

April 9, 2020

What does it mean to live with a belief in the existence of God? For many, of course, it all has to do with behavior because God is considered almost exclusively to be a judge and his authority will be felt upon our death and we will be accountable to God for our sins.

I don't know why that has such power but for legions of people down through the ages that has been the primary if not, the only idea or image of God that they can muster or, more likely, that they have been offered.

There is that famous image on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of God the creator of Adam touching fingertips but on the front wall of that chapel are the souls of the damned dropping into hell.

Ironically, the Gothic cathedrals were workshops of beauty for stonemasons, sculptors, glass/window makers, textile weavers and designers, gold and silver smiths, and architects, and landscapers, through generations of families and years of perpetual construction, so while the official doctrines might have offered a God of judgment and retribution, the people just kept making more beauty.

What about God in beauty, though, does God have anything to do with what we find beautiful or attractive in nature or made by human hands?

My answer is a resounding, Yes! God has everything to do with what is beautiful and attractive to us.

My young friends just "coming of age" who find each other so very attractive are experiencing the presence of God, the beauty that grandparents find in their grandchildren and vice versa, the wonder and awe that replace the urgent longings of youth that lovers who have aged together find in each other, those wonderful memories that dance though our minds of long gone days and just past moments, those, all of them, are the presence of God.

We long for many people, these days, and that longing might be like the grief that overtakes us when someone we love dies, but the longing is the presence of God.

It is my own experience and my own conviction that grief is the most potent of manifestations of love, and if God is love, he does not hide our loved ones from us in death or in life, but the longing itself is the presence of God seducing us to trust that our longing will be fulfilled. Just trust the longing.