CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Divine Imagination

Lesson 2: The Purged Conscience

About This Lesson

God's will is to cleanse and to free people from bitterness, unforgiveness, and things that take their thoughts away from Him. The young people are bombarded by thoughts that take them far from what God says about them. Wrong thinking will keep them from desiring to bring glory to God—what they are designed to do. By purging negative, destructive thoughts, the young people can have godly thoughts and imagination.

Key Takeaway: God cares about each person's soul and thought life. Everyone has thoughts that need to be renewed, cleansed, and purged. The blood of Jesus is the only way to cleanse your thoughts.

Key Verse: Hebrews 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

Teaching Outline:

I. THE BLOOD OF JESUS PURGES YOUR CONSCIENCE

Hebrews 9:9 *It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience.*

A. The Old Testament had symbolic cleansing (Hebrews 9:6–15). Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices could not perfect, cleanse, or purge the conscience. It could not affect the soul.
   1. V. 9 The word "conscience" in Greek is suneidésis, meaning "the soul and its consciousness of sins."
   2. Your conscience is the bridge between your soul and your spirit.

3. V. 12 Jesus used His blood to purchase eternal redemption, including your emotions, thought life, and imagination.
4. V. 13 The blood and ashes of a heifer were a substitute for Jesus' blood that temporarily cleansed. We have something better than the ashes of a heifer—the blood of Jesus!
5. V. 14 Only the blood of Jesus can purge your conscience! It washes your soul. It has the power to cleanse you from within!!!

B. Only Jesus' blood could purge. The Greek word katharizó means cleansing, like catharsis, which means the release of strong and repressed emotions. Jesus wants to cleanse your emotions, thought life, and imagination.

C. Man looks on the outside and wants to cleanse the appearance that people see. God looks at the heart and wants to cleanse the inner man, the hidden man of the heart.
1 Samuel 16:7 *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*
   1. At church, religious people might judge the youth by appearances and actions. You can know that God isn't judging you—He offers cleansing of your sins and your soul.

D. God's will is to cleanse. He wants to free people from bitterness, unforgiveness, and things that take their thoughts away from Him.

II. HE IS WILLING, BE CLEANSED!

Luke 5:12–13 *And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*
[13] Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him.

A. V. 12 The man said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."
   1. We don't have to wonder if God is willing to cleanse us, He is!

B. V. 13 Jesus showed grace by putting out His hand, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately, He was cleansed.

1. Whatever junk you may have in your soul, heart, thoughts, or memories from a broken past in your desires or imagination—take it to Jesus. He will stretch out His hand and touch your soul and cleanse you! He is always willing!

III. GOD CAN CLEANSE YOUR CONSCIENCE IMMEDIATELY!

A. In 2 Kings 5:9–14, we read about Naaman, the leper. He had to wash in the Jordan seven times to be cleansed.
   1. This was the same river that Joshua led the Israelites across. As the priests stepped into the river with the ark of the covenant, it parted, and they walked into and through a miracle.
   2. This was the same river where Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle and shouted, "Where is the God of Elijah?" (2 Kings 2:14). He hit the waters with the mantle, watched them divide, and stepped into his ultimate purpose.
   3. This was the same river where Jesus was baptized, and the Spirit descended like a dove and remained upon Him, as the audible voice of the Father spoke, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (John 3:16).

B. If we need cleansing in our soul or body, we can come to the Living Water. We come to Jesus! He is the only water that cleanses us from the inside out.

IV. KEEP BEING RENEWED

A. Your soul and mind need constant transformation and renewal. To cleanse yourself, keep going to the Living Water. Keep going to the Word of God.

B. Don't just wash in the Jordan 7 times like Naaman. Keep letting Him wash your soul with His blood! Keep going to the Word! The Word will wash and cleanse your soul.
   Ephesians 5:26 says, *"that He might sanctify and cleanse her [the church] with the washing of water by the word."*

C. God wants to renew your inward man!

Romans 12:1–2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1. Your mind, will, emotions, and imagination are holy to the Lord. Jesus cares about what is hurting your heart and hindering you from complete holiness to Him. He is willing to cleanse you. Are you willing to be cleansed?

