

Ephesians Series

Lesson #238

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Standards for Singing
Ephesians 5:18–21; Colossians 3:16



EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

Introduction:

***A vast variety of differences from church to church. Why?**

Elements of Biblical Worship

- a. Worshiping the Holy, Unique, Distinct, One-of-a-Kind Creator-Redeemer God.**
- b. Confession of sin**
- c. Proclamation of God's revelation**
- d. Prayer, supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings**
- e. Public reading of Scripture**
- f. Teaching the Scriptures**
- g. Giving**
- h. Observing the ordinances**
- i. Singing**

Results of being filled by the Spirit:

Eph. 5:19, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Eph. 5:20, “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ,

Eph. 5:21, “submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Eph. 5:22, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

Results of the Word dwelling richly:

Col 3:16b, “... teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Col. 3:17, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Col. 3:18, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

What are Our Assumptions?

Summary:

- **The Scripture is our sole authority on worship.**
- **God and God alone defines worship.**
- **But how do we evaluate music? Is that not a matter of personal taste? Or culture? (Subtext: good and bad music, art, literature, poetry, etc. are relative to culture and personal taste.) Is this true?**

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

**The Immensity
of God**



What the Bible Teaches About

The Holiness of God



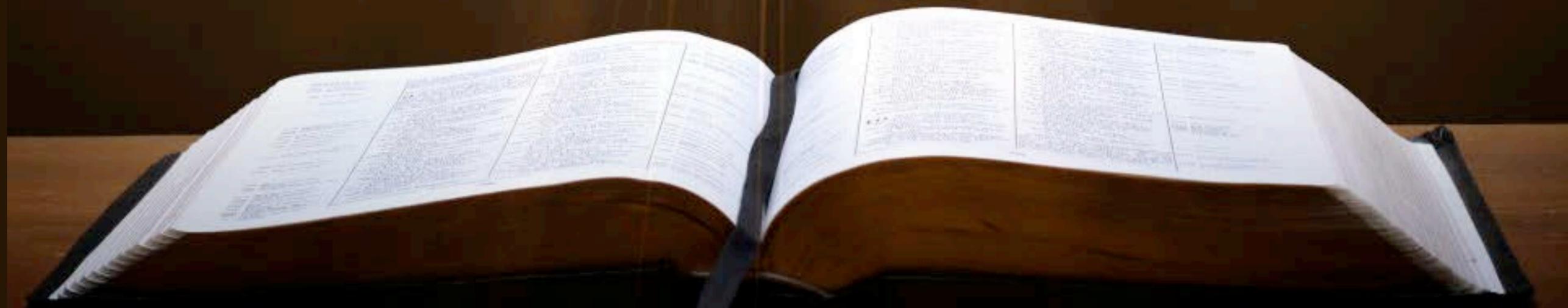
**What the Bible Teaches
About**

The Meaning of Worship



**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Corporate Worship



**What the Bible Teaches
About**

The Origins of Music



**What the Bible Teaches
About
The Elements and Forms
of Worship**



**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Worldview and Beauty



What the Bible Teaches About

The Nature of “the Church”



What the Bible Teaches About

The Purpose of the Meeting of the Church



Common assumptions which govern contemporary understanding of worship:

- **that the worship of the church should be attractive to those who are unbelievers, or who are baby believers with value systems totally shaped by their culture or subculture.**
- **that the purpose of the church is to enable its growth.**
- **that the criteria for evaluating worship is what it does to us on the inside, how it makes me feel, and that it should be uplifting and positive.**

Questions:

- 1. What is the purpose of the meeting of the Church?**
- 2. What is the purpose of congregational music?**
- 3. Should we conform to cultural norms? What about so-called “traditional” hymns? Weren’t those who wrote “traditional” hymns conforming to cultural norms?**

Conclusions:

- 1. The Church has a supernatural, divine origin, and is defined in all of its aspects by the Word of God.**
- 2. Though it has social, psychological, and musical aspects, it is not to be defined, managed, directed, by these autonomous human viewpoint systems.**
- 3. The Church is not designed to make unbelievers comfortable, but to teach them how to think, live, talk, and conduct their lives in a way that is different from the world/culture around them.**

