

Why?
THE ARTS IN SCRIPTURE

The first thing we learn about God is that he creates:

“God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.”

— Genesis 1:27

What does it mean that we’re made in his image? We are beings with heads, hands, and hearts that are born with the capacity to create.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

— Colossians 3:16-17

What kinds of creativity do we see in Scripture? Music, dancing, playing instruments, singing. And surprise, these are commands!

“Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp.”

— Psalm 149:3

“Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.”

— Psalm 96:1-3

“Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”

— Psalm 150:3-6

What other areas of creativity do we see in Scripture? The visual arts, architecture, design, craftsmanship, and so much more.

“He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft.”

— Exodus 35:31-33

“Now I have sent a skilled man, who has understanding, Hiram-abi, “the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre. He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, and in purple, blue, and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and to do all sorts of engraving and execute any design that may be assigned him, with your craftsmen, the craftsmen of my lord, David your father.”

— 2 Chronicles 2:13-14

“She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.”

— Proverbs 31:24

How are we to respond to God’s gift of creativity? In wonder, worship, and obedience.

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”

— Psalm 8:3-4

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

— Ephesians 2:10

Thoughts from others on our God-given creativity...

“The Bible tells us that God rejoices in our acts of creativity [not just our right doctrine and acts of obedience], just as any loving father would dote on his child’s wild drawings.”

— Makoto Fujimura, *Refractions: A Journey of Faith, Art, and Culture*

“God places us in creation with an invitation to unpack and unfurl all of the latent potential that God has folded into creation—and commissions us to do just that.”

— James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*

“Because we know God as both our Creator and our Redeemer, we seek to display his beauty and grace in our life and work.”

— Philip Graham Ryken, *Art for God’s Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts*

“The Christian faith presents us with a vision of created existence possessing its own latent orderliness and meaning, and that a crucial part of human creativity is to be attentive to that inherent order, to discover it and to bring it to light.”

— Jeremy S. Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*

“An art work has value as a creation because man is made in the image of God, and therefore man not only can love and think and feel emotion but also has the capacity to create.”

– Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible: Two Essays*