



## IMAGINATION: WHAT IF

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!

Highland Colony Men's Roundtable  
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### IMAGINATION: WHAT IF – EAGER EXPECTATION!

God has a plan for your life! To find it, requires imagination – transforming your *if only* regrets into *what if* possibilities.

Sept 28, 2023

**Scripture:** Romans 8:18-21; Ezekiel 1:28; Ezekiel 8:16-18; Ezekiel 37:5-10; Ezekiel 47:5-11; Ephesians 4:17-24; John 16:31-33

**Music:** Inmate gets baptized in prison - [https://www.youtube.com/shorts/rw\\_3dzcSREo](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/rw_3dzcSREo)

Charity Gayle - I Speak Jesus (feat. Steven Musso) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcmqSfr1ENY>

**Video:** The Lion King 1994 Remember Who You Are - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmWKvvXzlyg>

**Resources - Book:** IF – Trading Your IF ONLY Regrets for God's WHAT IF Possibilities by Mark Batterson.

**Book:** IMAGINATION REDEEMED – Glorifying God with a Neglected Part of Your Mind by Gene Veith, Jr.

### IMAGINATION: *What If* – IMAGINATION: The Mind's Eye! – Ezekiel.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ → The Lord went after Ezekiel's imagination, and through him the exiles. And he did that for strong reason—because human imagination is powerful. If you capture someone's imagination, you capture his mind, heart, and will. Consider Disney movies and how quickly children identify with the characters.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ → The human imagination is where meaning is made, where a vision for life is set, where mind and heart and will converge. It is the most strategic and most forgotten part of the human soul when it comes to Christian discipleship. May we be captive into the same faith and courage that were Ezekiel's—vision of God (Ezk.1:28), sin (Ezk.8:16-18), hope (Ezk 37:5-10) and grace (Ezk.47:5-11). See Ephesians 4:17-24.

### IMAGINATION: *What If* – AS IF! - Eager Expectation! – Romans 8:18-21.

**IMAGINATION: *What If* – AS IF** → What is real vs. what is imagined—the brain does not distinguish between them. Therein lies the power of **AS IF**. Therein lies the power of faith. It sees the invisible. It believes the impossible. **AS IF** bridges the gap between **IF ONLY** and **WHAT IF**. It's the way we defy our circumstances. It's the way God's promises become our reality.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ → The Apostle Paul uses these words when comparing present-tense suffering with future-tense glory. It's an accounting term, *logizomai*. Think spreadsheet or balance sheet. It's a record of debits and deposits. Almost like your checking account, your suffering will one day be reconciled. And while we may view suffering as a liability now, on the eternal ledger, it's an appreciating asset. Faith is not logical, but it's not illogical either. Whatever God says, that how we reckon.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ → You can be saved without suffering, but you cannot fully identify with Christ. Sometimes it's a miracle that helps us reckon differently. Sometimes it takes some suffering to help us reckon differently. You reckon differently after an experience of suffering where God shows himself faithful. The Day of Reckoning is coming. We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Or more accurately, we will all bow. NO ONE STANDS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING!
3. \_\_\_\_\_ → God is good. No matter what circumstance you find yourself in, they don't have to define you. Even if you cannot change your circumstance or broken relationships, you can defy them with your **as if** attitude. Living by faith doesn't mean you deny reality. It simply means you're in touch with a greater reality—a reality that is far more real than the reality you can touch or taste or see or hear or smell. John 16:31-33. When you follow Christ, the best is yet to come.

### ACTION: Journal This!

1. What if you are one decision away from a totally different life? How are you suffering, being stretched?
2. How might God be wanting to use your suffering for your good?
3. Do you tend to be focused—get stuck on the present or can you see the future as something better?



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## SCRIPTURE

**Romans 8:18-21 - 18** That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times.**19** The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next.**20** Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in**21** until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

**Ezekiel 1:28 - 28** The way a rainbow springs out of the sky on a rainy day - that's what it was like. It turned out to be the Glory of God! When I saw all this, I fell to my knees, my face to the ground. Then I heard a voice.

**Ezekiel 8:16-18 - 16** Finally, he took me to the inside court of the Temple of God. There between the porch and the altar were about twenty-five men. Their backs were to God's Temple. They were facing east, bowing in worship to the sun.**17** He said, "Have you seen enough, son of man? Isn't it bad enough that Judah engages in these outrageous obscenities? They fill the country with violence and now provoke me even further with their obscene gestures.**18** That's it. They have an angry God on their hands! From now on, no mercy. They can shout all they want, but I'm not listening."

**Ezekiel 37:5-10 - 5** God, the Master, told the dry bones, "Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life.**6** I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am God!"**7** I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone.**8** I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.**9** He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, son of man. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'"**10** So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

**Ezekiel 47:5-11 - 5** He measured off another fifteen hundred feet. By now it was a river over my head, water to swim in, water no one could possibly walk through.**6** He said, "Son of man, have you had a good look?"**7** While sitting on the bank, I noticed a lot of trees on both sides of the river.**8** He told me, "This water flows east, descends to the Arabah and then into the sea, the sea of stagnant waters. When it empties into those waters, the sea will become fresh.**9** Wherever the river flows, life will flourish - great schools of fish - because the river is turning the salt sea into fresh water. Where the river flows, life abounds.**10** Fishermen will stand shoulder to shoulder along the shore from En-ge-di all the way north to En-eglaim, casting their nets. The sea will teem with fish of all kinds, like the fish of the Great Mediterranean.**11** "The swamps and marshes won't become fresh. They'll stay salty.

**Ephesians 4:17-24 - 17** And so I insist - and God backs me up on this - that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd.**18** They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself.**19** They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion.**20** But that's no life for you. You learned Christ!**21** My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus.**22** Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life - a God-fashioned life,**23** a life renewed from the inside **24** and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

**John 16:31-33 - 31** Jesus answered them, "Do you finally believe?**32** In fact, you're about to make a run for it - saving your own skins and abandoning me. But I'm not abandoned. The Father is with me.**33** I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world."

### "I Speak Jesus" By Charity Gayle (feat. Steven Musso)

<p>I just want to speak the name of Jesus Over every heart and every mind Cause I know there is peace within Your presence I speak Jesus</p> <p>I just want to speak the name of Jesus Till every dark addiction starts to break Declaring there is hope and there is freedom I speak Jesus</p> <p>Cause Your name is power Your name is healing Your name is life Break every stronghold Shine through the shadows Burn like a fire</p> <p>I just want to speak the name of Jesus Over fear and all anxiety</p>	<p>To every soul held captive by depression I speak Jesus Your name is power Your name is healing Your name is life Break every stronghold Shine through the shadows Burn like the fire Shout Jesus from the mountains Jesus in the streets Jesus in the darkness over every enemy I speak the holy name Jesus Shout Jesus from the mountains Jesus in the streets Jesus in the darkness over every enemy Jesus for my family</p>	<p>I speak the holy name Jesus Your name is power Your name is healing Your name is life Break every stronghold Shine through the shadows Burn like a fire Your name is power Your name is healing Your name is life Break every stronghold Shine through the shadows Burn like a fire</p> <p>I just want to speak the name of Jesus Over every heart and every mind Cause I know there is peace within Your presence I speak Jesus</p>
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