



## Theology of Beauty and Imagination: A Guide to Wonder with Dr. Junius Johnson

### Lesson 8: Imagination in the Classroom

#### Outline:

##### Imagination in the Classroom

- We should have interest in the point of view of the student.
  - There are wrong answers. There are bad answers. There are bad questions, but they are not fruitless.
  - To show me beauty, you have to know what I find to be beautiful.
  - The teacher may see something that they have not seen before.
- Make space for imagination.
  - A classroom is not a lecture hall (designed for one-way delivery).
  - A classroom is designed for a teacher (not a lecturer).
  - The teacher is charged with ensuring that the information is received.
  - The teacher may have to say it again or say it differently or say it better for it to be understood.
- There are two versions of the outcome of a course.
  - There is the desired place to get the students to.
  - There is the place where the students will arrive.
- We ought to make sure that the classroom is a place of imagination and wonder.
  - **Never tell what you can show.**
  - **Never show without drawing them into the explanation.**
  - **Rarely give them an explanation but rather guide them through a process of discovering it.**
  - Present them with problems of every sorts.
  - Without curiosity there is not going to be wonder.
  - Wonder is the response we have in the moment of recognition of great disparity.
    - We wonder when we learn something new.
    - We wonder before that which is unexpected.
    - We wonder before that which is a breakthrough.
    - We wonder before that which required great strength, intellect, or industry to exist.
    - We wonder at un hoped for joys and un hoped for sorrows.
  - The conditions of wonder are the recognition of a great disparity, a conundrum, a paradox. Present them with phenomena that do not make sense.



- Imagination is involved in creating experiences that include wonder.

## Lesson Planning for Imagination

- Leave space in your classroom for imagination. Do not utilize all of the time for the class in your lesson plan.
- Spend the extra time chasing down things that stand out to them in a reading.
  - This gives the students a voice in the classroom.
- This makes space to lead the students by their passions.
- This is also great for the teacher because it means less preparation time.
- The point of teaching is not to be prepared with an answer to any question that students might ask; it is to be prepared to discuss any question they might ask, even if that must come down to admitting in humility that you don't know the answer.
- Teaching is a process of selection.
- No two sections of a course will be the same.
- The goal is to impart the sense that the subject is rich. Anything worth reading is worth reading twice. The good books are meant to be read in an ongoing fashion.