

Morning Sermon January 3, 2021
“Evil Imagination” – Genesis 6:5

I am skipping ahead a bit but before I do I want to take notice of a few verses on the way:

First, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth, who started men calling upon, praying to God again –

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.” ²⁶ And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD. Genesis 4:25–26 (NKJV)

Second, Genesis 5 is Adam’s genealogy, it starts with Seth, not Cain and mentions Adam had sons and daughters.

Third, when chapter 6 begins I believe the sons of God mentioned there are the descendants of Adam / Seth and the daughters of men are the descendants of Cain. This intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly leads men away from calling upon God, and living by His law and rules, ultimately to our text which tells us –

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that every intent* of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that every imagination* of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5 (KJV 1900)

*The Hebrew word translated “imagination” or “intent” means “to form” or “to create” modified by the phrase, **the thoughts of his heart**, shows us this is speaking about forming or creating things in our mind or heart, what we might call “creative thinking” or “creative imagination.”*

Now, creative imagination is praised in our culture, sometimes even our Christian culture.

I. *We need to be careful with “imagination” –*
⁵ And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that every imagination* of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5 (KJV 1900)

I am not saying the use of the word “intent” is wrong in translating Genesis 6:5, but I wonder if part of the reason we have taken “imagination” out of that verse is because we live in an age which is enamored with imagination?

1. *Imagination or intent of the heart is always evil when it replaces God’s Word or Law –*

A. *Note, Cain’s sinful “way” started with his own, contrary to God’s command, idea of what was a satisfactory offering –*

³ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Genesis 4:3 (NKJV)

B. *God tells us not to “lean on” depend upon our own understanding of things –*

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV)

C. *Note we are to trust the LORD, with our hearts, we are not to trust our hearts, especially not the imagination, intents and ideas that come from them –*

⁹ “The heart is deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:19 (NKJV)

2. *When God gives us a new heart, through spiritual heart surgery, that heart is faithful too, and occupied with God’s Word and Law, not imagination –*

¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19-20

3. *Note the contrast is evident even in the very next verse –*
¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. ²¹ But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God. Ezekiel 11:19–21 (NKJV)

The hearts mentioned in Ezekiel 11:21, following their desires for detestable things, are the same as the hearts mentioned in Genesis 6:5, those in Genesis were destroyed by the flood, those mentioned in Ezekiel, God will recompense their deeds on their own heads,”

Their own heads came up with the stupid, sinful ideas that their hands and feet carried out in the form of sin, God recompenses their heads, the wicked imaginations, from which the sin started!

II. *We need always to remember God’s Word, not our hearts, intents or imagination, is our means of salvation and growth –*

1. *This is true personally –*

A. *Starting with the New Birth –*

²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)

B. *Continuing with spiritual growth -*

² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)

C. *God’s Word is profitable -*

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)

2. *This is true for the church also, and for growth in numbers –*

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (teaching) and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:47 (NKJV)

God alone brings about true salvation, that is why we follow His Word!

III. *Is there any room at all in the Christian Life for imagination? Creativity?*

1. *Little is said about “imagination” in Scripture!*

In the New King James Version, the word is used only twice and both times negatively, it is used most in the KJV but never positively –

A. *After Noah offered a pleasing offering to the LORD, God started His promise not to destroy the world by a flood again, despite man’s evil imagination -*

²¹ And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. Genesis 8:21 (NKJV)

B. *In Mary’s Magnificat, her song praising God before the birth of Christ, “imagination” is mentioned as a characteristic of the “proud” -*

⁵¹ He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. Luke 1:51 (NKJV)

2. *We are left to assume or guess that with the New Birth, man’s imagination (or creativity) might be among the “all things” which are made new –*

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

John Bunyan and his book Pilgrim’s Progress are a great example of imagination combined with and working with, rather than against Scripture!

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6 (NKJV)

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