



## 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 – FROM PAIN TO GAIN!

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

Nov 02, 2023

**Music:** Tenth Avenue North "Healing Begins" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe1yKciSIT4>

**Video:** The Still Face Experiment – Dr. Ed Tronick <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1Jw0-LExyc>

**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.

### Joseph - Nobody likes a tattletale

The story continues with Joseph, seventeen years old at the time, helping out his brothers in herding the flocks. **These were his half-brothers actually, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. And Joseph brought his father bad reports on them.** Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the child of his old age. And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him—they wouldn't even speak to him. His brothers said, "So! You're going to rule us? You're going to boss us around?" And they hated him more than ever because of his dreams and the way he talked.

**Family Jealousy & Betrayal** When he told it to his father and brothers, his father reprimanded him: "What's with all this dreaming? Am I and your mother and your brothers all supposed to bow down to you?" Now his brothers were **really jealous**; but his father brooded over the whole business. They spotted him off in the distance. By the time he got to them they had cooked up a plot to kill him. The brothers were saying, "Here comes that dreamer. Let's kill him and throw him into one of these old cisterns; we can say that a vicious animal ate him up. We'll see what his dreams amount to." Reuben heard the brothers talking and intervened to save him, "We're not going to kill him. No murder. Go ahead and throw him in this cistern out here in the wild, but don't hurt him." Reuben planned to go back later and get him out and take him back to his father.

When Joseph reached his brothers, they ripped off the fancy coat he was wearing, grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern. The cistern was dry; there wasn't any water in it. Then they sat down to eat their supper. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead, their camels loaded with spices, ointments, and perfumes to sell in Egypt. Judah said, "Brothers, what are we going to get out of killing our brother and concealing the evidence? Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let's not kill him—he is, after all, our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed. By that time the Midianite traders were passing by. His brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt. Later Reuben came back and went to the cistern—no Joseph! He ripped his clothes in despair. Beside himself, he went to his brothers. "The boy's gone! What am I going to do!"

**Lies** They took Joseph's coat, butchered a goat, and dipped the coat in the blood. They took the fancy coat back to their father and said, "We found this. Look it over—do you think this is your son's coat?" He recognized it at once. "My son's coat—a wild animal has eaten him. Joseph torn limb from limb!" Jacob tore his clothes in grief, dressed in rough burlap, and mourned his son a long, long time. His sons and daughters tried to comfort him but he refused their comfort. "I'll go to the grave mourning my son." Oh, how his father wept for him. In Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, manager of his household affairs.

**Sex & Chaos** Joseph was a strikingly handsome man. As time went on, his master's wife became infatuated with Joseph and one day said, "Sleep with me." When his master heard his wife's story, telling him, "These are the things your slave did to me," he was furious. Joseph's master took him and threw him into the jail where the king's prisoners were locked up. But there in jail God was still with Joseph: He reached out in kindness to him; he put him on good terms with the head jailer. The head jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners—he ended up managing the whole operation. The head jailer gave Joseph free rein, never even checked on him, because God was with him; whatever he did God made sure it worked out for the best.

**Office Politics** As time went on, it happened that the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt crossed their master, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the head cupbearer and the head baker, and put them in custody under the captain of the guard; it was the same jail where Joseph was held. The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to see to their needs. After they had been in custody for a while, the king's cupbearer and baker, while being held in the jail, both had a dream on the same night, each dream having its own meaning. When Joseph arrived in the morning, he noticed that they were feeling low. So he asked them, the two officials of Pharaoh who had been thrown into jail with him, "What's wrong? Why the long faces?" They said, "We dreamed dreams and there's no one to interpret them."

Joseph said, "Don't interpretations come from God? Tell me the dreams." First the head cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: "In my dream there was a vine in front of me with three branches on it: It budded, blossomed, and the clusters ripened into grapes. I was holding Pharaoh's cup; I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup to Pharaoh." Joseph said, "Here's the meaning. The three branches are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will get you out of here and put you back to your old work—you'll be giving Pharaoh his cup just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer.

**Only remember me when things are going well with you again—tell Pharaoh about me and get me out of this place. I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews. And since I've been here, I've done nothing to deserve being put in this hole.” But the head cupbearer never gave Joseph another thought; he forgot all about him.**

**Success** Then Pharaoh said to his officials, “Isn’t this the man we need? Are we going to find anyone else who has God’s spirit in him like this?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “You’re the man for us. God has given you the inside story—no one is as qualified as you in experience and wisdom. From now on, you’re in charge of my affairs; all my people will report to you. Only as king will I be over you.”

Joseph was in charge of the entire country of Egypt. Pharaoh told Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but no one in Egypt will make a single move without your stamp of approval.”

And Joseph took up his duties over the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he went to work for Pharaoh the king of Egypt. As soon as Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence, he began his work in Egypt.

**I’ve Arrived – Everything is in the Past** Now before the year of Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh; “For,” *he said*, “**God has made me forget all my trouble and all of my father’s household.**” And he named the second Ephraim; “For,” *he said*, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

**The Past is Present** Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold grain to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down to him *with their* faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup>When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. He said to them, “Where have you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”

**God is in the Healing Business** Then he turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.



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