

preach to the people in overseas crusades or church services, I always made it a point to pray and “see” people responding. I would “see” the prayer lines and “see” the daytime leadership sessions helping pastors. I learned to intentionally intertwine my prayers with my imagination. **Thus, through all the years, I discovered that my heart is like a “garden” for faith. It has the ability to “produce” what I plant in it.** Dear friend, your imagination is a powerful force that can (and should) be harnessed for God’s purposes and plans.



The Garden of Your Heart

I want to challenge you to revisit the *“Parable of the Sower”* in light of this study on the imagination (Mark 4:1-20). When the Bible refers to the “heart” I’m convinced that it includes your mind and imagination. Jesus clearly teaches that our hearts are like gardens. **Just as the soil in a garden has the power to germinate seeds, so your heart has creative power to “produce.” Your heart tends to bring into reality whatever seed you plant in it.** Thus, it’s very important that you control what “seeds” you plant in the garden of your heart. Mark 4:14 says, *“The sower sows the Word.”* Ideally, you should be planting the seed of God’s Word in your heart. If you do, then you’ll have a godly harvest. Proverbs 4:23 says, *“Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues (forces) of life.”* The Hebrew word for “issues” can also be translated “forces.” Why does God tell us to protect our hearts? One reason is that our hearts have an innate ability to “grow” whatever seed is planted there. Thus, there’s good news and bad news regarding the garden of your heart! The good news is that it has the ability to produce the good things that God has for you. The bad news is that if you plant wrong seeds, it can likewise produce bad things. The criminal didn’t just wake

one day and discover that he was a criminal. He first imagined the crime, thought about it, associated with the wrong people, and eventually took steps in that direction. The truth is that the garden of his heart was involved. One of the key issues for your life is to make sure that you are planting the right kind of “seeds” in the garden of your heart. The primary seed should be God’s Word. Additionally, let the Holy Spirit inspire you. The Holy Spirit wants to inspire you with His goals, plans, dreams, and desires. Here are some important guidelines to help you harness the power of your imagination:

Guidelines for Faith Imagination

- 1. Realize the dangers of using your imagination the wrong way.** As we’ve said, your heart will germinate the seeds you plant in it. Protect yourself by discerning between good seed and bad seed.
- 2. Make the Word of God the primary “seed” in your heart.** As you read and study God’s Word it will produce faith. Let it inspire you with God’s dreams and goals.
- 3. Let the Holy Spirit plant seeds in your heart -- God’s desires, goals, and plans.** Be sensitive to the things that you sense the Holy Spirit is trying to plant in your heart. Don’t be afraid to dream with God!
- 4. Pray over the goals that God gives you. Do your best to discern His timing and His way.** As you pray and commune with the Lord, let Him show you His timing and His way. Timing is critical for success.
- 5. Use photos to reinforce the dreams that God puts in your heart.** Photos, posters, and paintings can inspire your heart with fresh vision and new possibilities.
- 6. Realize that your imagination is like a movie “in process.” Don’t be afraid to let God adjust your plans as time goes on.** We all “know in part.” Sometimes we miss God’s timing. Thus, allow God to help you adjust your goals and plans along the way. Be flexible.
- 7. Guard your heart and do not allow others to steal your seed.** Jesus talked about the enemy trying to steal the seed from our hearts (Mk 4:15). Don’t let others rob you of what God wants to do in your life.

Dear friend, may your imagination be filled with the good seed of God’s goals, plans, and dreams for your life. ■ -- **Jason Peebles**

Key Memory Verse:

“Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues (the forces) of life.”

Proverbs 3:23

Prayer for Faith Imagination

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. I commit my mind and imagination to You for your purposes. Teach me to “see” with the eyes of faith and walk in your plans. Thank you for your great love. In Jesus Name – Amen.”

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The Power of Your Imagination

by Jason Peebles

One of the greatest “tools” that God has given you for success is your imagination. When used properly, your imagination can become a powerful force for your future. **In fact, I want to go on record as saying that I believe your imagination is one of the primary areas that the Holy Spirit wants to use to fulfill God’s plan in your life.** It’s no coincidence that the Bible speaks of visions and dreams. These are things that occur in the heart and imagination and not simply on the cognitive level. Romans 12:1-3 says, *“Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”* Notice the connection between renewing your mind and finding God’s will. When God speaks of renewing your mind He means ALL aspects of your mind -- and that certainly includes your imagination. Your mind and imagination are connected to God’s plan.

Pictures and Words

In my missionary travels around the world, I’ve witnessed firsthand how parents teach their children to read. You don’t have to be a linguistic expert to know what I’m about to say is true. Without exception, in every culture, they use books that

associate pictures with words. There are usually photos of dogs, cats, horses, etc. – and then the word is associated with it. It seems that our minds are designed to process images and pictures long before we can understand written words. Even the expensive language courses that you can buy these days use this same technique.

Now, when it comes to Bible classes, I'm surprised at how little teaching (if any) Christians ever receive on the imagination. I rarely hear it mentioned when others teach on faith. Furthermore, it baffles me that sometimes I sense resistance when I mention the imagination in some churches. I suppose it's because there are metaphysical groups that solely focus on the "mind" to the exclusion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yet, to ignore the imagination is somewhat like "tossing out the baby with the bath water." Yes, your imagination must be properly harnessed for God's purposes, just like your thoughts must be. But the reality is that people are going to use their imaginations whether they have formal teaching on it or not. In my opinion, it's far better to equip believers with what the Bible says about the mind and imagination than to ignore it.

