

Created for Leisure, Delight, Art, and Play

I. God claims all of life

- God commands us both to work *and* to rest
 - Gen 2:2–3: “... on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy ...”
 - Exod 20:8–10: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work ...”
 - 1 Tim 6:17: “God ... richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”
- Leisure is claimed by God:
 - C.S. Lewis: “our leisure, even our play, is a matter of serious concern. There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.”
- Leisure is a gift:
 - Seerveld: “Christians of the historic Reformation will be wise if they understand art to be like clothes: a gift of the Lord to cover our nakedness, to dress our human life with joy, to strengthen and enrich our labors of praising God, serving the neighbor and caring for the world.”
- In a broken world, leisure requires careful engagement:
 - Ken Myers: “cultural engagement without cultural wisdom leads to cultural captivity.”
- In short, God claims your free time (Exod 19:6; Ps 24:1; Matt 22:37). He cares about what you watch, what you listen to, what you play. And he cares *how* you do those things. We want all of our lives to say, “Jesus is Lord.” We want all of our lives to be an offering to him (Rom 12:1–2).

II. Ground rules for building a good Christian worldview

1. We want to know what God’s word says about this area of life. For the purpose of this class as an authoritative word ministry of the church, we are not interested in human preferences or taste. We are seeking aesthetic truths that transcend culture (Matt 15:9; Rom 14:4; Gal 5:1; Col 2:20).
2. The Scriptures do speak to all of life, even if not directly (2 Tim 3:15–17; 2 Pet 1:3). We are seeking to think along the groove of biblical truth, thinking of necessary implications of biblical truth even while we are not wanting to go beyond what is written.
3. Jesus is worth everything. Are you willing to give up even your favorite TV shows, movies, sports, music, etc. for his sake? Are you actually willing to be taught by God’s Word in this sphere?

III. God, the artist

- God made all things beautiful. He delights in his creation.
 - Prov 8:30–31 “then I [God’s wisdom] was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.”
 - All of nature shouts his goodness (Rom 1:20), even his *playfulness* (Job 40:20; Ps 104:26; Isa 55:12)
- Calvin: “All the arts come from God and are to be respected as divine inventions.”
- Written arts:

- God loves poetry: roughly 1/3 of the Bible is exquisitely well-crafted poetry.
- God loves narrative: the literary artistry of books like 1–2 Samuel is unparalleled.
- Performing arts:
 - God loves drama: the Song of Songs is a love drama, with different voices. Much of the prophets is dramatic dialogue.
 - God loves music and skillful singing (Ps 33:3)
- Visual arts:
 - God commissioned a beautiful tabernacle, involving high craftsmanship of many kinds (metal working, wood-working, tapestry-making, ointment preparation) (Exod 31:3)
- Athletics:
 - God made our bodies strong and agile: “The glory of young men is their strength” (Prov 20:29)
- People are God’s highest form of art. Indeed, we are *art which makes art*.

IV. Goals for leisure, delight, art, and play

Goals for this class:

1. To think biblically about this important area of our lives so that we can love God better in it.
2. To learn to discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil in this area.
3. To learn how to delight in God even as we delight in his creation.

What is the purpose of leisure in the economy of God?

1. The glory of God:
 - a. No art for art’s sake. No self-centered “me time.” We seek to dedicate all our leisure to God. We want all that we make and all that we enjoy to reflect his excellence.
2. Seeking wisdom:
 - a. The transformative, expansive power of art: does this activity leave you changed or right where you started, perhaps even degraded?
3. Refreshment and rejuvenation:
 - a. Reminding ourselves of what is true, beautiful, good: experiencing God’s goodness through these created things.
 - b. Symbiosis with work: by times of renewal, we are ready to face the challenges of work. In addition to sabbath, there were the feasts of the OT.
4. Loving our neighbor:
 - a. Listening because it’s your friend’s favorite song. Watching a kid movie with your kids in order to be with them.
 - b. Musicians and artists and athletes bless others with their stunning gifts.
 - c. Parents giving the gift of culture to the next generation.
5. Speaking truth: “Until our bodies are made new, like the body Jesus now enjoys, our calling is not to *escape* fleshly existence, nor to *sanctify* culture (since it is ‘common,’ shared by believer and unbeliever, and cannot be made holy), but to so influence our culture as to make it more consistent with the created nature of man, and to sanctify our own lives, because we are also living *in the Spirit*, with our minds set on the things that are above.” (Ken Myers)
6. A foretaste of heaven: you were created not just to work, but to *rest*.

God gives the gift of art and culture to all people. Nigel Goodwin: “God in His wisdom did not give all His gifts to Christians.” (cf. Gen 4:21–22; 1 Kgs 7:13–14).