

For too long, we've let our imaginations rust away in God's toolbox of ministry resources. Developing our imaginations should be part of the basic training for every insider who longs to start faith conversations. Oswald Chambers declared, "Imagination is the greatest gift God has given us and it ought to be devoted entirely to Him."

We live in an age where creativity is at a premium. The world is embracing innovation but the church lags behind. Frost and Hirsch write, "It sometimes seems as if there is some form of "template" at work in evangelical churches around the world." We need a fresh touch of imagination from the Creator Himself.

Consider how God imaginatively communicates to us. Jeremiah was sent to a potter to hear God's words (Jeremiah 18:2). Ezekiel needed to eat a scroll to speak to Israel (Ezekiel 3:1-3). Embracing God's revelation is like a runner anxious for the race or the bridegroom eager to consummate his wedding night (Psalm 19:5). God doesn't communicate in black and white images like an outdated television set. He employs the latest high-definition technology.

Imagination ran rampant in Jesus' teaching ministry. Author Warren Wiersbe asserts that . . .

One of the obvious characteristics of our Lord's ministry is His effective use of imagination. He hid the truth in parables and pictures so that people might have their curiosity aroused and become interested enough to open their eyes and ears to understand the truth.

The use of word pictures to communicate the Kingdom is one example of Jesus' imagination. He compared the Kingdom to wheat, a lost coin, or a mustard seed. Our Lord grabbed everyday images and turned them into pictures of His Kingdom. We can do the same.

Sit down at a kitchen table and look around you. You see salt and peppershakers, a napkin, a plate or bowl, a glass, and silverware. Imagine yourself eating with a friend and a faith conversation naturally happens. But you don't have a Bible or a neatly packaged tract. What will you do?

This is when the Holy Spirit wants you to imaginatively communicate the gospel. How could you use salt and pepper to teach spiritual truths? What do knives and forks have to do with eternity? How can your drink speak to kingdom realities? When we become masters of the imagination, we create new pictures of the gospel in people's minds and hearts. All of life becomes a palate on which we can paint the gospel.

I love this quote from Francis Schaffer: "The Christian is the really free man--he is free to have imagination . . . The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars." Imagination isn't just for children. It's basic training for all adults who want to live and minister life2life. Let's be people who fly beyond the stars. Our God-fueled imaginations will take us there.