What We Have Learned

- 1. Eph. 5:18/Col. 3:16 both list hymn singing *first* in the list of results of a life filled with the Word of God by means of the Holy Spirit.**
- 2. One primary purpose of hymn singing is to teach one another and admonish/correct one another.**
- 3. Other purposes:**
 - to express our joy for God's work in our lives (defense, Psa. 5:11, 63:7; His grace to us, Psa. 13:6, 59:16; remembering His works, Psa. 30:4)**
 - to declare His name among His people, Psa. 9:11**
 - to remind us of what God has done for us and challenge us to live in light of His purposes and grace.**

What We Have Learned

- 4. Singing is not about evangelism, making non-Christians comfortable, attracting people to a local church.**
- 5. Singing is not about how it makes us feel, but about describing and declaring who God is and what He has done.**
- 6. Hymns, both music and words, must be evaluated according to some standard.**

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Worldview and Beauty



From what source do our ideas of beauty derive?

Are there external, objective standards for beauty, for “good” art, “bad” art; “good” music, “bad” music?

Application

Statements on right, wrong, good, bad all begin with God

This is where we talk and argue.

Logical Sequence

These are the real issues, usually ignored.

Aesthetics (Beauty): What is beauty? What is good music, art, literature? Can we use terms like good and bad? Attractive, unattractive? On what basis?

Ethics: What is right? What is wrong? What is good or bad?

Epistemology: How do we know truth? Right from wrong? Just or unjust?

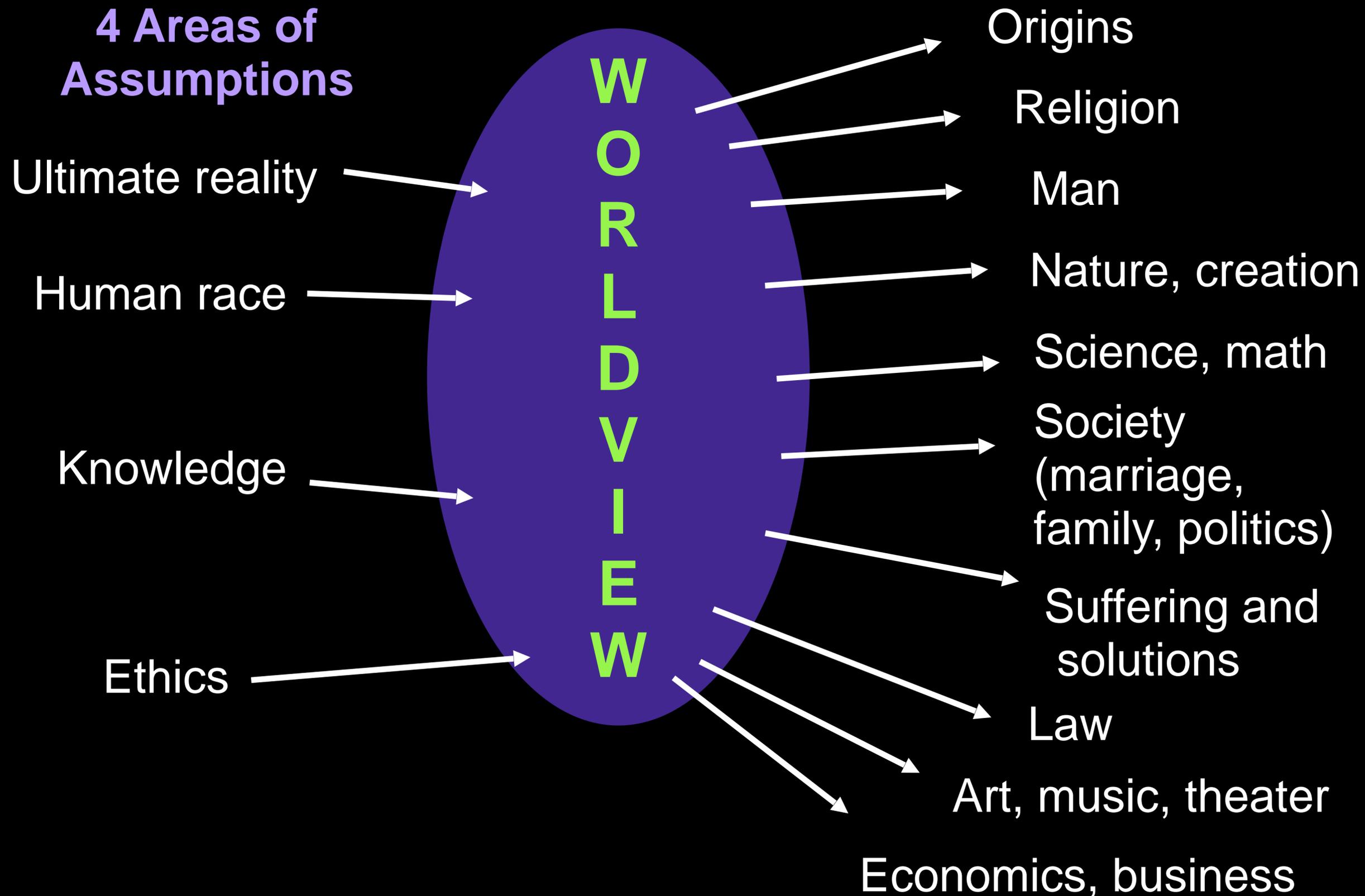
Metaphysics: Ultimate reality, i.e., God, matter, energy, nothing

