

LESSON 6.1 • IMAGINATION
OUTLINE

- I. We all have an image inside of us of what we can do (what we are capable of doing), along with what only God can do through us (what we are incapable of doing).
 - A. This latter image serves as a ceiling, or limit, on what God can do in our lives.
 - B. God created us with imaginations, and we can't think without them.
 - C. Most of us don't realize how much we use our imaginations, thinking they're just for kids, but we use our imaginations every moment of every day.
 - D. *Imagination* is defined as "the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality" (*Merriam-Webster.com*).
 - E. In other words, imagination is the ability to see something with our minds that we cannot see with our physical eyes.
 - F. When it comes to God's direction for our lives, we have to use our imaginations to see those things come to pass.
 - G. Our lives are the way they are today because of the way we have seen them or pictured them in our imaginations—the way we think determines the direction our lives will go.
- II. Words paint pictures!
 - A. Nothing can be built without an imagination.
 - i. Architects use blueprints to show builders how to construct what they have imagined.
 - B. You can't see anything happen without your imagination.
 - C. You have to use your imagination to start thinking and seeing bigger.
 - D. If you can't see something on the inside, you won't be able to see it manifest in your life.
- III. Memory is also tied to imagination.
 - A. Our memory functions off our imaginations.
 - i. Most of us don't write down where we parked our cars every time we go somewhere; we just have a mental image of where we left it.
 - B. We can't remember anything we can't picture or imagine.
 - C. We really can't understand something unless we can picture it in our minds.
 - D. If we can picture something, we can have it or do it!

- IV. God's vision for us is revealed in His Word.
- A. We have a superior covenant to the one Moses had, so if he could be healthy and live to be 120 years old (Deut. 34:7), then we can too!
 - B. We have to change the way we think.
 - C. We need to study the Word and imagine the truths God has given us until they paint a picture on the inside of us—until we see ourselves healthy, righteous, and full of peace and joy.
 - D. As Christians, our imaginations should paint such a real picture that we live by what the Word says more than we live by what we can see with our physical eyes (2 Cor. 5:7).
 - E. We can do that—we have God Almighty living inside us!
- V. Before you see something happen on the outside, you have to see it on the inside.
- A. It has to become so real to you that you see yourself doing it.
 - B. You won't see the miracle-power of God if you are defeated, discouraged, or depressed in your imagination.
 - C. Resurrect your imagination, and start using it in a positive way!
- VI. The imagination is a powerful force, but it has to be engaged.
- A. We have to be intentional about it—if we just put our imaginations on automatic, we will wind up being vain in our imaginations.
 - B. A positive imagination is a byproduct of whether we have truly been thankful and have valued the things of God.
 - C. A vain imagination, however, conceives evil instead of being creative and conceiving good things.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

ROMANS 1:21

- D. A foolish, darkened heart is a hardened heart, and once a person's heart is hardened, they become separated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18).
- E. Having a hard heart doesn't necessarily mean they aren't trying to love God or follow His will for their lives; it just means they don't understand how much God loves them apart from their behavior or performance.
- F. People with hardened hearts must focus on God and what He has already done for them, instead of being focused on themselves.
- G. As they focus more on Him, instead of their imaginations being vain, they will come alive.

- VII. We will become exactly what we imagine—whether that image is positive or negative.
- A. We would be much better off if we spent time encouraging our imaginations.
 - B. We need to find out what the Word says about us and pray and let the Holy Spirit give us an image of what He wants us to do—and who He wants us to be.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

ISAIAH 26:3

- C. Many of us think, *Well, I am trying to keep my mind stayed on the Lord*, but are we keeping our *imaginations* stayed on the Lord?
- D. When we don't realize how important it is to keep our imaginations stayed on the Lord, we will allow them to be turned against us, and we will only see negative things.

VIII. Ephesians 4:17 says—

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

- A. Vanity of the mind means that we aren't using all that God has given us.
- B. God gave us our imaginations—they are a powerful force!
- C. We shouldn't be like the lost who only use their imaginations to see negative things.
- D. If we aren't glorifying God—putting worth and value on Him by praising and thanking Him for what we have—our imaginations will default to seeing the negative side of everything.

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DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What are the two images you have on the inside of you?

2. What does the latter image serve as?

3. *Discussion question:* Discuss the importance of imagination in relation to God's direction for your life.

4. _____ can be built without imagination.

5. If you can't see something on the inside, you won't be able to what?

- A. See it manifest in your life
- B. Play Chinese checkers
- C. Do it on the inside
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

6. True or false: Memory has nothing to do with imagination.

7. If you can picture something, you can _____ it or _____ it!

8. *Discussion question:* What are some truths from God's Word that you are studying and allowing to paint a picture on the inside of you?

9. What you see on the inside of you has to become so real that what?

10. What must you do with your imagination?

11. True or false: The imagination is a powerful force, but it has to be engaged.

12. *Discussion question:* What lessons can you learn from Romans 1:21?

13. What must people with hardened hearts focus on?

- A. Christian television
- B. God and what He has already done for them
- C. God and what they should be doing for Him
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

14. You will become exactly what you imagine—whether that image is _____
or _____.

15. *Discussion question:* Are you keeping your imagination stayed on the Lord?

16. When you don't realize how important it is to keep your imagination stayed upon the Lord, what will happen?

17. What does "vanity of the mind" mean?

18. *Discussion question:* Why shouldn't you and your imagination be like the lost?

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SCRIPTURES

1 CHRONICLES 29:18

O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.

DEUTERONOMY 34:7

And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

PROVERBS 23:7

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

JOHN 14:12

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

JOHN 11:39

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

ROMANS 1:21

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

GENESIS 11:6

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

EPHESIANS 4:17-18

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, [18] Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

ISAIAH 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.