Examples from God's Word

To me, the idea of the imagination is one of those "self-evident" truths that hardly needs defending. But let's explore several interesting examples in the Bible. In Genesis 15:5,6 God said to Abram: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if you can number them; and He said, 'So shall they seed be.' And He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Notice that God didn't simply "say" what was to come – He told Abram to "look" at the stars and gain a mental picture. **This is an important point. What was God doing? God was using Abram's imagination to "show him" an image of his future.** Unlike Moses, God did not merely "write" tablets but used Abram's imagination. Later, God used the "sand of the seashore" to reinforce the same idea (Gen 22:17). Thus, when Abram thought about his future, He had an image in his heart of the stars at night and the sand along the seashore.

In another example, King David "saw" by the Holy Spirit the Temple that he never built. God showed him the specific plans and dimensions that

he passed along to his son. 1 Chronicles 28:11-12 says, "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern -- the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit." **This is an absolutely incredible story! The Holy Spirit gave King David detailed graphics and blueprints of a Temple that Solomon would later build. It's obvious that God used David's mind and imagination in a powerful way.** It goes on in verse 19 to say: "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." **Notice that David refers to "writings" and "patterns" that the Holy Spirit gave him. I believe that this same process is available to all Christians, for we have the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit can "show" you things to come (Jn 16:13).** In a very real way, all that the Bible says about visions and dreams is further evidence of God's desire to inspire your imagination. The Holy Spirit "speaks" and "shows."

The apostle Paul even used the power of the imagination for evangelism. Galatians 3:1 says, "Before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you." My friend, Jesus died in Jerusalem, not Galatia! Yet Paul had painted such a vivid picture of the crucifixion that it was as if they had been there and "seen" it. And what was the result? The wonderful result was that the Galatians had faith and believed in Christ. It's interesting to me that some of the most effective methods of evangelism today involve mime, acting, movies, and the arts. Why? Because when people "see it" their faith is increased. **Likewise, you must start "seeing" what God wants for your life. Faith starts by becoming convinced of God's will and then "seeing it" in your mind and heart.** If you are going to fulfill God's will, then your imagination is an absolutely critical element for your faith

In a similar way, Jesus received His goals from the Father. John 5:19, 20 says, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel." You may say, "How does this apply to my imagination?" Well, Jesus is our example in all things. **Just as Christ walked with the Father, communed with Him, and "saw" His works in advance, so we, too, can walk in the same**

manner. John 14:21 tells us that through our love walk with Christ He will "manifest" Himself to us. As a believer, God wants to use your mind and imagination to fulfill His plans in your life. If you've never done it, let me encourage you to pause right now and whisper a prayer of commitment. Commit your mind and imagination afresh to God. If you need to repent for an uncontrolled mind, then do it now. He will forgive you and help you harness the power of your imagination for His purposes.



Personal Experiences

Though we do not base our faith on personal testimonies, I thought it would be helpful for me to deviate from my norm and share some personal stories. I could fill many books on how (in my opinion) my imagination has been used by the Holy Spirit in my walk with God.

Before I actually stepped into full time ministry in 1979, I "saw" things in my heart that were in the future. I remember standing one night by the beautiful fountains on the campus of Oral Roberts University where I was a student. If I've ever heard God's Spirit in my mind and heart, I heard Him that night. He began to speak to my heart by asking me to look at the water flowing out of the fountains. I was "hearing" and I was "seeing." It was a cascading fountain in the center of the campus that flowed from one level to another. The Holy Spirit began telling me (in my heart) that my ministry would start with just "me" but in time, flow to the nations. He told me that it would involve missionaries around the world. I also "saw" a map (in my imagination) with lights all over it.

He said, "These are the places that you and the missionaries you serve must go for His Name's sake." I responded, "If that be so, then let there be more lights." Instantly, it was as if a person turned on a second set of lights on the map. I've come to believe that the first set of lights are my own travels -- and the second set of lights are our missionaries. **Today, if you were to put lights on a world map where our office has missionaries around the world, it would look like the map that I saw years ago. I "saw" it long before my mind would ever know "how" to do it.** And, there were other things that I heard and saw that night. I now know from experience that the Holy Spirit is always years ahead of what our limited minds know. That's why it's important to pray in the Spirit and not just with the mind (1 Cor 14:14,15). Many of the things that were spoken to me that night are now being fulfilled. Others things are yet to be realized.

Later, in my ministry, I also "saw" myself flying an airplane before I ever had my first lesson. After years of traveling, my body and mind were getting weary of constant travel. I needed a faster mode of transportation. In this case, it was more my own desire that led to the vision. I began "seeing" myself owning an airplane. Thus, I started putting up photos in my office that reinforced what I felt God would help me accomplish. I started reading airplane magazines and putting up pictures of single engine airplanes that I felt would do the job. I did later, in fact, become a pilot. I've owned several airplanes through the years. In one case, a businessman donated a beautiful Cessna 421 Golden Eagle. It was a pressurized twin engine airplane with tremendous capabilities. I flew it for many years. Flying may not be for everyone, but in my case, it served me well and allowed me to cover great distances. I was able to easily get to out-of-the-way places that I otherwise would not have visited. I even hauled medical supplies and equipment outside the USA. Through the years, I've flown thousands of hours for the ministry.

In a similar way, my imagination "saw" our office building long before we would own one. Our ministry rented office space for many years, but we are now in the process of paying for an office that we own in a beautiful office park. **I could go on and on with examples, but the simple yet profound truth is that my imagination has served as a "garden" for my faith and the voice of the Holy Spirit.** One other quick example. Before I would