

Only Imagine

Today I remember a friend who, for years, wanted to play a Hammond B-3 organ. This powerful electric instrument is coveted by churches and jazz musicians alike. My friend's imagination allowed him to picture himself tap dancing on the pedals and navigating the keys with Spirit-fueled excellence.

I saw only one problem with his deep desire: His fingers had never once touched a keyboard.

But that didn't change his unrelenting prayers—or his imagination. A man of vision as well as faith, he was seated in his usual folding chair one Sunday when the church organist failed to appear.

My friend walked to the organ and sat at the bench as the Holy Spirit said, "Come." Our pastor and music director knew nothing about his lack of musical expertise. He simply placed his fingers above the massive three-tier keyboard and began to play as if he had done it all his life.

First came clear, introductory phrases that charted a hymn's basic melody. Then, unphased by a hymn in four flats, he flowed several runs up and down the keyboard, navigating both pedals and keys flawlessly. When the worship service ended, he went on a run around the sanctuary. Several others followed him.

My friend's newfound ability shocked even him. "I've never even played 'Chopsticks' before," he said. "I don't remember what I just played." To this day, he still plays for all services.

Long before that miraculous Sunday, my friend had the imagination to see what God wanted him to do. Even though he had no skill or training to play the organ on his own, "God played through me," he said.

Our imaginations are much more powerful than we realize. For the believer, another term for “imagination” is “spiritual vision.” We imagine what the Spirit of God is up to in our lives. He plants those thoughts deep within us.

When King David shared his vision for building God’s temple with the people of Israel, he took time to offer a prayer. His words included this key phrase: “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” (1 Chron. 29:18a, KJV). The Modern English Version says, “O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the thoughts and intentions of the heart of Your people.”

Imagination allows Spirit-filled believers to keep a picture in their hearts of what God is telling them to do. Imagination breaks down earthly walls and soars above human limitations. Where the enemy tries to tear us down, imagination lifts us up. It calls us higher. It moves us out of lack into “life more abundant and free.”

But the Holy Spirit must guide our imagination, or we will suffer the consequences. One of the seven things the Lord hates, listed in Proverbs 6:17-19, is “a heart that devises wicked imaginations.” In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he urges his friends to use their spiritual weapons of warfare, which are “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:4b-5a).

In fact, biblical references to a “wicked” or “evil” imagination (Jer. 7:24, 9:14, 11:8, 13:10, 16:12, 23:17; Luke 1:51; Rom. 12:1) refer to those thoughts not yet taken captive to the obedience of Christ (see 2 Cor. 10:5). Our own imaginations bring forth carnal behavior. But His imagination produces a path of blessings.

A godly imagination allows us to see more through the eyes of the Spirit and less with our darkened earthly vision. It allows us to come into agreement with these words of Jesus, fueled by His own imagination: “Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me will do the works that I do also. And he will do greater works than these” (John 14:12a).

Because imagination lets us see what God sees, we can experience His peace. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You.” Andrew Wommack once quoted the verse like this: “The Lord will keep you in perfect peace when your imagination is stayed upon Him.”

Whether it is a keyboard, a palette, a flashing cursor or a classroom filled with wide-eyed learners, we must know there is no “if” to imagination. We can only imagine—through the Holy Spirit.

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