CHARIS YOUTH

# Series: Divine Imagination

## Lesson 1: Thankfulness

### About This Lesson

This series, "Divine Imagination," helps the youth see that they can have godly thoughts and imaginations that help them dream and fulfill God's plan for their lives. The first lesson focuses on the importance of understanding that you are a spirit with a soul in a body. The young people will discover that thankfulness guides their imaginations in a godly direction toward supernatural victory.

**Key Takeaway:** If you are thankful, your imagination will be creative, productive, godly, and enlightened!

**Key Verse:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

### Teaching Outline:

I. SPIRIT – SOUL – BODY

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A. "The God of peace" uses the Greek word eiréné, which means rest, peace, wholeness, prosperity, tranquility, exemption from the rage and havoc of war.
   1. The Devil wants to wreak havoc on people, especially in their imagination.

B. You are a spirit, you possess a soul, and you live in a body.
   1. Soul is your mind, will, and emotions. You possess a soul. Your soul should not possess you.

2. Soul includes your thought-life, attitude, overall outlook on life, hopes (or fears), ambitions (or lack thereof), plans, and your imagination!

C. Your soul is important! This is where you live! This is where you dwell. You can't escape it!
   1. You can temporarily escape many things: your school, your job, your house, your city, your country, your friends, or your family.
   2. God cares about your soul, your thoughts, your emotions, your dreams, and your imagination.
   3. God doesn't want the enemy to rent space in your head! He paid for you to have an abundant life! He paid for you to have peace in your spirit, soul, and body!

## II. THANKFULNESS DIRECTS YOUR IMAGINATION

Romans 1:20-21, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [21] because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

A. God is the Creator! Whenever you see beauty or order, there is always a creator!
   1. The very first attribute of God is that of Creator! "In the beginning, God created" (Genesis 1:1).
   2. One of the first attributes of the enemy is that he is a destroyer! He doesn't want to bring beauty or order. He wants to bring chaos, destruction, pain, and defeat.

B. "Nor were thankful but became futile in their thoughts." Thankfulness directly controls your imagination!
   1. If you are unthankful, your imagination will not be creative—it will actually be destructive.
   2. You'll imagine problems that are really not there.
   3. Small, minuscule problems will seem enormous in your mind.
   4. You'll be easily offended and thrown off course.
   5. You will imagine solutions that are actually extremely destructive.

## III. YOUR IMAGINATION IS A POWERFUL FORCE! GOD GAVE IT TO YOU FOR A DIVINE PURPOSE

A. How do you get your imagination to function with this divine purpose?
   1. Be thankful!
      a. Give a personal example of a time you were thankful, and it helped you think of creative ideas or see a solution to a problem.
   2. Worshippers, musicians, and singers are very creative. They have powerful imaginations, but creative people can also become very bitter. The foundation for godly worship and godly creativity is always thankfulness!

## IV. THANKFULNESS DIRECTS YOUR IMAGINATION

A. David and Goliath show the power of imagination (1 Samuel 17:17–37). David's imagination went into high gear!
   1. V. 25 Reward was given: the man who killed Goliath would get riches, marry the king's daughter, and His father's house would be exempt from taxes!
   2. V. 28 Eliab criticized David's heart—his dreams, hopes, excitement, and imagination.
   3. V. 32 David told Saul, "Let no man's heart fail." David saw their hearts were affected and imagined defeat.

B. David was a man after God's own heart. He had a heart with a divine imagination.
   1. Vv. 36–37 This was a righteous fight, and David visualized victory through God's help.

## V. THANKFULNESS DIRECTS YOUR IMAGINATION

A. He was thankful even though there were reasons to doubt and be unthankful.
   1. The army of Israel was full of a bunch of chickens!
   2. His brothers were mean bullies!
   3. The king didn't believe in him, even when he was the only one willing to do the job.
   4. Goliath was huge!

B. He was thankful because there was a cause worth fighting for, and he was prepared.
   1. He had a sling and a pouch that held five stones!

