



**Creativity and God:  
The Greatest Master Artist  
And The Story of Vincent van Gogh's Creative Journey**

We may not find this story in many art history books, yet this story comes alive in one of the oldest books penned. The Bible is the story of God's great creation; the story of beauty created out of chaos through God's word. A story of inheritance and legacy that we still live in and enjoy today. It is a great masterpiece of light that illuminates all darkness.

While we often search to discover new experiences, I find that if we sit back for a moment and look carefully at our surroundings, we will make a great discovery of hidden treasure right in front of our eyes: *the great masterpiece created by God of who we are*. As individuals, we are designed and created beautifully. None of us, or anything that our Heavenly Father has created, is alike. He is the ultimate Great Master who, through His word, created beauty in us and around us to enjoy for His glory.

*Look at the splendor of your skies,  
your creative genius glowing in the heavens.  
When I gaze at your moon and your stars,  
mounted like jewels in their settings,  
I know you are the fascinating artist who fashioned it all!*

Psalm 8:3 (TPT)

Did you every wonder where you got that new idea or how you decided to map out a plan for work or home? Where did you gain the thought to solve a problem or to develop a solution?



What led you to your sense of curiosity to discover the beauty and details of life, nature and your surroundings? Did you ever wonder what inspired you to write a story, create a new recipe, paint a landscape, sketch a cityscape, write a song, or play an instrument? *Did you ever wonder what inspired you to create?*



We begin the study in the book of Genesis, the first of sixty-six books penned in the Bible. I am awestruck by the first few verses as I discover how our God our Yahweh, our Elohim, is the most brilliant artist and Creator of the Universe. (The term "Elohim" means "supreme one" or "mighty one".)

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was completely formless and empty with nothing but darkness draped over the deep. God's Spirit hovered over the face of the waters and then God announced, "Let there be light," and light burst forth.

*And God saw the light as pleasing and beautiful, He used the light to dispel darkness.*

*God called the light "Day" and the darkness "Night".*

*And so the evening gave way to morning- the first day.*

Genesis 1: 1-3 (TPT)





As we read on in this first chapter of Genesis, we discover the amazing glory of God's great masterpiece. Everything He created -- from flourishing grasses, the washing of the waters and seas, the animals and sea creatures, the trees that reach across the skies to the tapestry of stars -- all of it was beautiful! And as we continue to read further in Genesis, Chapter 1, we discover what I believe to be our Father God's greatest creation of all, shaped by love.

*Then God said: "Let us make a man and a woman in our image to be like us.  
Let them reign over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the livestock,  
over the creatures that creep along the ground, and over the wild animals."  
Genesis 1:26 (TPT)*

*So God created man and woman and shaped them with his image inside of them.  
In his own beautiful image, He created his masterpiece.  
Yes, Male and female. He created them.  
Genesis 1:27 (TPT)*





I reflect for some time upon these words penned in this movement of Genesis. I am reminded of a recent study in the gospel of John and begin to understand and embrace how, at the very beginning, our God is powerful, purposeful, wise and full of glory. By speaking the word of creation from his eternal dwelling place of light, he made everything from nothing. He created each and every one of us as his beautiful and unique masterpieces.



I read in a study in the book, *The Image Maker* by Brian and Candice Simmons, “The blessing of God is so incredible! As for God, his work is perfect. He sees all that his hands have made and declares it to be “beautiful”, especially the work he is doing in us.”

*And through his creative inspiration this Living Expression made all things,  
For nothing has existence apart from him!*  
John 1:3 (TPT)

I closed my Bible and put down my pen and journal. I find myself inspired to create a piece of art to express my love for God’s beautiful creations that surround us. His beauty is to be seen through all things-- even when our days may be filled with extra long duties, challenges and uncertainties. I begin to feel a deep need in my soul for God’s word and His beauty in all things. I collect my drawing pad and pencils, and gather some photos, books, and magazines for inspiration.

