

General Topics :: Vain Imagination VS Holy Imagination

Vain Imagination VS Holy Imagination - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/12/12 22:33

Reading the thread about Narnia has made me ponder a few thoughts. How should we use our imaginations? We all know now that it can be used for bad such as lust, covetness, or hate. How should we use it to glorify God? How far do we let our imagination go? Only imagine things that have or will happen?

Here is a definition off Dictionary.com.

imagination

The formation of a mental image of something that is neither perceived as real nor present to the senses.

The mental image so formed.

The ability or tendency to form such images.

The ability to confront and deal with reality by using the creative power of the mind; resourcefulness: handled the problems with great imagination.

A traditional or widely held belief or opinion.

Archaic.

An unrealistic idea or notion; a fancy.

A plan or scheme.

Re: Vain Imagination VS Holy Imagination, on: 2005/12/13 5:24

Hi Preach,

I picked up on this point in the Narnia thread, not having noticed this new one. I'd like if you'd look at my post and work out where to reply (if you want to) to what I said. Thanks.

This will take you to the page.

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Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/12/13 9:43

Me too. My response is actually in the Narnia thread.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/12/13 12:14

I'm sure we all agree that we should glorify God with our imaginations, but how? This may be confusing, because I really don't know how to word the question. I guess I'm wondering what the limits would be. We all know we shouldn't imagine committing sin.

Should we imagine anything other than what we would or should be doing?

I guess I'm just stuck on the thought about meditating on truth, but if the example we use or imagine illustrates that truth. I assume that is fine? How far do you go with it? You could imagine a good witch and a bad witch and say its God and Satan. But witches are bad regardless what 'color' they think they are.. so.. How far do you go with it?

I guess in my mind I usually imagine things to come, that that have happened, or possibly situations that could happen. Maybe its just because that's just that way I am.. I do play music and that is 'imaginative' or atleast close to the same line of thought. Does anyone understand what I am saying?

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/12/14 15:05

It looks like this thread either got lost or just wrapped itself in the Narnia thread..

Re: Real or perceived - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/12/14 16:04

Quote:

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With you there Preach. Present reality is difficult enough and meditating on the truth, digging for the truth... the Lord *being* The Truth... seems more than enough. Still not sure either how to wrestle with this... Am not fond of fiction when it comes to Christianity especially in this day where we have an awful lot of imagination of the wrong sort accepted as 'truth' as it is. Another would be similar to that bit that was circulating around for awhile regarding a pastor laying into a group and then ripping up a check for a million dollars. It was a great message if there ever was one, but that was the whole problem, it never happened and got circulated around as 'fact' though it came out of a fictional novel...

Loved LOTR, read through it as a teenager with a bunch of buddies and the movies were outstanding, so close to my own earlier 'imaginings' that it was kind of freaky ... 'How did he climb inside my head?' Not about to go into the whole Narnia thing here but think these things out to be taken for what they are, something very ... peculiar that a mindset has developed that these things are 'needed' or are great 'evangelism' tools etc. etc. It just gets all out of whack, the scriptures are anything but boring, needing all these props and whatnot, that is the problem all these replacements for the foolishness of preaching and just some plain old fashioned contemplation...

Quote:

----- guess in my mind I usually imagine things to come, that that have happened, or possibly situations that could happen. Maybe its just because that's just that way I am.. I do play music and that is 'imaginative' or atleast close to the same line of thought. Does anyone understand what I am saying?

Brother it has only been fairly recently that I started to recognize that in my own life and I must say it is largely due to the influence of this site and the saints that come here and share.

It likely came about more by accident but often there is just so much of this in us. The whole of prophecy (in our day) or should I say the large majority of it ... honestly, how much of this is sheer speculation, pizza overdose, what have you? Fallen minds and shady characters, so many things that need to be addressed and yet we have a plethora of "Thus saith the Lord" 'prophets', prediction pundits, spiritual physics with Christian overtones...

Projecting, that desire to 'foretell' things, even in the realm of "I know what you are thinking" amongst Brethren, assumptions and presumptions ... *casting down vain/evil imaginations*. It really began to break upon me that I was only seeing perhaps a part of this. Surely it would pertain to the lust of the eyes, the flesh, temptations but what about projecting things that have yet to happen? "Forecasting" may be a better word. We can do it in so many ways and get caught right up into our own tomorrows that we start believing them to be fact before they have any evidence often times. You can do it with your loved ones ... "I bet he/she is doing this..." when you are away... "I *know* this is what so and so is thinking...." It's almost a peculiar way of gossiping about someone in your head, hmmm, all of sudden Jesus' words about "...has already committed adultery in his heart" takes on additional meaning. Fantasy, good and bad... is it true? Probability and possibility can be miles apart.