2. He had already killed a lion and a bear!
3. He knew his God was greater than this Philistine.
4. He belonged to the people chosen by the Almighty!

C. David believed God would do what He said He would do, so David spoke and wrote poetry that voiced his divine imagination (1 Samuel 17:40–51).
   1. Vv. 45–47 The psalmist of Israel speaks some of the greatest poetry ever uttered!
   2. Vv. 49–51 When the rock sank in Goliath's head—David knew exactly what to do! He had already imagined it! He already knew the giant's sword would be the closest sword to chop off Goliath's head.
   3. The Israelite army probably didn't know what to do. It took them a few seconds to snap out of shock and disbelief. They probably imagined where the nearest exit was and were ready to run away.

D. Two imaginations were at work. One was a young man thankful to belong to God who imagined victory in the face of impossibility. The Israelites imagined themselves as victims and remained that way until someone with divine imagination emerged.
   1. Are you ready to emerge and use your divine imagination?

**Bottom Line:**
In everything give thanks. Your thankfulness directs your imagination!

## Small Group Time:

1. Guard your heart by guarding your imagination. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." Your thoughts come from what is in your heart. Your thoughts/heart guide your imagination.

- On a normal day, do you think your imagination is more godly or not godly (thinking of things that do not follow God's ways)? Why?
- If your imagination is destructive or fearful, how can you remove the thoughts or situations that cause it to be that way?

2. Young people have great imaginations! Your imagination affects you. How you view yourself in your imagination shows up in how you act and speak. For example, if

someone imagines he or she is wimpy, then he or she will act like a victim and say things that show they don't have self-confidence and are weak.

- What are some things you would imagine if you knew you were victorious because you have the power of Jesus in you? How would you act, and what would you say that reflects your divine imagination?

**Declaration:**
"I am thankful. My imagination is creative, productive, godly, and enlightened!"

## Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** How will thankfulness affect your imagination?
- **Pray:** Commit your imagination to God and ask Him to show you when your imagination is pleasing to Him and when it is not.
- **Read:** Read Romans 1:20–21 each day. All creation knows there is a God because of beauty and order. Make a list of things you see that are full of beauty and order. Thank God for them.
- **Live It:** Each day this week, think of a different person for whom you are thankful and tell them why you are thankful for them.
- **Create:** Each day, keep an imagination journal. Notice the things you think about and create or just have a unique idea about. See if your thankfulness motivates your imagination.

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

**Icebreaker Question:** What is your favorite season, and why?

**Opening Activity Suggestion:** Find the Christian music video and/or song, "I Can Only Imagine" and play it for the group. Discuss how we don't have videos or pictures of heaven, so we have to use our imaginations.

**Opening Affirmation:** "I thank God for my divine imagination and will use it to bring Him glory."

**Giving Time:** 2 Samuel 5:20 *David said, "…The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water."*

David's enemies, the Philistines, were after him. God reassured David that He would deliver the Philistines into his hands. God went before David and took care of the enemy. God's kingdom is advancing, so be part of it. Don't look back later in your life and wish you hadn't waited to start giving to the kingdom advancement.

## BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

**Challenge:** Help the young people form a habit of thankful thoughts that guide their imagination. This week's challenge is to tell God something you are thankful for each time you get on your phone. When they focus on God's blessings to them and reasons for their thankfulness, they might recognize that they want to honor God with their thoughts when they are on their phones.

**Biblical Worldview:** Our biblical worldview sees all blessings and reasons for thankfulness ultimately come from God. Encourage the young people to thank God out loud in front of their friends for the blessings they recognize that cause them to be thankful. As they model thankful thoughts for their friend, it will also help them keep thankfulness as a guide to their divine imaginations.

**Outreach/Missions:** Distribute any missionary newsletters or email updates from missionaries your church sponsors. Have the young people join small groups and give each group a missionary letter to pray for the missionaries. Encourage groups to incorporate things they are thankful for the missionary doing in their prayers.