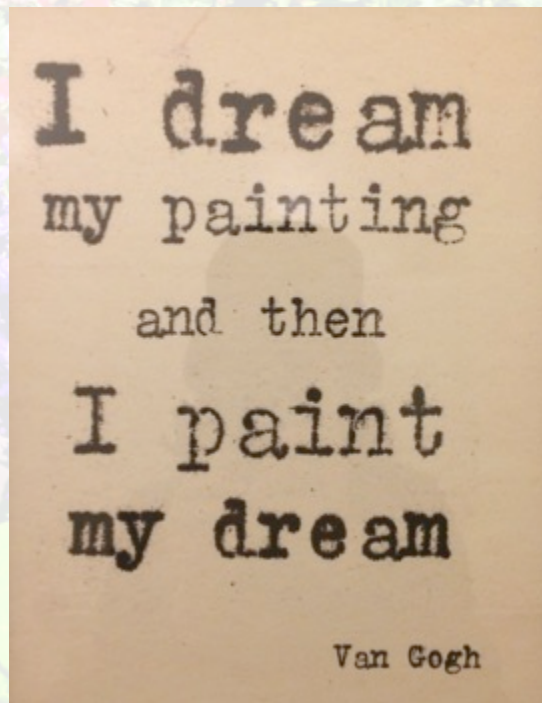
*Rembrandt is in the Wind* by Russ Ramsey is stacked within a collection of books on the side table of my studio. I also feel inspired by some of the writings in the book of stories I’ve been reading about Michelangelo and Liliias Trotter. Both stories have captured my imagination and have taken me on wonderfully creative journeys about the artist’s ability to express God’s beauty in many different ways.



I open Ramsey’s book to a story entitled, “The Starving Artist: Vincent van Gogh’s *The Red Vineyard* and the Elusive Nature of Contentment.” As, I begin to read, my heart is filled with the rich colors of peace as I realize just how deeply Vincent van Gogh has become entrenched in *my* soul and *my* artwork over the years.

The author opens the story of the life of van Gogh by describing how the crafting of his works were immersed in his world of color, shape, texture, scent, and composition, as though to see the purity of the beauty through the lens of God’s creation. The author tells his view point of van Gogh’s life through the selection of a painting entitled, “The Red Vineyard” which became the subject of the only painting he ever sold during his lifetime. (This painting hangs in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.) It is a classic hallmark of the van Gogh style: a thick application of paint, hatched brushstrokes, geometric outlines. It is not a painting that stands out to many. And some may not even know it is a van Gogh unless they read the plaque that accompanies the painting. *Yet, this is the only painting he sold during his lifetime.*





Ramsey reminds us that van Gogh created over 3,000 pieces—a far greater number than Rembrandt, Monet, Cezanne and many others who had years of time on their side. He added that van Gogh, through the second half of his career, would complete one painting every three to five days. Could you imagine having your creative heart so on fire as to produce the beauty of God's glory this rapidly? I do not think anyone (or any computer) in today's world could generate the deep richness of van Gogh's purity that has been so admired by so many across the globe and through the decades.

Ramsey questions the reader: *What of the futility that seems to belong to any creative endeavor?*

I began to think, *what was in the heart of van Gogh that inspired him to create?*

Ramsey quotes a passage of reflection by Vincent: 'Someone has a great fire in his soul and nobody ever comes to warm themselves at it, and the passers-by see nothing but a little smoke.'

As I read further into this short story illustration of van Gogh's life, I learn that even with all of his personal life challenges, he would never stop speaking of his love for God and Christ.

Ramsey adds that what van Gogh would not find what he was looking for in his lifetime, not because he died young, but because the glory, love, beauty and peace he hungered for were not in this world. But we learn they are real and are real for all us as we choose to open the door to our hearts for God's glory to fill us with His love.

Perhaps this is what C.S. Lewis described as a "welcome into the heart of things," -- a door of glory and a promise for all who have hearts of faith in God and Christ.

