

frame 1—**The Beauty of the Lord**

frame 2—**AIM** to complicate uniqueness

frame 3—**REASON** because unity and ‘the oneness of one’ may well
be larger and grander and more transcendently awesome than
we have so far granted, than we have yet recognized

frame 4—**SR** Ps 27:4: One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will
I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of
my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his
temple.

frame 5—**SUM** **Temples and catwalks serve radically different
purposes**

frame 6—**PRAYER:**

O God of grace’s charm,
Show us the beauty of Your face today,
Transfix us by Your splendor
Till all the little catwalks
Of our prancing self display
Grow dark and dismal
By comparison;
Till we can do no better
Than forever gaze,
And never ever, ever take our eyes off You
—through all eternity,
 for Jesus’ sake, Amen.”

frame 7—Lagerfeld’s Catwalk: PARIS, FRANCE – MARCH 04: The
following scenes are from Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Fall/Winter
2014-2015, featuring creations for Chanel by German designer Karl
Lagerfeld, set in a supermarket (Getty Images)

frame 8—Rihanna pushing a shopping cart + model with leggings full of
holes

frame 9—Rihanna et al in shopping cart

frame 10—Lagerfeld and one of his models: What do you find on a catwalk?
This one has shopping carts and supermarket products. But usually you find sophisticated women and men prancing in sophisticated attire

frame 11—Ms. Upstate New York: Madison Manuel [met her and her mom, Robbin, her photographer, at my son's wedding; then she was mom's assistant; now she's a beauty queen]

frame 12—Ms. Upstate NY + 2 other queens

frame 13—TEMPLE—1 Chr. 29:1: "... not for man, but for the LORD God."

We've said it before: **Temples and catwalks serve radically different purposes.** A catwalk is not a church. And God's house is not for fashion parades.

Robbin re Madison as contestant—not interested in being Ms. World; aim is to build her resume; she's intent on study, and study costs money, and the scholarship applicant who has the best resume gets the most money. Robbin and Madison are interested in more than looks, you might say; they're interested in scholarship. Academe is better than a parade of bodies, eh? What do you think? Which do you prefer—a catwalk for beauty, or a catwalk for scholarship?

I've been thinking of the many variations on this kind of option that we face in life:

frame 14—Glen Greenwald / Ed Snowden vs NSA

frame 15—ACLU vs the establishment

Sandy Hook parents vs NRA

frame 16—America vs Moscow / North Korea / China

Assad vs Al Qaeda

Iran vs Israel

frame 17—ABC vs CBS vs NBC

MSNBC vs FOX

This choosing thing is a very sensible strategy. Because, whoever is behind it, it keeps us from David's narrow minded focus on "one thing." What does David say? **Ps 27:4**: One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”

One thing. Not you, maybe, but me, I, Lael Caesar, I marvel and despair at how ready and earnest I can be about reflection on these many and varied journalistic and political and economic things, these things that, ultimately speaking, are such frighteningly immaterial questions. It's scary how nothing they are in God's eyes [Steve re earth's vs heaven's point of view]. In the grand scheme of things, as God shows it to us, all of them together don't deserve enough significance to get a column inch of Scripture. Somebody said we need round-the-clock news, so we invent things to be called news, or we keep repeating the same thing every 3 ½ seconds and call it breaking news.

And Lael Caesar's trigger finger doesn't make it any better. He's so trigger happy about advancing some argument or other in favor of, or against one or the other of these animals: political animals—Donkey vs Elephant; Bear vs Eagle. Economic animals: Bear vs Bull. Of course there are also the

theological options, inside stuff that the gentiles don't know too much about, but good Christians can fight over—the stern God vs the sweet God; the OT God vs the NT God; the legalistic God vs the gracious God; law vs grace; works vs faith; pre-lapsarian vs post-lapsarian; pro-1888 vs con-1888. And the ecclesiological options, matters of church polity—should elections be determined by financial strength or by numbers of baptisms? Should youth lead or should experience guide? What about diversity? Should it trump competence? And of course there's the big one--ordination or dis-ordination [that's my little bilingual joke. I hope you don't mind it]. So that when we select our committee to study the issue, and our committee to report on how our committee has looked at the issue, we have to select from all sides.

