

Imagination - Friend or Foe?

Introduction – This paper was written by a high school and college mathematics instructor. It was not written or produced by any particular denomination, cult, or religious leader. It is provided free of charge as an expression of God's love for mankind.



Imagination and creativity can be wonderful. Albert Einstein once said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." There are people who even go so far to say that imagination is more important than reality. In contrast, Thomas Edison leaned in a more physical direction when he said that genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.

The root of the word *imagination* is image. Imagination is the ability to produce images and ideas in your mind often independent of any outside stimulation of the physical senses. In other words, you have a little movie theater inside your head. So, what's playing today on the screen in your mind? Are the images uplifting or is your mind filled with fear, corruption, regret, or violence? In the Bible, we read of a very wealthy man named Job who lost it all. He said, "'For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me'" (Job 3:25 KJV). While he was being blessed, Job was entertaining visions of destruction. Many people cannot enjoy life because they are afraid of the future. Unfortunately, for many people, their mind is a literal battlefield, where they fight for survival each day. Frequently, we read of the rich and famous of this world who have ended their life in suicide. They could not cope with the images in their head. In fact, rich or poor, young or old, we are seeing an epidemic of self-destruction in society.

Critics often scoff at the Genesis account of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Nevertheless, Satan is the one who put a question of doubt into Eve's mind. When she and her husband rebelled against God's instruction, sin and death were introduced into the world. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

(Romans 5:12 KJV). Later on, in Noah's day, the imagination of man continuously focused on evil. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5 KJV). "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13 KJV). The Bible does not teach the inherent goodness of man. It says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV).

God is holy. He wants our minds to be healthy and filled with good things. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8 KJV). King David put it this way, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14 KJV).

Jesus said we are responsible for our thoughts as well as our actions. "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28 KJV). If you lust after someone, you are guilty of adultery. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:35 KJV). If you hate someone, you are guilty of murder. According to the standards Jesus established, we are all guilty of breaking God's commandments. King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 9:3 that the heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness is in their heart. Jesus said, "²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ²³All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23 KJV).

God spoke to the nation of Israel, "But they listened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:24 KJV). "And you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not

listen to me" (Jeremiah 16:12 KJV). Your imagination can often distract you from hearing the voice and direction of God.

If the nature of man is wicked and the devil regularly throws ideas of fear and temptation into our hearts, how can we possibly be victorious over our imagination? We need a new heart. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10 KJV). "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26 KJV).

It is more than a physical battle; it is a spiritual battle for your soul. ¹²"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹⁶Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:12,16 KJV).

Our strength must come from the Lord. ⁴"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; ⁵Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 KJV). We must exalt the Lord and cast aside anything in our life that would attempt to gain supremacy over our relationship with Christ. We must live a life of fellowship with Christ and worship. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21 KJV).

The world is quickly passing away, but Jesus Christ died on the cross to redeem us from sin and death. ¹⁵"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17 KJV). God's desire and plan for man is eternal and abundant life. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10 KJV).

If the Spirit of God is speaking to you today, then today is your day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2 says that at just the right time, God heard you. If you cry out to God, He will hear you. On the day of salvation, He will help you. He will send the Holy Spirit to guide you and draw you to Him. Certainly, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation! There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Your heart may become hard and your ears deaf to His call. Today, if you are fortunate enough to hear His voice, I urge you to say yes to Christ and His love.

You can experience a spiritual rebirth today. Romans 10:9 (KJV) says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Will you pray today and begin your journey with Christ? "Lord Jesus, I confess with my mouth today that You are the only begotten Son of the living God. I repent and turn from my sins. I believe that You died on the cross to save me from my punishment and I receive You as Savior and Lord of my life. Please help me to grow in Your fellowship and serve You all the days of my life. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer today from your heart, then you have become a child of God. You have been born again and your adventure with Christ begins. Read the Bible each day, beginning with the book of John. Talk to God each day and ask for His help. Find a church that loves Jesus, loves people, worships God with enthusiasm, and teaches the Bible. They will help and encourage you on your journey with Christ.

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