Van Gogh's calling and love for God started when he was in ministry before he began his journey as an artist. In his artwork, he wanted us to see the hope he had nurtured; to know that a truer greater glory of God is with us and lies ahead for us who believe.

*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
Psalm 19:1 (ESV)*





*...For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands,  
and your joy will be complete.  
Deuteronomy 15:16 (NIV)*

Van Gogh's art has taught us to see the stars that swirl in the sky, the unfolding of the Iris in bloom, the colorful dew that settles on the fields of poppies, and to *help us see it illuminated with a million little lights*. His illustration of God's creations are a true reminder for us to slow down and take the time to really see what our Heavenly Father has created "since The Beginning", a reminder for us to embrace in His glory and love.



The story of Vincent van Gogh's life reflects how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His Glory and purpose; to shine the light of beauty and love; to outshine any darkness we may face in our daily lives.

Van Gogh's desire to paint the purity of life in thick texture colors demonstrates that we can all see the beauty in any thing we are facing, if we are willing to open the door to our Hearts to welcome in God's Glory.

I put down the book and felt my soul awaken with a 'burning fire inside' to create. I opened my drawing pad, pulled out my color pencils and ink pens. I cut some fresh flowers from the garden to sketch out some new ideas for my next painting. The bright light from the day began to fade, and it was time to put my art tools away. My soul and heart felt refreshed, as though I was guided by God's glory and inspired by Van Gogh's story to express God's beauty.

I closed the door to my studio and took a walk through my home to visit some of the pieces I created that were influenced by van Gogh.







## DIRECTIVES

What fire is burning inside of you to open to God's glory more?

Write down God's beauty He created that inspires you to draw closer to Him.

Visit with God in His word to see how He created His great masterpieces.

Spend time reflecting upon God's word. Hear His voice speak to your heart and where He is calling you.



## Inspirational Bible Reading:

### The Beginning Genesis 1 The Message

1-2 First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

3-5 God spoke: "Light!"

And light appeared.

God saw that light was good  
and separated light from dark.

God named the light Day,  
he named the dark Night.

It was evening, it was morning—  
Day One.

6-8 God spoke: "Sky! In the middle of the waters;  
separate water from water!"

God made sky.

He separated the water under sky  
from the water above sky.

And there it was:  
he named sky the Heavens;  
It was evening, it was morning—  
Day Two.

9-10 God spoke: "Separate!

Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place;  
Land, appear!"

And there it was.

God named the land Earth.

He named the pooled water Ocean.

God saw that it was good.

11-13 God spoke: "Earth, green up! Grow all varieties  
of seed-bearing plants,  
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree."

And there it was.

Earth produced green seed-bearing plants,  
all varieties,

And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.

God saw that it was good.

It was evening, it was morning—  
Day Three.

14-15 God spoke: "Lights! Come out!

Shine in Heaven's sky!  
Separate Day from Night.



Mark seasons and days and years,  
Lights in Heaven's sky to give light to Earth."  
And there it was.

16-19 God made two big lights, the larger  
to take charge of Day,  
The smaller to be in charge of Night;  
and he made the stars.

God placed them in the heavenly sky  
to light up Earth

And oversee Day and Night,  
to separate light and dark.

God saw that it was good.

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Four.

20-23 God spoke: "Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!  
Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!"

God created the huge whales,  
all the swarm of life in the waters,  
And every kind and species of flying birds.

God saw that it was good.

God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!

Birds, reproduce on Earth!"

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Five.

24-25 God spoke: "Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind:  
cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds."

And there it was:

wild animals of every kind,  
Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.

God saw that it was good.

