

“The Artist and The Artwork”

Genesis 1:29-31

Art historians and critics around the world agree that one of the greatest works of art ever produced is Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa. This work was painted during the Italian Renaissance of the 16th century and depicts a homely woman with something of a curved smile. Both her expression and other novel elements of this painting have contributed to the fascination and fame of this piece ever since. Today, it hangs in the Louvre, one of the greatest galleries in the entire world, as a testament to its greatness.

Can you imagine if someone were to desecrate such a magnificent work as da Vinci’s Mona Lisa? What if a passerby were to give her collarbone a tattoo or paint highlights in her hair in an attempt to modernize her? It would be outlandish, unthinkable. Not only would such an act be disrespectful to the work of art itself and all who marvel at it, but it would disrespect the artist who poured out his talents and effort upon it.

In the same way, we have a masterpiece all around us. We have pristine mountaintops, which have been shaped by the Sculptor’s hand. We enjoy blue skies, unrivalled by any shade of paint on any artist’s palette. And there is no art that has ever been created that provides life-giving sustenance like the Great Creator’s masterpiece called Earth. In fact, it is so good that God Himself marveled at it when He created it.

In the first chapter of Genesis 1:29-31 we read: “God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth, and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it. [I have given] every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”

Humans—you and I—know that this Earth is good. After all, we depend on it. But, isn’t it fascinating that God, who depends on nothing from anyone, said it was “very good?” God is saying there is an inherent value in our Earth. There is something to be honored, appreciated, and respected.

God never creates something without purpose, and creation is no exception (Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:16). As servants of God, shouldn’t we do everything we can to see his purposes pursued in all things? Therefore, we must see that the things He calls holy remain holy, the things He calls righteous remain righteous and the things He calls good remain good. His declaration that this creation is good and the understanding that God is purposeful should move us to action.

Just as you have been created with an inherent value and purpose, so this Earth is meaningful, purposeful, and valuable. It naturally follows that we should do our best to protect and preserve what our Creator has declared is good. There is no better way to honor both the Artist and His amazing masterpiece.

Talk It Up:

1. Look around you. Where does the natural creation resemble the work of a thoughtful designer and artist?
2. At several points in the creation account, God refers to His creation as “good.” In what ways do you think that creation is good?
3. Read Colossians 1:16. People often believe that this Earth was created exclusively for us. However, this verse says it was created for Him. How can the Earth be created both by Him and for Him?
4. How have your actions, words, or thoughts this week affirmed the “whole purpose of God” in your life? (Acts 20:27)
5. How has your mindset and/or actions reflected God’s missional purpose for you this week? (Acts 20:29)
6. How has God’s Word built you up this week? (Acts 20:32)

Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for the beauty of His creation.
- Thank God for creating a planet with purpose and value.
- Ask God to open your eyes to ways your actions can demonstrate to others the purpose and value of His creation.
- Ask God to open the hearts of specific people in your life who need a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for God to start a spiritual awakening on your campus and on college campuses across the country and around the world.
- Take time to pray for any personal requests that group members may have.