



## Week 5: Imagination “Reclaiming the Battle Ground”

Luke 4:5-6

### † OPEN

Welcome to our series “**The Shema.**” So far we have explored four dimensions of this foundational commandment: 1) to have no other gods before Him, 2) to make our money worship Him because “where our treasure is there goes our heart,” 3) to engage with God’s Word in such way that it not only instructs our minds but also sets our heart “on fire,” and 4) forgiving one another “from the heart.” Today we will explore a key human faculty that we have largely neglected—the imagination—because, when properly disciplined, it can fuel a burning heart.

### 👥 SHARE & RECONNECT

- How did your family of origin teach, encourage, and model creativity and imagination (or not!)?

### 📖 READING

- Compare and contrast Genesis 3:1-6 with Matthew 4:1-10.
  - In what way does the serpent use the one-two punch of intellect and imagination to accomplish his purpose with Eve?
  - Are there similarities and differences in his approach to Jesus?
  - To what extent did Eve and Jesus harness these two faculties in their response?

### 📖 REFLECT

- When they asked the poet William Stafford, “*When did you become a poet?*” he responded, “*That’s not really the right question. The question is, when did you stop being a poet? We’re all poets when we’re young.*”
  - How would you respond to Stafford’s question? Does it matter?

- Protestant theologian Stanley Haeurwas writes: *“If we want to change our way of life, acquiring the right image is often far more important than diligently exercising will power because will power is a notoriously sputtery engine on which to rely for internal energy.”*
  - Share an “image” that has energized and overcome an otherwise reluctant will and either led to action or helped resist temptation.

“We have a pair of mental operations, Imagination and Explanation, designed to work in tandem. Explanation pins things down so we can handle and use them—obey and teach, help and guide. Imagination opens thing up so we can grow into maturity—worship and adore, exclaim and honour, follow and trust. Explanation restricts, defines and holds down; imagination expands and lets loose. Explanation keeps our feet on the ground; imagination lifts our heads into the clouds. Explanation puts us in harness; imagination catapults into mystery.”

— Eugene Petersen

- Where are you on the imagination/explanation spectrum? Reasons?
- Which of the many sources of images listed in the sermon might prove most helpful for you (Scripture—metaphors, stories, word pictures, Art—music, poetry, theatre, movies)?
- Read Revelation 5:1-14. Identify the dominant elements addressed to the imagination and the intellect respectively.
  - Thinking of a specific “front burner” aspect of your life right now, which ones “speak” powerfully to you right now and why?

## PRAY

- Read through each of these passages, focusing on the images, metaphors, word pictures, etc. and use them to shape your prayers—praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, confession. Give free reign to your imagination. Begin with your reflections above on Revelation 5:1-14 and follow with
  - Ezekiel 37:1-14
  - Revelation 1:9-18
- Pray for Wellspring pastors, boards, CG leaders, youth leaders, children’s ministry leaders to “take back the battle ground of the imagination” that Satan has hijacked both personally and in their leadership.