

Jacob Brink

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First Year Seminar

“Economy of Wonder”

Access the video “the Economy of Wonder” on Moodle. Write/type answers out to the questions below for class discussion.

- 1) We “wonder” about things on a daily basis- “what is the weather going to be like tomorrow?”, “what is the answer to #5 on my biology homework?” etc. This type of “wondering” is often, as the video suggests, “transactional and pragmatic”. Afterall, we need to know whether to bring an umbrella and we want to get an A in biology. How is the idea of “Wonder” discussed in the video different?**

According to the video, our culture and society has lost the art of appreciating things in our life for the beauty and the appeal they carry in and of themselves. Wonder in the video is not simply the practical curiosity which enables us to function and survive; instead, wonder is the appreciation and enjoyment of things for their impractical, unnecessary beauty. Just like eating food could be done without flavor or taste, it is possible to live our whole lives without ever truly witnessing the beauty of the world. However, when we fail to recognize the wonder of the world and its beauty for beauty’s sake, we begin to forget the glory and honor of God, and we lose the ability to pray and to worship God. Since worshipping God is more than just a transaction, viewing God and religion as a means to an end will lead to a church that will never truly glorify God and worship him with feelings and emotions. Although most view wonder as its basic unnecessary admiration for beauty, Christians must view wonder as the key to understanding and truly worshipping God.

- 2) In an earlier video (Wolterstorff on a Liberal Arts education), you were encouraged to “engage the disciplines to gain an understanding of God’s world”. How does the video’s sense of Wonder and Beholding apply to your vocation as student? How does this relate to the distinction made earlier between knowledge and wisdom?**

This video encourages me to continue my role as a student at college, where I am learning more than is technically necessary for my career. For example, instead of only committing to engineering classes, I am required to take other classes such as an arts credit. Calvin College’s liberal arts curriculum emphasizes the need for students to not only learn what will ensure a career, but also to appreciate the things deemed unnecessary by society. Currently, I am taking a band class, which will not count towards any credits, but will definitely make an impact on my ability to enjoy art and beauty as God intended it to be used for. In the same way I and many other students are learning and experiencing a broader scope of classes, Christians are called to learn more than just knowledge of God; Christians are called to discern and meditate with wisdom. With knowledge comes only bare survival, while wisdom allows proper application and acknowledgement of God’s will.