or any of the 100 billion preceding us) ever creating a single atom of anything! Now that is beyond remarkable, and is obviously miraculous.

As a result of considering that none of us are creators, rather stewards and manipulators of what has been placed here, it is not too great a leap to say we are, in effect, all artists in one form or another. We are artists using what we are given (Time being the most important and valuable gift) to create the greatest possible works of art: parents raising children, those with Down Syndrome spreading joy, bricklayers helping build houses, walls, etc., teachers aiding parents in raising their children, doctors thwarting disease and illness, policemen, trashmen and military personnel maintaining order, warehouse workers packing packages, students learning in preparation for later life and work . . . everyone, if they are to fulfill a meaningful purpose, should then recognize their gifts and work with the pride and purpose no less than that of the world's leading painters or composers. Everyone is an artist – the issue is with what diligence and care.

Not considering our artist vocation will mean our artwork will be far less than otherwise possible or, worse yet, that we ignore our artistic vocation totally and are just takers in Life, a danger that occurs most often and strikingly when people “retire” and forget the many possibilities their Time gives them to focus on their artwork even if not in making money, the sad “holy grail” of too many people in considering worth as the ability to make money – for the essence of Life is Time, talent and how we “paint” with them – it is NOT money!

So, How is Your Life's Artistry? Hopefully Getting Better.

Yet, even if we can answer this as “Yes!” there are still the great truths and realities:

He who stops being Better, stops being good. *Oliver Cromwell*

If something is worth doing, it is worth doing Better. *Sayings from Beulah State University*

For, as a means of evaluation, the direction (the trajectory) of our artistry (or lack thereof) is more important (and easier to evaluate) than a momentary look at our current artistic output.

Practical Implications & Steps to Better

- The Starting Point • Great one-word advice taken and applied (more than anything else) will change (and keep changing for the Better) the trajectory of Life. And this great advice? Jesus' first recorded public word – “Repent.” For it is true, just as Worse leads to further Worse, Better leads to more and increasing Better as we in Grace repent to it.

- And this Better (like Worse) is mostly in small ways and steps – if we wait around for big Betters we will probably NEVER see or find them, but in the midst of many small Betters we will occasionally see a larger Better along the way. Repent to Better and don't overlook and neglect the many small Betters that collectively will lead to great cumulative change!
- Life is fluid and, as a result, we have a choice between either Better or Worse because we are not staying the same!
- Repent (turning from) possibly the biggest lie of all: "If I had the time . . ." for failing to remember, say and think "Time is NOT money!" means we value our Lives no more than money – Time is the essence of Life!
- And a second, debilitating lie: "I'm too tired to . . ." 90% of our weariness comes from carrying the guilt of wasting our Time and, as a result, wasting our Life.
- Start valuing, planning and using Time to Better versus letting it slip through our hands to Worse. How? Using 24 hours in purposeful and disciplined ways versus reacting to "what has to be done" because this typically ignores the most important parts of Life that may not fight for attention – Jesus Christ, marriages, children . . .
- Simplify Life by understanding the philosophical "Life" can be much more easily understood and "attacked," not in whole, but in its 10 major "pieces:" Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, Relational, Work, Rest, Financial, Recreation & Entertainment and Personal Grooming & Hygiene.

Better is not the natural trajectory of Life, but it is God's plan for every Christian and our inevitable path with His Grace – power promised as we fulfill God's planned Life's Artistry in our personal salvation – the good works He prepared in advance personally for each new Christian.