

Spears Art Studio
Who Wants to Be Creative?

by D.S. Spears Ed D



Studio Snack #1©
D, S. Spears
oil on canvas
image size: 16"x20"
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Who Wants To Be Creative?

by D. S. Spears, Ed.D.

Most people would answer enthusiastically, “I do! I do!” I consider myself a creative thinker, but I’m among many who want to do and understand more about life, about myself, and about God. I’ve learned over the years that God solves my dilemmas over time and that I must not assume answers. The Holy Spirit brings fresh insight through studying the Word, through prayer, and from wisdom and experiences of others. Questions that I have asked:

1. So what’s the big deal about being creative?

Learning about God’s creation is inherent in art activities. I believe God wants us to be creative and has given us the potential to progressively become more like Him. He created us for His pleasure, and we can create for ours, which probably also pleases Him. Attention to detail may lead us to become more intimate with nature through drawing, gardening, writing and more, and with greater appreciation for the unsurpassed greatness of our Creator.

Being creative adds “spice” and excitement to existence. As the writer of Ecclesiastes so eloquently expressed, life can be mundane and feel futile periodically. A person does not have to be a professional artist to experience the thrill of creating.

Art experiences develop character. Patience is a virtue difficult to learn and more difficult to teach. If we make the decision to gain from the experience, art can teach us to not give up, to rework the first attempt, or to try again. Countless times I have reworked a painting, or started over if the first try was unredeemable. Creativity requires re-thinking, combining design elements into different arrangements, using different line quality or colors. For example, using a large brush sets me free from tiny detail too soon in a painting, and allows me to take advantage of the spontaneity produced by the brush strokes..

Learning to see accurately is one of the greatest benefits of art experiences. If we want realism, we must observe details, edges, line directions, shapes, sizes, and colors. This requires practice in seeing what is actually before our eyes to gain skill—also exercising patience. If we choose “abstract” images, one still must use art principles and elements skillfully, requiring practice and... patience... practice... patience... practice- - .

2. What part of us is creative?

Even small experiences in art benefit the brain and is especially valuable for children’s development. Continued experiences in art cause continued progress. As a child I liked drawing, and I’m still steadily improving. The creative experience of art spills over into other areas, so that fresh neural pathways in the brain are open, and new ideas are possible in any area of life.

Research has proved that the full creative process involves integration and harmonious functioning of both brain hemispheres; and the creative process stimulates “traditional” learning by creating new thought patterns and symbols. Students of all ages are thus able to apply problem-solving skills to the arts, and then apply those same skills to other learning and to life situations. (More information about art and the brain is in the article to follow this one: *Art Is Good for My Brain!* ©.

Scripture is silent about the brain, but speaks much about the mind, heart, and spirit. In Scripture, heart can refer to soul or spirit, depending upon context, but in general, refers to the “inner self.” Since we are made in God’s image, it is generally accepted that human beings are tri-fold like God, being made up of spirit, soul, and body. God is a Spirit,⁶ God has a Soul and God has a body.

The soul is also tri-fold, being made up of mind, will (freedom of choice) and emotions. The soul reveals the personality, and is influenced by experiences and by physical appearance. The mind has a direct connection to the physical brain, and it appears that emotions have a direct connection to the physical heart, the brain, and perhaps other organs. Conscience appears to reside in the soul, since it is related to knowledge, being the moral compass—the part of us that just “knows” stuff. James 2:26 states that the body without the spirit is dead, leading to the conclusion that the spirit is the “life force” of the body.⁹ The spirit of man must be connected to the Spirit of God for eternal life with God, but the spirit of man does continue to exist, whether or not the spirit is alive to God. The “soulish” will has a direct connection to the spirit through conscience. Only the Word of God, being sharper than a two-edged sword, can discern between soul, spirit, joint, and marrow. Scripture sums up all the activity of the body and soul as “flesh”, which is opposed to the Spirit (10).

This information about the three-part human being sheds light on the creative process as being unique for each person, since most appealing created products are directly the result of emotion with an intellectual mix.

3. How and where does creativity operate?

To even begin to answer this question requires more questions:

How does inspiration work? Inspiration involves more than the brain. Inspiration is stimulation of the mind and emotions to a high level of activity; something that causes a desire to express an idea. Ingredients of inspiration are

- imagination - a recombination of mental images from past
- experiences into new patterns, and
- intuition - direct knowledge, judgment, meaning, or idea that occurs without any known process of conscious thought; a spiritual process.

How does the creative process work?

- saturation
- information research,
- incubation—where imagination is at work, and
- illumination—sparked by intuition.

Does art belong to the “flesh” (body and soul) or to the spirit? According to the above, creativity belongs to the “inner man”, having its inspiration in the spirit, filtered through the soul, and involving the body and time to bring expression. It is, therefore, crucial to tap into godly inspiration. We all know there are artworks that have been inspired by wrong spirits.

4. Does art have to be religious to be godly?

Definitely not. We are told in Scripture to think about things that are lovely and of a good report (Philippians 4:8). Art has many purposes: practical, decorative, thought-provoking,

commercial, for practice in developing skills, and more. The artist's "signature" is imbedded in the artwork through line quality, choice of colors, etc., regardless of subject matter and is discerned often at a subconscious level, revealing much about the artist. Since art belongs to the spirit (inspiration and illumination), a beautiful landscape or a painting of children can lead to thinking about lovely things.

But an artwork doesn't necessarily have to be "lovely" either. Consider artists who make us think with subjects such as poverty, strong emotion, something "futuristic", or simply change recognizable forms. Picasso's *Guernica* expresses the horrors of war with greater impact than photography, and his "Blue Period" explored negative emotions that provoke interpretation and analysis—higher order thinking skills.

5. Isn't there already enough art in the world?

I struggled with this question many years ago, especially concerning the area of crafts. It seemed as if the world was cluttered with "junk" that wasn't "real art". However, after many years of teaching and observation of progress, I now believe the true value of art and crafts is the *process*, because of brain development, character building, learning to see accurately, and exercising discernment in making wise choices. Besides, it's fun. So, if you have not created some art, the answer to this question is "No."

6. If there's "nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), how can we be creative?

It seems as if all ideas, techniques, and processes have already been explored. Hundreds of artists whose creations speak to the masses are valued highly, greatly enriching culture, and hundreds more imitate them. Scores of artists are frustrated, because they have not achieved greatness in the public eye for innovation nor affected art history by creating new art "movements. We cannot create something from nothing like our fabulous Creator, but we can take the existing substances and arrange and present them in patterns and ideas that are new to us. *Therefore, creativity for us is discovery.* Again, the process is more important than the product. We should always aim to do our best and to learn from the experience, and if we turn out a masterpiece, we will be blessed and perhaps bless others.