

# IMAGINEERING

*The GARDEN Service  
4/10/05*

*Rob French*

I've got to tell you, when I was first asked by Linda to be involved with the message this Sunday and found out the subject was Creativity and Imagination, I was a little surprised that she asked a Purdue engineer. Typically, we engineers aren't exactly known for our wild and over abundance of creativity. Once I got past this the first thing I thought that I could do was to pray. So I turned to God and prayed, for direction and some creativity. Then I got excited. Because engineers help apply science to life, and why not do the same thing with imagination, you know apply it to life.

So, I started doing a little research, as engineers are prone to do. What I was looking for was someone who was the best at doing just that; bringing creativity and imagination to life. Then I remembered a trip we took to Disney World when our kids were smaller. When we were down there, there was a door in one of the work areas that had a sign on it that said "Imagineers". And that name stuck with me. I'd heard of Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and now with RJ going to college Biomedical engineers but this was a first for Imagineers. I learned that this is the title that Walt Disney originally gave to a group of creative people who were charged with making Disneyland a reality.

Well, continuing on with my research, I spoke with my wife, Sandi, to see where creativity might be applied and where it might be helpful in our lives. She suggested relationships. That was clearly something I would have never come up with on my own. It was a fantastic idea. Because, that's exactly what Jesus did. There is an outstanding example of that in the Bible.

It's the Bible scripture for today which comes from the **Book of Luke, Chapter 19, 1:10 (NIV)** *starting at the first verse. The scripture tells us that Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus, he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man, he could not see him because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked and said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed Him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner'". But, Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

Now when this occurred, Jesus was being very creative in the way he was establishing this relationship. He felt that this relationship between Zacchaeus and God was important, and as a result, approached it in a way that was not normal at that time. First off, Jesus invited himself to dinner. It is reported that this is the first time He had ever done that. Secondly, He has invited Himself to the house of a 'sinner' in the eyes of the people who were around Him. This is totally outside the norm in establishing a relationship. But as we can see from the reaction of Zacchaeus, it was by far a meaningful relationship. Ultimately, it was the greatest thing that had ever happened to Zacchaeus.

I read an article in the Indianapolis Star titled "Creativity Knows No Boundaries" and they quote an engineering professor from MIT telling us to "Think outside the boundaries that restrict so many of us. Be curious. Don't get trapped by what other people 'know to be true.'" Merton Flemming goes

on to say "Much of the standard of living is the result of inventiveness, the act of creativity in developing new things, new devices, new ways to live," and I would add to that new relationships.

Now getting back to our Imagineers. One of the symbols associated with Imagineers has been a blank sheet of paper. And the reason as Marty Sklar, the Vice Chairman and Principle Creative Executive for the Imagineers, explains is "there are two (2) ways to look at a blank sheet of paper: one way is to see it as the most frightening thing in the world, because when you're faced with a blank sheet, you must make a first mark on it. It doesn't matter whether you are an artist, a writer, an engineer or an accountant, making that first mark is the challenge. On the other hand, a blank sheet of paper can be the greatest opportunity in the world for the same reason, but with a more important nuance, you **get to** make the first mark on this blank sheet of paper. You can let your imagination fly in and out in any direction you choose. You can create whole new worlds. You can think outside the box. And that blank piece of paper shows up at any time the Imagineers seem to have an insurmountable problem or are stuck on how to do something.

There's a story that one of the Imagineers shared the meaning of the blank paper and it's significance with one of his brothers with whom he didn't communicate real well and therefore didn't really know him. And this relationship was important to both of them and the didn't know how to change it. Well as they grew older, and weren't together all the time, the one brother wrapped a Birthday gift in a white, blank piece of paper. Later in the year, he received that same blank piece of paper returned to him fully covered with creative ideas, thoughts and personal feelings from his brother. He continues this and he saves all of these papers and is now closer to his brother than ever before. That paper was the bridge that strengthened their bond.

As we look at a video and listen to this song perhaps you will come up with something creative that you could use in a relationship that is meaningful to you.

