

Thrive: The Power of Imagination

Scripture used: [Ephesians 3:20 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today Pastor Hurmon started us on a new series on how to “Thrive and Flourish.” What does it look like? It looks like a flywheel of intersecting features and traits at work in our lives: positive emotions; engagement into community; relationships (i.e. healthy and rich bonds with others); meaning and purpose; accomplishments; financial stability (i.e. no hardship, duress, or extreme deprivation); and spiritual health.

KEY POINTS

1. Our iconic Scripture today starts with “now unto him who is able”. Embedded in the passage is a hidden key lying in plain sight - a gift to everyone. It is an invitation to unleash the power of imagination. Imagination is powerful - “to do more than asked or imagined”. We must expand our imaginations as far as we can, step on the very edge of what we can imagine, and then God will take us even further. Imagination is the gateway to the incredible.
2. Imagination is one of the ways we reflect the image of God - [Hebrews 11:3 \(NLT\)](#). It can also be the laboratory of evil - [Genesis 6:5 \(NLT\)](#) - our minds can conjure horrible things, such as the Holocaust, the slave trade, mass shootings, sex trafficking. Imagination can trap us in past pains and present fears. It can make us vulnerable to being manipulated. Look at the SuperBowl ads - we see ourselves driving that car, taking that vacation, borrowing from this bank, wearing those shoes. “I am buying it” is the primal impulse after our imaginations get manipulated and twisted.
3. Yet, imagination can unleash an astonishing capacity to heal, to survive, and to thrive. God designed imagination for the I/thou partnership. According to God’s power that is at work within us, it facilitates an incredible partnership between us and the divine. We can do an imagination experiment: visualize a day that goes perfectly, where everything works out brilliantly. Consume a lot less TV and social media, and instead read real books - particularly fiction, which takes us away via storytelling, and taking walks in nature. And read scripture, which is designed to cultivate our imagination & deepen our faith
4. [Genesis 18:1A-2A \(NLT\)](#): “three men standing nearby.” Descriptions of the Almighty are meant to strike our imagination. The Lord is a warrior, a burning bush, a rock, a fortress, a deliverer, shepherd, light and salvation, father to his children, tenderness and compassion, mother comforting her child, wonderful counselor, prince of peace, word that became flesh, God with us, high priest who can empathize with our weaknesses, lamb who takes away the sins of the world... All these powerful images help us engage more intimately with God. We can locate God in our experience. We can find God in the neighborhood.
5. [Genesis 18:9-10 \(NLT\)](#) - according to his power, Sarah and Abraham were skeptical of the promise, but God asks “Why did you laugh?” - God heard, and spoke back to her. Just like Sarah and Abraham, we must listen, and then act on the cue. By taking action, we see the amazing results - from bad student to good student, from follower to leader, from unhealthy to healthy. Every upswing and advancement begins with the power of our imagination.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Our imagination is a key part of humanity, and made in the image and likeness of a creative and loving God. Our imagination is so powerful that the enemy wants to harness it to destroy the world. It can create envy, jealousy, even hatred. That is why we need to be on guard and fill our minds with God’s Word.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider your own imagination. Is it rooted in scripture or in popular culture? Does your imagination facilitate the “I/thou” relationship that God intended for us? What is standing in the way of a healthier imagination that will help you thrive?

- 3) **DO** - It is okay if you are initially skeptical about the power of imagination as God intended it to be used. Choose one place where you would like to thrive more in life. Prayerfully imagine how you will advance and elevate yourself.