

IMAGINATION

WHAT

IF ?



IMAGINATION: *WHAT IF – Just say NO!*

- Faith is an act of the imagination. And a healthy, vibrant imagination is crucial to the Christian life. Imagination is not the opposite of reality or the enemy of truth.
- Our problem is not an overactive imagination. The real threat is a lack of imagination, or an imagination stunted or misshaped by our experience.
- Some of us are stuck in *“if only”* living marked by regret, feelings of guilt, fear, and doubt. But God can turn your *“if only”* mindset into a *“what if”* attitude, where your faith looks forward to the future with holy confidence.
- The Bible calls us to adopt an active imagination that helps us look beyond our experience like those who modeled a fearless faith before us!



A person stands on a dark, rocky cliff, facing away from the camera with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or surrender. The background is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise, with warm orange and yellow light filtering through soft, white clouds. The overall mood is one of hope, reflection, or triumph.

IMAGINATION: *What If* – Has Your Ability to Imagine been Sabotaged?

1. **TRAUMA** → If you have a history of trauma, or even a series of disruptive or invalidating events in your life, ask yourself what story you are telling about those experiences? Why did they happen? As you answer that why question, examine your response for negative core beliefs about yourself that may reflect low self-esteem or a lack of self confidence.
2. **SHAME** → The wounds from your childhood affect your behaviors, relationships, and ability to feel any sort of positive emotion about yourself. Unaddressed shame can keep you from everything you want to do and be. It keeps you in a cycle of criticism and belief that I'm unworthy of love or belonging.
3. **ISOLATION** → When we are alone and isolated, we are left to figure out the meaning of the story shame is telling me, alone. God created us for community. He created us so that others around us can encourage us when we are down. He uses people to speak life into us, when we are too tired, or broken, or emotionally weak, to even read His word. The problem is, when we are really hurting, it can be much easier to isolate than to reach out to others and really address the layers of emotions we're battling. anyway. Therefore, we stay stuck.

IMAGINATION: *What If*

– If only – Just say NO! – Romans 8:1-4.

1. WOUNDED & BROKEN → God uses your story to help and to heal others.
2. BREAK THE HOLD → Break every yoke. Share your shame (Isaiah 58:3-9). You must say NO.
3. Say NO! → Some spiritual breakthroughs are only possible with the combination of prayer and fasting. When you fast and pray, the synergy is more than the sum of its parts. You will never know what God would have or could have done. You're only left with "*if only.*"
4. DEVELOP YOUR "NO MUSCLE" → Of all the muscles, the most important is the "NO" muscle. Fasting is one of the best ways to "what if." If you feel like your dream is in a holding pattern, try fasting—what do you need to say NO to? Complete the sentence: "If you feel like ... , what do you need to say NO to? The best way to kill sinful desires is by starving them to death.





ACTION: Journal This!

1. What if you are one decision away from a totally different life? What if you developed your “NO” muscle by fasting 1 day, 3 days, 14 days, or 40 days.
2. What “if only” regret might have been different if you would have said “NO?”
3. How has trauma, shame, and isolation robbed you of the life God has wanted to give you?