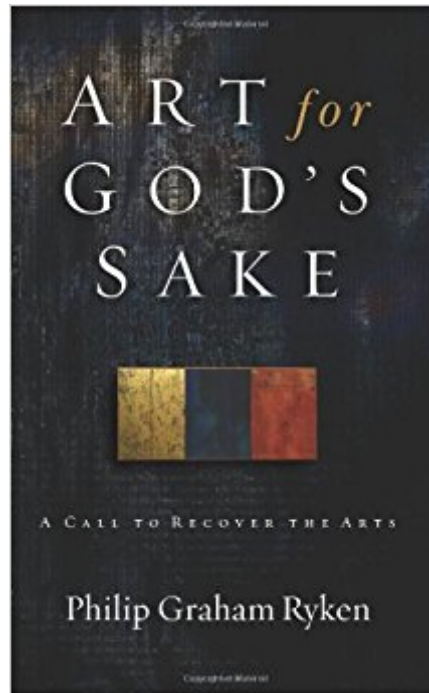


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# Art For God's Sake: A Call To Recover The Arts



## Synopsis

The creation sings to us with the visual beauty of God's handiwork. But what of man-made art? Much of it is devoid of sacred beauty and is often rejected by Christians. Christian artists struggle to find acceptance within the church. If all of life is to be viewed as under the lordship of Christ, can we rediscover what God's plan is for the arts? Philip Graham Ryken brings into sharp focus a biblical view of the arts and the artists who make art for God's sake. This is a concise yet comprehensive treatment of the major issue of the arts for all who seek answers.

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## Customer Reviews

The creation sings to us with the visual beauty of God's handiwork. But what of man-made art? Much of it is devoid of sacred beauty and is often rejected by Christians. Christian artists struggle to find acceptance within the church. If all of life is to be viewed as under the lordship of Christ, can we rediscover what God's plan is for the arts? Philip Graham Ryken brings into sharp focus a biblical view of the arts and the artists who make art for God's sake. This is a concise yet comprehensive treatment of the major issue of the arts for all who seek answers.

As a watercolor artist and a firm believer in Christ's love and redemption, I have often felt marginalized within the Christian community. One establishment wouldn't carry my work unless I put a Bible verse on a plaque at the bottom of the frame. Others wanted me to put obvious symbols of Christianity into my work. Still others struggled with the whole concept of a Christian being an artist and could not understand what value that call could possibly have in the Kingdom. How could art be

evangelical? What was its value in the face of recession or hunger, or sickness, or pain? In other words, art was frivolous and not part of the "real world". This little book was like a balm to my soul. It healed all the scarred places where words have wounded. It is a gem and a gift to artists in all disciplines. It re-enforced what I had silently believed and brought light to the dimmed and darkened places within me that I didn't even know were there. I am on the second reading and I'm hoping it will continue to bring a new freedom to my work. I highly recommend it for its words of affirmation from a Godly perspective..

*Art for God's Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts*, by Philip Graham Ryken is a solid resource, which aids in nurturing a deeper understanding of the arts and assists in cultivating a Biblical worldview and theology of the arts. *Art for God's Sake* is an unassuming, simple, and easy to read book about recovering the arts and restoring them to their right place in God's kingdom for God's kingdom purposes, and to God's own Glory. Ryken summarizes his work, "This is the Christian view of art: the artist is called and gifted by God-who loves all kinds of art; who maintains high aesthetic standards for goodness, truth, and beauty; and whose glory is art's highest goal." Ryken proposes that art has a redeeming purpose in God's plan and that art deals in the currency of reality and truth. This reality should include the hopeful aspects that the gospel narrative gives us. Ryken says, "Christian art is redemptive, and this is its highest purpose. Art is always an interpretation of reality, and the Christian should interpret reality in its total aspect, including the hope that has come into the world through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ." Philip Graham Ryken assesses the importance and the value of art in God's world saying, "At its best, art is able to satisfy our deep longing for beauty and communicate profound spiritual, intellectual, and emotional truth about the world that God has made for His glory." Not only is the aesthetical value of art highlighted here, but also the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and truth-value as well. The majority of the book, *Art for God's Sake*, looks at these themes and God's calling and equipping of the visual artists Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 31. From this passage and these two artists, Ryken uncovers four fundamental principles for a Christian theology of the arts. The four fundamental principles for a Christian theology of the arts are: 1. The artist's call and gift come from God. 2. God loves all kinds of art. 3. God maintains high standards of goodness, truth, and beauty. 4. Art is for the glory of God.

I am very concerned with our present culture's definitions of beauty since "repulsive" is fast becoming the new normal. This is one of the topics Philip Ryken addresses in his booklet, *Art for God's Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts*. It's a manifesto for artists of all types to do what they do for

the glory of God, basically debunking the addage that art needs no reason for being, i.e, It's just "Art for art's sake." Not only is the book meant to encourage artists in their calling, it is also meant to give nonartists a short introduction to thinking Christianly about the arts. Some reviewers at Goodreads said it was too simplistic, but for someone like me (with no art background), the simplicity was a huge plus. My favorite quote: "The problem with some modern and postmodern art is that it seeks to offer truth at the expense of beauty. It tells the truth only about ugliness and alienation, leaving out the beauty of creation and redemption. A good deal of so-called Christian art tends to have the opposite problem. It tries to show beauty without admitting the truth about sin, and to that extent it is false - dishonest about the tragic implications of our depravity. Think of all the bright, sentimental landscapes that portray an ideal world unaffected by the Fall, or the light, cheery melodies that characterize the Christian life as one of undiminished happiness. Such a world may be nice to imagine, but it is not the world God sent his Son to save."

This entire book is well structured, well argued, and very well thought out from the onset. However, I would highly recommend reading the entire work just to reach the last few pages. I walked away from reading this book with a hopeful motivating force driving me back to the craft, but with a firm reminder that it must be done with the proper heart. This is an excellent work that I hope you will read if you desire to create for more than just your own enjoyment.

This book blew me away. It was just what I needed. It didn't teach me a lot of new content, but presented ideas in a fresh way that felt very encouraging and do-able. I would recommend this book to everyone.

This tiny book is an excellent place to get started in learning about how Christianity and the arts relate. Ryken is a wonderful writer, and this brief treatment of the subject is filled with wisdom and inspiration. The book is probably too short to seriously aid those who have already invested a lot of time into studying the topic, but those who are getting started will find this very helpful and accessible. For my brief review on this book and most of the books out there on Christianity and the arts, see: [theologyforreallife.com/artsbooks](http://theologyforreallife.com/artsbooks)

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