

Greater Wonders from God in 2024

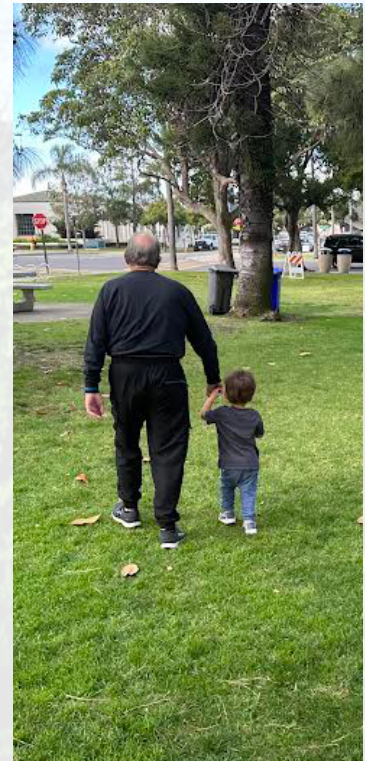
*You make known to me the path of life;
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
Psalm 16:11*

The other day, a new colleague was telling me about a special show they had attended in a dome-like theater where “science meets art”. He went on to explain how the dome was layered with technological images of nature and people, inside and out. As one walked into the dome, he said, your senses exploded from the projection of movement of the images and sounds of music being played throughout the dome. He explained this experience as a surreal moment and one he would never forget.

We continued our conversation and shared how science has influenced art for many centuries. I shared how Vermeer’s paintings were influenced by a special lens intended for biological study. With this lens, he was able to accurately convey light, tone and color to a degree that had never been achieved before.

A few days later, I continued to ponder our conversation. Though I appreciate learning and seeing new forms of art expression, I thought to myself: *does a virtual experience of nature under a dome mean we are missing out on the simplicity of God’s creativity in our daily lives?*

In the book entitled *Discovering God Through the Arts*, author Terry Glaspey talks about how we will never experience the awe and wonder of God if we are sleepwalking through life. As we grow older, we become dulled to the world around us. Glaspey asks the reader, are you becoming indifferent, cynical, world-weary, complacent and jaded? Have we lost the sense of our childlike wonder and curiosity to rediscover the beauty of the simplicity of God’s creations that surrounds us?



Glaspie takes us on a walk through his neighborhood (a self-guided experiment of sorts). He describes how, by forcing ourselves to slow down and truly look around him on his walk, we begin to discover the simple joys: watching the gentle movement of a leaf; a leaf softly dropping from a limb to the ground; the birds chanting to one another from one branch to the next; the autumn breeze as it washes across his face; the colors of the sky changing from soft blue to violet and pink.



Ah, the joy in seeing God's wonders all around oneself.

He adds:

This is what G.K. Chesterton had in mind when he reveled in the joy of childlikeness:

“Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.”

Glaspey continues to cite examples of God's wonder as expressed by artists across the arts from painting to writing to music. He shares that, sometimes, God may come to us 'incognito'. He may enter our lives when we least expect it. It may be when we are traveling through a season of our life with some challenges. We may be unaware of the peace and presence of God that accompanies us along the way. The wonder of God is present to us when we are willing to open our hearts to be awakened to the extraordinary. In this modern world of technology, let us put away the tendency to categorize, label, judge, evaluate and control everything we experience. He adds, "Slow down, take it in, sit with the experience. Honestly, isn't that even what real scientists do before they make their final conclusions?"



After so much time spent in wondrous reading, I decided it was time for me to take a break...time to put on my walking shoes and take Terry Glaspey's advice to go on a "child-like" adventure and open the eyes of my heart to discover God's glory around us. I asked my husband to join me and, as we took the first few steps out of our

home, I looked up. I followed the soft white brush strokes across the sky announcing a large army of clouds marching over the rolling hills towards us.

I grabbed my husband's hand and said, "Look, let's stop for a moment, take a deep breath and take in the beauty of God's supernatural glory."

When we reached the beach, the sun was beginning to set for the evening. And, when we looked to the east, those thunder clouds were getting closer and closer. I felt as though we were walking on a narrow pathway between "light" and the world.

"We are going to see a rainbow," said my husband.

Within a couple of minutes, a rainbow appeared across the land. As we continued to look up with laughter and joy, praising our God for his painting, we began to see another rainbow being painted next to the first one. I felt like a kid, watching as God's masterpiece of a perfect double rainbow unfolded with more and more clarity.



I wished I had my camera, however, my husband reminded me that we could simply etch this time on our hearts and minds. At that moment, we stopped and prayed with thankful hearts for God speaking to us with his signs and wonders. As we continued our journey home, the rainbows became more vibrant and pronounced.

We ran into our friend Paul and asked if he would take photos on his phone and send them to us. All was silent except for voices, young and old, saying, "Wow!" "Look!" "Oh my goodness, that is so beautiful!"

We prayed with Paul, thanking our God again for His beautiful masterpiece. We looked towards the ocean to see another magnificent painting of sunbeams reflecting on the ocean's surface. When we finished our prayers, God gave us one more sprinkle of love and encouragement as drops of rain from heaven blessed our land. Making the final trek of our journey up a hill by our home, we looked up again to see the moon shining through a cluster of clouds. We are so amazed and awed by our God's Glorious love for us and the live "reality show" of His creations.

What simplicity and joy one can discover when choosing to step outside to take in the essence of nature and beauty around us. The Joy of God can navigate us through all seasons of life. *Give yourself a "childlike" break of wonder and curiosity and open your heart to the joy of the moment, day and season.*



Although the light from day had faded when we arrived home, I had a deep heart desire to express our rainbow experience in a painting. I pulled out my paints, grabbed a canvas, my favorite brushes and my smock, and began to paint.

What joy I found in creating a painting from my "HeART" for His Glory. For a time, I was free of the ways of the world to praise God. Let's open the eyes of our hearts more to discover God's beauty in all things. Let's put away our jaded thoughts and discouragement, put on our "new shoes of hope", and walk with God through all seasons. Join me in 2024 on a discovery of the many joyous moments that surround us!



Directives:

Be free to laugh and play!

Find time every day to walk and marvel at the beauty of your surroundings.

Make time in the new year for a creative outlet such as painting, knitting, cooking, dance, movement or playing a musical instrument.