Bottom Line:
Whatever sorrow or anguish you may have in your heart, Jesus cares about you. His will for you is good! He is now stretching out His hand, saying, "I am willing, be cleansed!"

Small Group Time:

1. Paul, before he became a Christian, had persecuted Christians and even held the coats of the people stoning Stephen. The trauma of his previous life could have crippled him as a new believer, but the blood of Jesus purged his conscience and allowed him to preach and write many books of the New Testament. God redeemed his heart.
   - What advice do you think Paul would give you about letting go of your past mistakes and bringing glory to God?
   - We know Paul didn't dwell on his past, but embraced his new life as a Christian. What strategies might help keep you from dwelling on the past?

2. A Cleveland Clinic study showed that the average person thinks 60,000 thoughts daily. About 95% of these thoughts are the same habitual thoughts, and 80% are negative. Negative thoughts need to be purged. The negative things people say start as negative thoughts that are voiced.
   - What are some negative things you've heard other people say? What would you say to encourage them to let Jesus cleanse their thoughts?
   - What negative thoughts would you like to be set free from? Guide the group in a time of silent reflection and ask Jesus to purge those thoughts.

Declaration:
"I accept the blood of Jesus to purge my conscience and free my mind. I choose to let Him guide my desires, dreams, and imagination."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** What thoughts need to be cleansed to allow God to guide your desires, dreams, and imagination?
- **Pray:** Ask God to show you areas of bitterness and unforgiveness that need to be purged from your thoughts.
- **Read:** 2 Corinthians 10:4–5 Paul wrote about taking thoughts captive. Read these verses each morning and watch during the day to take captive any negative thoughts try to creep into your mind.
- **Live It:** Sometimes, we don't recognize that we have negative thoughts until we hear something negative come out of our mouths. Focus this week on catching a negative thought before it comes out of your mouth. Instead of saying it, thank God for cleansing your thoughts and focus on how you can bring glory to God in your thoughts and imagination.
- **Create:** Think about what would help you remember that your mind, will, emotions, and imagination are holy to the Lord. Maybe you want to make a bracelet that says "Holy" or a message on your home screen to help you focus on your divine imagination.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Lead a discussion asking the youth to describe what their bedrooms would look like if they never purged their clothes, books, games, and personal items from childhood until now. Help them see that keeping things from the past takes space to enjoy things now, and many of the things are useless for the life they are living now.

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

Giving Time: Romans 10:14—15 *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And*

how shall they hear without a preacher? [15] And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

The Gospel message is free, but it takes money to send the message out through various methods and people. As the young people develop the habit of giving to God, they are also building the kingdom of God around the world. When they get to heaven, they won't regret any money that went to help others receive Jesus as Savior.

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: This week, give each young person a small trash bag. Challenge them throughout the week that each time they recognize negative or destructiveness in their soul, heart, thoughts, or desires—or memories from a broken past in their imagination—they should take it to Jesus. Encourage them to write down what needs purging, pray, and let Jesus cleanse their thoughts. Then they should throw away what they wrote. Something thrown away shouldn't be retrieved from the trash! Their thoughts don't have to go back and dwell on it because Jesus took care of it!

Biblical Worldview: Having a biblical worldview recognizes that the Bible has the answer for having a clear mind that can have thoughts that bring glory to God. As the young people allow Jesus to cleanse their thoughts, they can help their friends and family recognize that the Bible is true and has the answers that the world can't give. Their biblical worldview should shine through their thoughts and imaginations, which come from God and are cleansed by Jesus.

Outreach/Missions: Pray for the local school counselors, teachers, youth group workers, and others who will be encountering young people who are dealing with traumatic memories and thoughts. Ask God to give the youth group members opportunities to share with their friends how Jesus can help them. Encourage each youth to be ready to pray and point people to Jesus.