Does it strike any of my sisters and brothers how many opportunities life gives us to focus on more than one thing? Either this or that? Have you noticed how easy it is to feel sorry for people who aren't up on the news? Feel sorry for them; think less of them; dismiss the very suggestion that there may actually be more important issues to think about; that there are things that we might, with profit, give more attention to, while we give these a little less, or even ignore them completely. We, the illuminati, get to choose between the versuses: catwalk for looks vs catwalk for money; catwalk for flesh parade vs catwalk for academe; catwalk for body vs

catwalk for mind; catwalk for ogling vs catwalk for scholarship. One of these, you see, is really, really the opposite of the other: we have to figure things out and make sure we don't choose the bad one. Somewhat like choosing between porno and Hollywood.

The devil was there, you see, when Moses' goodbye appeal set before Canaan bound Israel, life and prosperity or death and adversity (Dt. 30:15). It stung him to the core of his wretched soul that he had deceived his own brain into choosing for misery when he could still have been bathing in eternal light, gazing at the beauty of the Lord in that shining temple at the center of reality. And he was still around when Joshua, on the other side of the Jordan, said goodbye too, and told Israel they could choose as they wished, but he and his house would serve God (Josh. 24:15). And he was still around three and a half thousand years later when God called a girl named Ellen to bear His messages to the remnant, and guided her to write, in *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 147: "The will is the governing power in the nature of man." He was there. Satan was there. The devil knows all you know, and all I know from Moses, and Joshua, and Ellen about the power of choice.

And so he presents us with choices. Choices that will consume us, and exhaust us, and bewilder us, and destroy us—because we're trying to be

conscientious. Ellen White talks in DA 330 about people who have chosen wrong for selfish reasons. She says their “continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added.” In that same context she says

frame 18— “Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.”

One principle. One principle. One principle. No perplexity. My precious wife does so much more for God and humanity than I ever do—every day. Sometimes she has rightly grieved over our stories about yesterday, about decisions and actions that have marked the days and years and stages of our lives. She can remember agonizing about things we did while I did them with such certainty. I don’t want you sanctifying my lack of reflection, my shallowness, my impetuosity and impulsivity. Character flaws are not the same as divinely inspired confidence. But there is such a thing as divinely inspired confidence: “Those who accept the one principle of making the

service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.”

One principle. One principle. David was into one principle. Life already has perplexities enough for us to complicate it further with doublemindedness. The doubleminded person is exhaustively and exhaustingly unstable (James 1:8). Besides, truth has enough absorbing fascinations in itself. The one who has seen the beauty of Jesus does not need to go off looking for the devil’s intrigues to make life interesting. **[Illus—surprise parties that require lies]**. What your life needs is one principle that is born of, fashioned by, and focused on God and God alone. That was David’s deal—one principle, one passion, one desire, one thing. What does David say? **Ps 27:4**: *One thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.” I want to live in God’s house so I can look at His beauty. **One thing**. Truth is, one thing with God is more than enough for your focus. God is one. That’s enough. One in three. That’s too much. Go blow your mind. Like we said at the beginning, ‘the oneness of one’ may well be larger and grander and more transcendently awesome than we have so far granted, than we have yet

recognized. And David would agree. Because David's one thing looks very much like too much. David's one thing is at least three things:

NRSV: One thing I asked of the LORD,

that will I seek after:

a) to live in the house of the LORD

all the days of my life,

b) to behold the beauty of the LORD,

and **c)** to inquire in his temple.

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NIV	dwell, gaze, seek	<i>yšb, chzh, bqr</i> [D stem]
NASB	dwell, behold, meditate	
NKJV	dwell, behold, inquire	
ESV	dwell, gaze, inquire	
NET	live, gaze, contemplate	

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How big is one thing? And what is 'the beauty of the Lord'? Second one first: the word does mean 'beauty.' So God is beautiful. But the word also means delightfulness. You want to think of delightfulness. When I think of delight I think of children. **Illus:** playing with daddy and squealing with delight; getting surprises from daddy; getting tossed into the sky by daddy. You're so light because all the weight of your sins is gone; Daddy has forgiven your sins; you can squeal with delight. And we're only just beginning How big is one thing? Enough, bigger than you, if it's God.

How big is one thing? Everything, if what your're looking for is the beauty of the Lord. Because you don't discover the beauty of the Lord by focusing on two things, and three things, and many things. You don't get to stare at your beautiful God by multitasking. You get to look into His face in His temple when your hunger is for Him, and your thirst is for Him, and your craving and your passion is for Him so much so that you know you want nothing else, and in any case, you have no intention of settling for anything else. You know the song:

frame 19—I have walked alone with Jesus
 In a fellowship divine;
 Nevermore can earth allure me—
 I am His and He is mine.
 I have seen Him, I have known Him,
 For He deigns to walk with me,
 And the glory of His presence
 Will be mine eternally!

frame 20—Oh the glory of His presence!
 Oh the beauty of His face!
 I am His and His forever;
 He has won me by His grace.

