

IMAGINE

Unless you turn and become like children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).

No one meets the entrance requirements for God's kingdom who hasn't mastered the art of perpetual childlikeness. Far from advocating immaturity, Jesus is reminding adults like us of the absolute necessity for maintaining those qualities so prominently displayed in children; such as faith, wonder, play, and the gift of imagination. When these characteristics are lost we lose our very souls.

A new book by Anthony Esolen¹ explains how current cultural trends actually work in the opposite direction and deaden the God-ordained gift of imagination in children. With wit and satire, Esolen both encourages and disturbs us as he describes ten proven methods that destroy the imagination. He promises that "a judicious application of even three or four of these methods will suffice to kill the imagination of an Einstein, a Beethoven, a Dante, or a Michelangelo" (p. xiii).

1. Keep your children indoors as much as possible.
2. Never leave children to themselves.
3. Keep children away from machines and machinists.
4. Replace the fairy tale with political clichés and fads.
5. Cast aspersions upon the heroic and patriotic.
6. Cut all heroes down to size.
7. Reduce all talk of love to narcissism and sex.
8. Level distinctions between man and woman.
9. Distract the child with the shallow and unreal.
10. Deny the transcendent.

On the dangers of immersion in television and "popular culture," Esolen writes: "After years of watching the comic face of nihilism, your children will come to respect nothing, love nothing, believe in nothing, and long for nothing" (p. 157).

I wish every parent, grandparent and school teacher would read this book. Frankly, other than a God-sent Great Awakening and revival, I can't think of a better way to save civilization than to absorb the teachings of this book and apply them in our homes, schools, and churches.

O Lord, forgive us for the ways we have neglected the gift of imagination you've given us. Through the Spirit who dwells within your children (!), help us to rediscover the ability to dream and create. Enable us to help our children cultivate their imaginations so that their desires and ambitions reflect you and the purposes for which you've created them. Amen!

Pastor Stan

¹*Ten Ways to Destroy the Imagination of Your Child.* Anthony Esolen. ISI Books. Wilmington, Delaware. 2010.