Pressures of life

Components of Worldview

Foundation of *all* thought

The Worldview Mixmaster



CULTURE

1. The popular meaning:

the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.

2. The meaning here:

The beliefs and behaviors that characterize a group of people, from a small group such as a family or team, to a large group such as an ethnic group or national entity.

The beliefs influence the values, priorities, actions of a group of people. In this sense, what the Bible speaks of as worldliness is really the culture of different groups of fallen, rebellious human beings.

GOD CREATOR

TRUTH, BEAUTY
resides in the
thinking of God

God speaks to
everything He
creates or He
speaks to nothing
He creates.

FINITE UNIVERSE

Matter/Energy

Light

Vegetation

Animals

Man

[who he is;

Purpose

Social

(Marriage, Family,

Law, Politics)

Ethics

Aesthetics

(Art, Music, Literature)]

1. The Bible says a lot about “beauty.”

שְׁבִי (šĕbî, “ornament”), beauty in the sense of the ornamentation that makes something beautiful (e.g., Isa. 4:2).

טוֹב (tôb, “good”), occasionally used to describe physical beauty, usually in phrases like “good (tôb) of appearance.”

תִּפְאָרָה (tip̄ārâ), to beautify, glorify.

Words expressing Aesthetic excellence:

- **Glorious**
- **Magnificent**
- **Majestic**
- **Splendid**
- **Beautiful**
- **Excellent**

1. Standards for “beauty” are used by God from the beginning of Creation, Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25.

Gen. 1:4, “And God saw the light, that it was good;”

Gen. 1:10, “... And God saw that it was good.”

Gen. 1:12, “... And God saw that it was good.”

Gen. 1:18, “... And God saw that it was good.”

Gen. 1:21, “... And God saw that it was good.”

Gen. 1:25, “... And God saw that it was good.”

In some passages (1 Sam. 9:2; 1 Kings 20:3; Dan. 1:15) it specifically describes that which is agreeable to the sight or senses. Elsewhere it refers to that which gives pleasure to our higher nature (1 Sam. 25:8; Esther 2:7, 8:17, 9:19, 9:22; Zech. 8:19; Mal. 2:17).

1 Sam. 9:2, “And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.”

1 Kings 20:3, “ ‘Your silver and your gold are mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.’ ”

Dan. 1:15, “And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies.”

“Handsome,” “loveliest,” and “better,” all translate *tov* in these passages.

Esth. 2:7, “And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”

Esth. 5:9, “So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.”

Esth. 8:5, “and said, ‘If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces.’ ”

2. The Bible says a lot about “beauty.”

יָפִי (yōpî) “beauty”, noun,

יָפָה (yāpâ) “to be beautiful”,

יָפֵה (yāpeh) “beautiful”.

2 Chron. 20:21, “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:”

Psa. 45:11, “So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.”

“It is also implied by the fact that the sense of the term *tov*, denoting a thing that is excellent of its kind, rules out the possibility that the assessment regards the mere subjective response to creation by either the writer or God himself. The use of *tov* in this narrative suggests not just personal delight or pleasure but an objective quality about creation itself, irrespective of any particular person’s response.”

~James Spiegel, “Aesthetics and Worship,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* Volume 2, 4 (Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), 45–46.

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Isa. 28:5, “In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people,”

The Bible uses a number of terms to express the beauty and excellence of God. These terms establish God as the standard of beauty.

Thus,

God possesses *intrinsic* beauty which is the standard of all excellence, splendor, magnificence, beauty, and glory.

POINT: When God says something is *tov*, He is appealing to an ultimate standard.

Conclusion: Beauty is not a mere cultural relative, but an absolute, eternal, immutable standard residing in the thinking of God.