

Review: The Good and Beautiful You

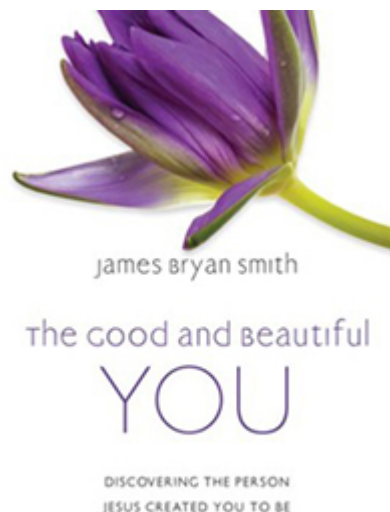
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The Good and Beautiful You

By James Bryan Smith (InterVarsity Press)

You are God's beloved in Jesus Christ. You dwell in an unshakeable kingdom. These two truths are foundational for the Christian life.

In *The Good and Beautiful You: Discovering the Person Jesus Created You to Be*, James Bryan Smith helps us to see how these two truths shape our self-understanding.



Smith invites us to consider our “theological anthropology,” or our beliefs about God and human beings. These beliefs are shaped by our understanding of God, what it means to be made in God’s image, the nature of sin, and how we can be renewed by grace through the salvation extended to us in Jesus.

The Good and Beautiful You examines toxic self-narratives that prevent us

from flourishing in our life with God.

Smith invites us to consider Christian teaching on the soul and the body, as well as how we are desired, loved and made for God, what it means to be forgiven, made alive, and made holy by the Spirit's power. Smith also examines the notion that each of us has a sacred story, calling, and a wonderful future as a glorified human being in God's eternal kingdom. In each of these areas, Smith identifies a false idea commonly present, and he counters these false ideas with true alternatives found in the biblical witness and through sound theological reflection.

Smith observes that we live from our deepest convictions about ourselves. When we live according to falsehood, we suffer. But when we embrace and enter a life that is built upon the truth about reality, we flourish. Faith in Christ helps us to see the truth about God and ourselves.

Our identity is discovered through our relationship to God through Jesus.

Smith not only explores biblical and theological ideas to help us embrace our identity in Christ. Each chapter is followed by a Christian spiritual discipline that displaces old ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving and helps establish new patterns that free us to live according to the way of Christ.

God changes us from the inside, out. As we grow in grace, we exhibit a more faithful witness to the "great salvation" the cross of Jesus has achieved and that we, by faith, receive.

As Smith writes: "You are no mere mortal. You are a divinely designed, deeply loved, fully forgiven, fully alive, sacred person, with a sacred story of grace, a sacred body, and a holy longing for God. You were perfectly designed before the foundation of this world, to do great works that give glory to God. And you are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe." (p.211)

These truths reflect who God has made us to be, calls us to be, and redeemed us to be, thanks to the wonderous, complete, perfect and finished work of Jesus Christ.

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