Guess where I wanted to go with all this is to just say that I have been truly working at letting this go into the trash bin. It's such a waste of resources, causes all kinds of anxiety and worry, think the devil and his minions are quite suggestive of this sort of thing, luring away the mind to get caught up in a whole host of future things, speculations, it can bring bitterness and unforgiveness and the object of this inner wrath is completely oblivious to any of it often times.

It's a blessed relief to be honest, when I catch it creeping up meet it with a "I am not going there, forget it". Even with the *possibilities*, they *could* be true... But the reminder is "*Nothing is hidden that won't be revealed*" as well as the fact that the Lord sees it's all anyway... And the last finishing touch on it all is, even if you are 'right', what's the reward? Feeling smug

g? Ecchhk.. no thanks.

Hope I am making sense now...

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/12/14 18:12

Quote:
-----Brother it has only been fairly recently that I started to recognize that in my own life and I must say it is largely due to the influence of this site and the saints that come here and share.

Amen. I have noticed that this site does play a huge part in my thinking. It seems like I catch myself thinking scripturally all day! This is not a bad thing! When I have a thought I always compare it to scripture or even look at the attacks one could make on that thought. This is because anytime something is posted on here everyone analyzes it with scripture, according to their own background. This site has opened me up to many many different lines of thought.

Many people do use their imagination and call it the spirit of God. My pastor calls this the gift of suspicion, which by the way is not a gift of the Spirit. :-P Many just assume or suspect something is going on and its not a gift of knowledge, wisdom, or discernment.

Re: - posted by PaulWiglaf, on: 2005/12/15 0:55

Quote:
----- peculiar that a mindset has developed that these things are 'needed' or are great 'evangelism' tools etc. etc. It just gets all out of whack, the scriptures are anything but boring, needing all these props and whatnot, that is the problem all these replacements for the foolishness of preaching and just some plain old fashioned contemplation...

crsschk:

You're right; they aren't necessarily needed, even Lewis would say that; however, it was an outlet for him to express what God meant to Him.

Lewis had already been fighting hard in the trenches for Christianity, going toe-to-toe with the great minds of his day (there's a great book that compares Lewis vs. Freud by Armand Nicholi which can be found if googled under "Lewis vs. Freud"). He retired into the world of the imagination only towards the end of his life.

I'm also in the camp of wanting to see the church enlightened, invigorated, and impassioned with God, hating the shallow thinking (or just plain thoughtlessness) that pervades the Western hemisphere Christians. We feel contented to hide behind veils of pleasure and comfort, and then wonder why an atheist, pagan or agnostic can throw the scriptures (in twisted fashion, of course) in our faces and watch us quiver. I find that really irritating.

Yet, I myself have begun writing a fictional tale, because I sometimes find that you can cry on the rooftops of fantasy a lot louder than in modern neighborhoods (or that might be because in a small town no one is outside to listen :-P).

We must remember that most of Ancient history consists of story telling. Scops, or story tellers, would pick up a lyre and sing out tales of battles, wars, and (yes) religion. That's what the Psalms are, and that's what the women did when they cried, "Saul slayed his thousands, and David his ten thousands..."

...Yet, I must agree with what Lewis says about there always being two equal and opposite errors we can fall into--much like having two ditches on each side of a road.

On one side, there's prosaic simplicity, which has no room for anything imagined or fanciful (and, dare I say it, *supernatural*--literally "over nature"). This road leads to problems when looking at Daniel and John's relation of metaphysical symbols, such as dragons, beasts, etc. A prosaic mind cannot develop a picture, like an artist with no brush. (this mindset seems more naturalistic and atheistic than anything else).

The other is the pagan mind. It is full of demons, dragons, ghouls, and goblins (or faeries, fauns, centaurs, and nymphs) all floating about in a cauldron of caves, castles, forests, and seas. This mind looks down on the practical, having eyes only for that which is full of emotion and mystery. Such a mind leads a man to bemoan any ordinary or mundane element of life (and have little commitment since this mindset can't stand being tied to something when passion dies).

Yet, we know that Satan cannot create anything on his own power, but must pervert and contort the blessings God has bestowed upon us. The power of the imagination is God's gift to arouse in us a desire for the pure and excellent Nature (Over-Nature) He intended us to live in. The practical side must accompany this to keep us rooted in both conviction and commitment--thus, enabling us to dream and obey.

I hope this helps answer some questions.

