

Practicing Imaginative Prayer

This prayer requires an uninterrupted 30-60 minutes. Some pray this way daily, others do so once a week. Every experience will be unique.

1. The Setting: Before beginning, designate a time and place free from interruption, somewhere comfortable and conducive to prayer.

2. Invite the Spirit to guide your imagination: Ask the Holy Spirit to steer your imagination. Ask to *experience* what you *intellectually* know to be true. Ask for protection from the enemy.

3. Imagine the scene: Imagine a place that's associated with fond memories (a beloved place in nature, a significant home or room), with as much detail as you can. See, hear, smell, and feel the place. Spend time re-presenting it. Then imagine yourself entering the scene. Take in and enjoy your surroundings.

4. Imagine Jesus entering the scene: Then, imagine Jesus walking into the scene. Perhaps he approaches from afar, maybe he opens a door and steps in. Sometimes you may run to him. It may help to reference an artistic depiction of Jesus, or you can call on your existing mental image of his appearance. What's important is his character.

5. Encountering Jesus: What follows will be led by the Spirit the longer you practice. To start, you may imagine Jesus speaking truths from Scripture over you. You can also imagine yourself in Jesus' parables.

You are a new creation. (2 Cor 5v17); There is now no condemnation for you. (Rom 8v1); You have become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5v21); You are chosen. You are a royal priest. (1 Peter 2v9); You are God's own possession. You are God's child. (John 1v12); You are the Holy Spirit's Temple. (1 Cor 6v19); You are Jesus' friend. (John 15v15); You have been raised with Jesus and seated in the heavenly places. (Eph 2v6); You are the aroma of Jesus. (2 Cor 2v15); You were bought with a price. (2 Cor 6v20); You are holy and beloved. (1 John 5v18); The Lord loves you with an everlasting love (Jer 31v3); The Lord rejoices over you with singing and dancing (Zeph 3v17); You are holy and blameless in the sight of God (Isa 43v4); You are precious in the sight of God. (Isa 43v4); You are the apple of God's eye (Zech 2v8); You are forgiven, perfected, and free from condemnation. (Rom 8v1, 2 Cor 5v21, Heb 10v14); Jesus will never leave or abandon you—you are God's dear child. (Matt 28v20, John 14v18)

6. Respond to Jesus as seems appropriate: Can give thanks, offer expressions of love, speak to Jesus, or ask Jesus questions.

7. Be with Jesus and allow him to do as he sees fit: He may surprise you, lead you to a memory so he can address your past with you, give you glimpses of his delight in you, or of the coming Kingdom.

8. Closing: Thank God and ask to grow in seeing and knowing him more



Week Two: Imaginative Prayer

1. Imagination is the mind's ability to evoke and re-present images of things not physically present

2. Relationships are forged by years of experiences, stored up and recalled by our imagination, with their associated emotions

Such images and memories form relational connectedness between people

3. Our relationship with God must also be nourished by imagination

The one who was from the beginning, whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we looked upon and have touched with our hands – this life became visible, and we have seen it – the life that was with the Father and has now been made visible to us. That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, so you too may have fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1

4. Imagination does not take us away from reality, but enables us to have a powerful experience of reality

I am grateful to him who has strengthened me, Jesus our Lord, because he considered me trustworthy in appointing me to the ministry. I was once a blasphemer and arrogant, but I have been mercifully treated. 1 Tim 1

5. Christian prayer does not involve clearing our minds of images, nor emptying our minds, but rather utilizing images to connect with God

Tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So to them he addressed this parable: 'What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy. Luke 15

6. Practice imaginative prayer using the steps on the reverse side