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Book Review of “Beauty, Order, and Mystery”

I had the great opportunity to read “Beauty, Order and Mystery” by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson. This book was written in 2017 and is a great staple to have in anyone’s library. In Part One “A Theological Vision for Sexuality”, there was a lot of debate on whether Christianity was approaching sex in the correct way, from objectifying women’s bodies to homosexuality acceptance in the church as equal to heterosexual sex. In Part Two, “The Beauty and Brokenness of Sexuality”, there was an uncovering of problems such as the oversexualization of the “selfie”. Another problem that this part of the book uncovered was how people with gender dysphoria are treated and how can we be called to love if we cannot acknowledge that these people need help as well. Another problem was the difference in power between the genders resulting in the fact that men are stronger, but not to save themselves, but to give their lives in sacrificial love. To love the female with the love of Jesus toward the church. In Part Three, “Biblical and Historical Reflections on Gender and Sexuality”, there were clarifying passages that were meant to clarify much of the confusion that would seem to make people hesitant to becoming Christian. There were issues of whether men and women should have long or short hair and how it was seen in

the community along with head coverings. There was also talk of practicing chastity so that people didn't fall subject to lust.

This book was very insightful and helpful. It was a look into a different perspective of Christianity as it pertains to sexuality. I remember taking the course human sexuality during the summer and so I wondered if this book would take my understanding a bit further, thankfully it did. There are so many different aspects to sexuality in the secular world that we never stop to think of all the different angles that there could be in Christianity. Are we doing a service or a disservice by not talking about sex in church? Are we addressing the ones who feel awkward because they don't know what to do and there is no guidance? Are we providing the community that we have been instructed to have? One saying that I love that my church has is "We exist to connect people to people and people to God." That cannot be missed because if we do not have the community, how can we say that we are doing God's work by drawing all men? Not to say that any church is perfect, but we should be striving to make all our neighbors feel as if they belong, no matter what their preference. God can and will use anyone to get the glory for His kingdom, so who are we to shut them out?

In chapter 6, they spoke on the brokenness of "selfies" and how it literally took over the world. Celebrities, regular people and even churches were taken over by this phenomenon. It could be seen as something positive to bring people to awareness of the goodness of God, however, it was skewed into a self-addiction. People were so concerned with making the perfect selfie that eventually, the selfie was all anyone cared about. In the book, they describe a certain sex appeal was attached to every selfie to make it more attractive to people so that they would get more likes. The problem with this is that it eventually led to another phenomenon called "sexting". This is where people would send explicit pictures to one another instead of words.

Unfortunately, this also produced a problem with children in Middle and High schools around the country. This is just some of the brokenness that we are still experiencing currently. Are there any true resolutions to these problems that we are seeing according to this book? The authors like to think that there can be. If we could only get back to the root of what God has for us, the authors are pretty sure that life would get back on track. The problem with this theory is that sin has taken hold of the world, both in the secular section and the church section. It would be nice to have everyone go back to having a matrimonial relationship with Christ at the center, however, because of sin we most likely won't see that happening. The world is ever-changing with lots of new ideas becoming normalized, especially in the western culture that the world seems to mimic far too much.

I would 100% recommend this book for reading in your leisure time or as a great bible study. This book brings to light so many issues that the Christian community likes to sometimes hide under a rug. Between homosexuality, transgender, polygamy and more, this would open eyes and create honest and open dialogue for more understanding in how we are called to love all of God's creatures. The truth is that most of these people would love to come to church and learn more about the God that loves all and the God who created them, but sometimes people's emotions can alter their perception of what is right, wrong, and Godly.