In Christ,
Benjamin

Re: Vain vs Holy - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/12/15 8:30

Quote:
-----Many people do use their imagination and call it the spirit of God. My pastor calls this the gift of suspicion, which by the way is not a gift of the Spirit.

That's good!

Hi Benjamin,

Quote:
-----We must remember that most of Ancient history consists of story telling. Scops, or story tellers, would pick up a lyre and sing out tales of battles, wars, and (yes) religion. That's what the Psalms are, and that's what the women did when they cried, "Saul slayed his thousands, and David his ten thousands..."

Well yes and no, that's not to suggest that things were based strictly on allegory, even in this example. Feel pretty sure that is not what you meant here.

In this avenue of imagination, that which is used as an expression to the truths of God, of Jesus, Pilgrims Progress a great example... (When will that 'blockbuster' be made?) and that being a decidedly direct application as opposed to the more subtle 'hinting at' or 'principles of' approach... likely to misconstrue that, that one's own belief system is expressed out into art shouldn't be a surprise whatsoever. Where things get all wacky with the seemingly over excitement is the way the original intent and motives get drawn out. How many spin offs are in the waiting? "*Finding the Lord in...*" Boy, this keeps drawing back to that other thread no matter how hard we try...

Think what PreachParsley was looking at here was a different line of thought somewhat. What stayed with me yesterday was the old cliché;

"Truth is stranger than fiction"

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/12/15 17:07

I have a question. I have not read Pilgrims Progress (I do plan on it). Is Pilgrims Progress a story of people? Do people do super human things or are animals doing strange things in it? Or is it a fiction story of things that could actually happen? Hopefully I will be able to read it sometime so I can have input on it.

Thanks.

Re: - posted by Warrior4Jah (), on: 2005/12/15 17:11

Ey bro,

So basically you are saying that even with the possibility of it being good (Narnia, or something else for example) you decided to leave it alone so you don't have to worry about it?

The good thing about this, (if I didn't misinterpret your post, otherwise ignore it :-)) is that you won't ever see bad stuff you rather not wanted to see afterwards. I think that its very confusing and tiring to define a border. Everytime something new gets released you need to checkup on it again.

My fear is that you can unintentionally cross a border, but making the border less 'fenced' for the next time, having the risk that you keep giving in.

Quote:

-----crsschk wrote:

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Hope I am making sense now...

Re: - posted by Warrior4Jah (), on: 2005/12/15 17:18

Hey crsschk,

I've never heard that old cliché (perhaps cause I'm pretty young still :-)) but I can very imagine (?) that there is only one Truth and many fiction. Truth is defined while fiction is not, unlike non-believers we can't 'bend' or 'redefine' the truth unless God changes (it). Fiction is not ment to be real if I'm correct. Still it can be based on the truth, but it would never imply to be the truth.

Just some thoughts..

Quote:

-----crsschk wrote:

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Re: - posted by PaulWiglaf, on: 2005/12/16 22:50

PreachParsly:

What you have in Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory of the Christian walk (hence the reason why the main character is Christian). All the characters have obvious titles (such as the Interpreter, Brave Heart, Mercy, etc.), as well as the places being also named in such a way that you understand Christian's journey to be the journey through faith that we also go through (only, of course, having an image of the spiritual being played out in a physical picture; i.e. he goes up a hill called "Difficulty", is beat by a man called Despair, etc.)

I don't want to ruin it for you, and I highly recommend the work (esp. if yours has the scriptures printed in the margins to show where Bunyan was writing from). God gave such an unlikely man an uncanny way to relate God's truth. May we all allow the Lord to do the same through us.

Blessings,
Benjamin

Re: - posted by PaulWiglaf, on: 2005/12/16 23:09

Crsschk:

You're right to use that cliché. But here's another one: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink...You can, however, salt his oats". In other words, if you season everything (including fiction) with the salt of God's Word and His truths, the world will soon become quite thirsty; that's what Lewis envisioned.

He once remarked that if Christians could create a book company that rivalled Penguin, filling the stores full of books that contained Christian litany, atheists would despair when all that was presented in newsstands and bookstores all pointed to the Most High, not their lofty thoughts.

Yet, I agree, the vague degrees that some go to are quite questionable. If one really looks at works like Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, there are a plethora of Christian inferences; indeed, Lewis was surprised himself with the number of them.

There are other writings that can be compared as well--including Christ's parables (that'd make a great thread to discuss on); however, this only creates a continuous cycle of digression.

Perhaps, the question itself of whether fiction is acceptable or not can't just be cleared by a simple answer. Indeed, there have been several strong posts from both sides of the issue.

Let us always hold up this founding principle, though: "*whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*" (1 Cor. 10:31)

In Christ,
Benjamin