You don't get that from multitasking. You don't get that from being careful and troubled about many things:

JPS One thing I ask of the LORD, only that do I seek:
 a) to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
 b) to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD,
 c) to frequent His temple.

This a temple centered thing. It's different from a catwalk oriented thing.

Temples and catwalks serve radically different purposes. In the end, the catwalk is so people will look at me. The temple is so I can see Jesus. You have to decide which you want, folks: you want to be famous? Is that why you dreamed up Vida International? You want to be rich? Is that why you operate Harbert Hills Academy? Is that what OCI is all about? You want to be celebrated for your brilliance? Is that why you work at Wildwood? You want people to see how beautiful you are, or cute, or fine, or handsome? Is that the basis of Yuchee Pines' existence? What do you want—a catwalk or a temple? You want glory? Or you want to experience the glory of His Presence, and swoon before the beauty of His face? What do you want?

Catwalks and temples serve radically different purposes. There's another 7-word way to say that: **Catwalk business is different from temple business.** When your committee meets to vote on the new building do you remember to ask yourselves the 'one thing' question? Is this catwalk business, or is it temple business? Is this so people can look at me in Jakarta, or is this so people can see the beauty of the Lord my God in Jakarta? When personalities seem to be traveling in opposite directions in the same space, can the chair find a gracious way to remind everybody, even when the clashing geniuses seem to forget? Because OCI is not 'look-at-me' business;

OCI is 'look-at-Jesus' business. **Catwalk business is different from temple business. Catwalks and temples serve radically different purposes.**

When your own tech savvy, business savvy, book savvy cries out for some recognition, when your mastery at moving agendas leaves you yourself feeling good, 'I can really do this; I'm really good at this,' are you ready to remind yourself: this is NOT a catwalk; this is temple business? I am NOT on parade; I am neither a pair of legs on display nor a brain on display; this is NOT a show (Is not this great Babylon that I have built!). This is NOT a show. I'm looking at Jesus. When the gifted offer themselves for employment, do the candidacies get the scrutiny they deserve? Or are we glad for a little Judas here or there?

DA717: Judas was highly regarded by the disciples, and had great influence over them. He himself had a high opinion of his own qualifications, and looked upon his brethren as greatly inferior to him in judgment and ability. They did not see their opportunities, he thought, and take advantage of circumstances. The church would never prosper with such shortsighted men as leaders.

You want a brilliant Judas in your ranks? There may be one or two available. Think about it. When the next sweetheart deal presents itself, will you make sure it isn't 30 pieces of silver? Maybe there's money you could make for your project by selling Jesus. Is that what you want, or are you lost in contemplation of His beauty? When you have your capital campaigns, how do you impress potential donors? And donors, when you give or think of

giving, how are you thinking--they'll really remember me for this? Or this will glorify Jesus? Are you thinking catwalk, or are you thinking temple?

BTW, how do you do this contemplating thing? Actually, the question is, are you willing? Because He is ready for the encounter with you! He is at your Jabbok River, at your burning bush. Are you ready? Isaiah's uncle the King Uzziah had to die before Isaiah was ready. Then he discovered Him in the temple. You can be in the temple and still miss Him. Or you can be galloping to Damascus away from Him. But trust me, He wants you. Are you ready? He is in your house, Martha. The options are yours, or Mary's: You may take care of Jesus—particularly relevant to self supporting missionaries—or you may sit at His feet; let him take care of you (Luke 10:41, 42).

You have your choices—run around and do many things and be remembered as the visionary who made things happen. Or, there's **SC70**, where Ellen White shows how to streamline everything into one thing, so that prayer and work is all nothing more than gazing on the beauty of the Lord, and being transformed into His beauty of character: “Consecrate yourself to God”

And you've heard this before, it's precious:

frame 21—DA83: It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones [*end of slide]. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.

As we associate together, we may be a blessing to one another. If we are Christ's, our sweetest thoughts will be of Him. **frame 22*—We shall love to talk of Him; and as we speak to one another of His love, our hearts will be softened by divine influences. Beholding the beauty of His character, we shall be “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” 2 Co. 3:18.

Moment by moment I'm kept in His love,
Moment by moment I've light from above;
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine,
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.

Ps. 27:4: One thing And that's what heaven is about--looking at
Jesus forever and ever and ever and ever