26-28 God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them  
reflecting our nature

So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,  
the birds in the air, the cattle,

And, yes, Earth itself,

and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

God created human beings;

he created them godlike,

Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

God blessed them:

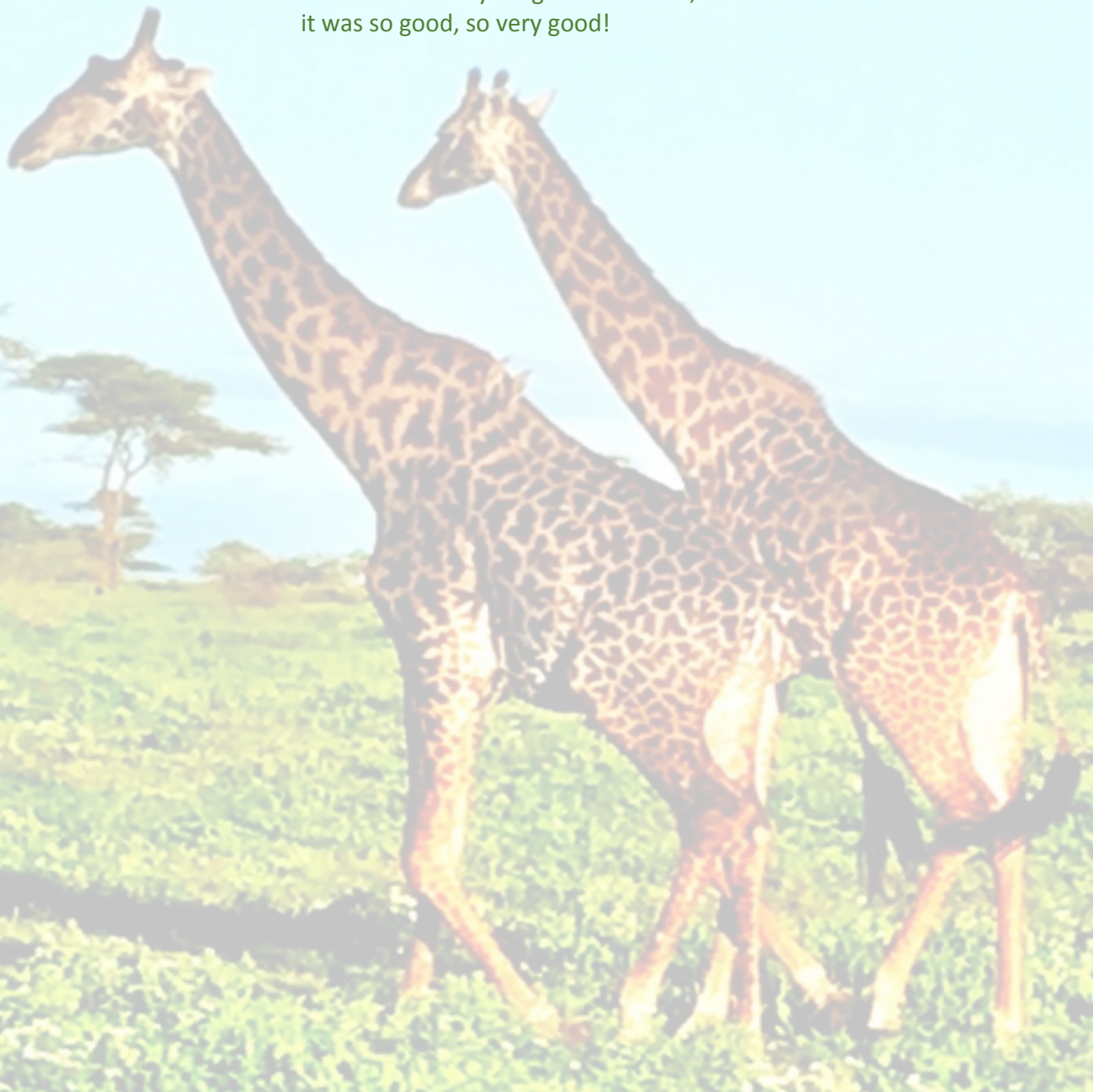
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,  
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

29-30 Then God said, "I've given you



every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth  
And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,  
given them to you for food.  
To all animals and all birds,  
everything that moves and breathes,  
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.”  
And there it was.  
31 God looked over everything he had made;  
it was so good, so very good!



Enjoy being God's portrait!