Video *50 First Dates*

Song: *Love Can Build A Bridge*

Now if we look at relationships in our lives. Which ones are important enough for us to spend time on and to be creative in either establishing or maintaining them. Would they be family relationships? Ones with a spouse, a parent, a child or sibling? A relationship with Friends? Co-workers? Classmates? Pets? Our relationship with God. What relationships should we focus on? Which ones are important? Again, if we look at the Bible scripture for today and the teachings of Jesus, we learn that ALL relationships are important. God wants us to have a strong relationship with everyone we meet; they are all our neighbors. And it all begins with our relationship with God.

As creativity was demonstrated with Jesus and Zacchaeus' relationship what can we do to be imaginative with a relationship?

How can we be creative when it comes to establishing, rekindling or strengthening our relationships. There are a lot of different ways. Here are three (3) that quickly come to mind.

1. **PLAY** If we're dealing with someone of a younger age, or children, ask them to play something like foursquare, monopoly or a card game. But it's important that you ask.
2. **SHARE COMMON INTERESTS** During this time, your understanding of them will grow and you will be able to talk more freely.  
Here's one for us guys.
3. **LISTENING** Learn how to be an active listener. God always listens to us and based upon that, our relationship is strengthened.

Another thing we can do is to be open with people. To share our innermost thoughts and feelings. And to use our imagination on how and when we do that. And at the same time, while we are being creative and active in our relationships with others, we need to be willing to be "cut off" or

hurt. Because when we do this we are vulnerable and things aren't always going to go the way we expect them to. But God knows that and will support us in what we're doing.

This morning I thought we might as well be equipped with the same tools as the creators of Disneyland. So we are passing out a blank sheet of paper. I thought we would also try using this as a symbol of creativity and a way to approach life. God's love for each and every one of us is just like this piece of paper, without a mark on it; without a flaw. I believe it's God's intention as shown through Jesus that we have relationships with family, friends and people we meet in this world and share our love. So let's each view this blank piece of paper as an opportunity where we GET to make the very first mark. Let this be a place where we can spark our imagination and where we think of ways to create and develop our relationships with God and other people. And as the week goes on let's continue to mark on this paper creative ways to approach a relationship and use it to encourage and inspire us. We can draw things like a telephone to call someone we haven't spoken with or the sun or stars to meet someone outside or the color yellow to cheer someone up. Do absolutely anything you want, keeping in mind that God is giving us a chance to do this and now that we've started today and it's just a matter of carrying it forward.

Song: *Colour Everywhere*

Video: *The Librarian*

A final story I would like to share with you is about someone in the workplace whose boss was cruel, overbearing, uncaring, degrading, mean let's just say she wasn't a lot of fun to be around. And this worker dreaded coming into work every day and didn't know how to deal with this situation. One day after church the worker decided to turn to God and pray about this person. Not a prayer where they would burst into flames, but a prayer for understanding and tolerance. And the prayer developed into a prayer to God to be with this person. And soon he began to view his supervisor in a whole new light. Now the boss' actions didn't change dramatically but the workers response to her did. A new type of relationship was created from the adversarial one that existed before. And as it turns out when the supervisor retired she recommended this person to fill her vacant position.

At this time I would like to invite you to take just a moment of time with me in prayer with our God.....

God we are thankful for being together at the Garden this morning and for getting me through the Message today.

We know that you are listening to our prayers and as we turn to you as a group we ask that you touch each and every heart here today and help us to feel closer to you.

We also turn to you for forgiveness for some of our past actions that have not helped our relationships or when we have turned our back or walked out on relationships that are important to us.

Help us to take time each day to talk with you

and be present in the words that we speak to others as we try to be creative.

God once again there are also people here today that facing disappointment in a relationship or maybe just feeling that a strong one may never truly develop.

Recharge them with hope

and comfort them with the knowledge that you are beside us.

God we also ask that you be with those who are having to deal with an injury or surgery or the death of a loved one.

Help them to experience your healing power

and feel the transformation that comes with life close to you.

God thank you for always being there for us. Thank You God Amen.

**Close:**

As we leave here this morning, with your paper in hand, know that being creative in establishing and strengthening our relationships is important to God and that God will help us make it happen. Thank you for coming.