

02-02-2024

Adventures in Imagination

When I was a kid, waking up in the middle of the night, convinced I'd *heard something*, my half-brother David would often say, "Go to sleep, Gene; it's only your imagination." That wasn't much comfort, especially in an old farm house that did a lot of creaking and complaining when strong northwest winds took a notion to rattle the shutters and make the chimney howl.

I was also a target of the many ghost stories my half-sister Virginia used to dream up in those "Inner Sanctum" radio 40's as well as having taken seriously her reading of *Little Orphan Annie*" a poem that made goblins and ghosts real to little kids with big imaginations.

The standing take, of course was that if you imagined it, it wasn't *real*. And that's pretty much what the world still thinks of imagination. But recently, viewing a week of discussions by Andrew Wommack concerning the Bible's understanding of the power of imagination, I heard Andrew argue that the imagination creates much of both the good and evil in our lives.

Wommack's views were drawn from several scriptures which few people take very seriously. In Genesis ch. 11, we read this: "And the Lord said, "Behold the people is one, and they have all one language.. and now nothing will be restrained from them *which they have imagined.*"and therefore, "let us go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

What Wommack drew from this is that if one can imagine a thing so that he can see it with the eyes of one's heart, and agree about it with one or more others, it can be brought into reality, like the tower of Babel the people we agreeing to build.

This is not exactly foreign to common understanding. Many inventors like Ford or Edison, or Tesla, or even me, tying fishing flies, learn to *visualize*, (another word for imagine) a thing in order to invent it.

The great writers, like Shakespeare, were masters at using visual imagery, (imagination), to create their characters and charge their speech with powerful visualizations. Here's Hamlet: "My father, methinks I see my father ... in my mind's eye, Horatio. Take him for all in all, he was a man."

" And here he is, talking about the skull of Yorik, the king's jester: "Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft, and yet how abhorred in my imagination; my gorge rises at it."

But Wommack points out that Christians who learn to visualize the promise in God's word, can bring that promise into realization concerning what the word says about things like healing, prosperity, deliverance from addictions and many of the "ills that flesh is heir to;" the troubles so many need to be successful in praying about.

Wommack put this notion to the test by imagining in his mind's eye the layout of the whole campus of Cheris Bible College. He walked his vision out until he could imagine a mental blue print of exactly how that campus should be built.

So far major parts of that campus have already been constructed in exact compliance with his vision. All this can be verified by Googling up the Cheris Bible college web site. (awmi.net) Andrew was convinced that with God's help, he could build Cheris debt free, and so, he has.

There are several places in the Bible where God gives his *child* a picture to imagine. In Genesis He leads Abram out of his tent and bids him gaze up into the night sky. He then tells him that his descendants will be as countless as those stars. Abe was nearing 100 years of age at the time and his wife Sarai was barren. But Abe "believed God," took that vision to heart, and became "Abraham, the father of many nations." (Gen: 17)

Finally, we read of how Jesus, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame..." The "joy" that He *visualized* was ours. He took all that "contradiction of sinners" upon his down body on that tree, enduring the agony, both mental and physical, so that "our joy might be full." (See Hebrews 12: 2,3)

So imagination is another powerful gift God has given his children. It appears that if we can picture in our minds the promise in God's word that serves our problem, we can believe that picture into reality. In Proverbs we are told that "without a vision, the people perish," but we also read in Isa 40 that among those who wait upon the Lord, their young men will see visions and our old men dream dreams." Right now I'm dreaming that my old ears will soon hear well enough to once again enjoy great music. "I'm a believer."

Gene Pinkney 02-02-2024 for The Daily News