

## Butterflies, Mountains and Grandkids

Whenever you get a new phone, computer, or similar device, you will likely spend a little time setting up the background. You might give some thought to onlookers, but your background is primarily for you; a photo of family or friends, or maybe a place you have visited, or where you would like to visit. You might choose a beautiful landscape or something artistic.

When you look at your favored photo it evokes a response. If it is your own photo, you remember the time and the circumstances; the story that goes along with it.

Whether beautiful or ordinary, it is *pleasant* to you and you are drawn to it in some way. You enjoy seeing it when you activate your phone or start your computer. From time to time you might even pause and ‘gaze through’ the objects on your screen and just focus on your background photo. *Pleasing*.

I gave my mom a butterfly calendar. It was made up of photos I had taken. (Even an amateur with a little patience and luck can get a nice pic if he ‘clicks’ enough.) She thought the butterflies were beautiful, but I am quite sure she preferred an earlier calendar featuring her siblings. Those photos were taken by my dad while they were on one of their fall excursions across America.

Each month was a memory; each month, people she knew and loved. (She never had met any of my butterflies.) I’m pretty sure she enjoyed the calendar with her siblings again and again even though the calendar year had passed. *Lovely*.

The Apostle Paul uses a word in the short book of Philippians that occurs in the New Testament only once. Most translations use the word ‘lovely,’ but it should not be confused with external beauty. It is a word that is rooted in

‘affection.’ When applied to things, it describes things that are *pleasing* and that *draw ones heart with affection*. When applied to people, it describes those who are *dear* or *beloved* or who bring *pleasure* to your heart. People and things that are *lovely* draw the affection of the heart.

The opposite of *lovely*, as Paul uses it, would be things *despised, rejected, or discarded*.

Paul encouraged Christians...

**Whatever things are...lovely...  
Dwell on these things.**

—Philippians 4:8

I’m pretty sure that Paul was not thinking about photos. However, many ‘pics’ fit the definition. I cannot exclude the Colorado mountains on my calendar and the ‘lovely’ thoughts generated when I see the picture. I remember getting up early to greet the sunrise. I remember the hike, the thin air (and me huffing and puffing)...And I remember the transforming colors of the sky as the sun climbed the distant peaks...and then *first light* (click, click, click)...and then slowly resting my camera at my side knowing that no camera, no photographer could possibly capture that moment. I stood in awe thinking about God and the majesty of his creation. *Lovely*.

‘Lovely’ is not confined to religious things, so, mountains and butterflies; an enjoyable activity; a favorite pet; family and friends; fellow Christians encouraged; the uncountable blessings from God; they are all included.

And did I mention my grandchildren. Turn off the TV; No! sell the TV, and turn the grandkids loose...*Lovely, pleasing, drawing affection*.

Why not pause...and spend time each day thinking about *lovely* things.