

Study 2 - The Original Mandate of Dominion!

“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

Introduction

God’s plan of expanding His kingdom throughout the earth through human beings did not begin with our redemption in Jesus. It is an eternal purpose, and His plan has been in effect since before the beginning of time. After creating the physical world and the animals, God made man and woman as the crown of His creation and put them in charge of manifesting His glory on this planet as His representatives and ambassadors.

God’s will be for heaven to be duplicated on earth. He invested human beings with His power and authority so they could have dominion in three primary areas as they expanded His kingdom in the world: (1) rulership over creation, (2) power to perform all the works God called them to do, and (3) authority over Satan, demons, and any other evil spirits. Human beings were to rule over nature, space, time, and matter. They were to be kings over creation.

Study Questions

Part 1: Created to Have Dominion

1. In what manner did God make man (male and female)? (Genesis 1:26a, 27a)

KEY DEFINITIONS: The word “*image*” in Genesis 1:26 is translated from the Hebrew word *tselem*, which can mean “resemblance” or “representative figure” (strong, H6754); it also has “the sense of essential nature” (VINE, H6754). The word “*likeness*” is from the Hebrew word *demuwth*, which can mean “resemblance,” “similitude” (STRONG, H1823), “shape; figure; form; pattern.” This word “signifies the original after which a thing is patterned” (VINE, H1823). The *Living Bible* best captures the sense of Genesis 1:27: “Like God did God make man.” Since we were created out of the essence of God, we have His “genes.” We are not “gods”; we are not divine. However, we have God’s nature and characteristics. He created us in His lineage.

Mankind is intended to make of earth what heaven is like.

2. (a) God is an invisible, eternal Being, with supernatural abilities and attributes that are infinitely superior to the natural world. What is God in His essence? (John 4:24a)

(b) What is the essential part of us as human beings, which will return to God after we die, as distinct from our bodies, which will return to the ground as “dust”? (Ecclesiastes 12:7b)

3. What were God’s first instructions to Adam and Eve after He blessed them? Complete the following: Genesis 1:28a: “God said to them, ‘ _____ and _____; _____...’”

The prevailing principle of the kingdom of God is permanent expansion.

4. What did God plan “beforehand” for us to do as new creations in Christ that would enable us to “be fruitful” in the earth? (Ephesians 2:10a)

5. What are two other elements of God’s mandate to humanity? Complete the following: Genesis 1:28b: “...fill the earth and _____; _____... every living thing that moves on the earth.”

KEY DEFINITIONS: In Genesis 1:28, the word “*subdue*” is translated from the Hebrew word *kabash*, which literally means “to tread down” and conveys such ideas as “conquer,” “subjugate,” “bring into bondage,” “force,” “keep under,” and “bring into subjection” (STRONG, H3533). *Subdue* is a term often related to military power that indicates the force to overcome or bring under control. The word “*dominion*” is translated from the Hebrew word *radah*, and this word, also, means “to tread down.” It has such connotations as “subjugate,” “come to have dominion,” “prevail against,” “reign,” “bear rule,” “rule over” (STRONG, H7287), and “dominate” (NASB, H7287a). Many of these senses imply compelling someone to do something by force, to place underfoot, or to enslave. These words largely refer to the subjugation of Satan and his works.

Dominion is the highest spiritual power given to man, because it is territorial power.

6. Into what “territory” on earth did God first place human beings so they could “tend” and “keep” it? (Genesis 2:15)

Part II: Understanding Dominion

Exercising dominion involves both leading and ruling. We are leading when people follow us of their own free will and give us permission to guide them. We are ruling when people do not want to follow us, even though they may know we are carrying out God’s will. When we rule, we must make decisions that go against people’s feelings and desires, to be obedient to God.

7. (a) Jesus demonstrated the pattern of kingdom leadership in John 13:3–17. What did He say we should do for one another (symbolically and sometimes literally), emphasizing the importance of servant leadership? (John 13:14b)

(b) In Matthew 20:25–28, Jesus contrasted the kingdom perspective of greatness with the worldly perspective. How did the rulers of the Gentiles, who were “great” according to the world’s standards, treat those who were under them? (Matthew 20:25)

(c) What did Jesus say about true greatness and what it means to be “first” among other people? (Verses 26b–27)

We lead by means of spiritual fatherhood, relationships, service, and example when people follow us willingly.

8. (a) We cannot exercise “leadership” over our spiritual enemy, the devil, since he will never change his evil ways. Instead, we must rule over him. What is one way in which we are to do this? Complete the following:

James 4:7: “Therefore submit to God. _____ ...”

(b) How will Satan react to this? (Verse 7b)

REFLECTIONS ON DOMINION

Men and women were created to have *dominion* over their environment; they were not designed to be *dominated*, to be controlled and suppressed. God did not design us to live like this, and it has no part in our dominion mandate. Jesus came to earth to restore human beings to dominion so we could rule over

sicknesses, adverse circumstances, and Satan and his demons; so, we could have power over alcohol addiction, drug abuse, bad thoughts, and anything else that causes us to move away from God's will. Moreover, dominion was not given to us so that we could subdue other human beings—only the enemy. If God gives us authority in other people's lives, it is only to govern, guide, and direct them, never to put them under subjection. Governing often requires great wisdom and self-control. We are to serve people and lead them into the blessings that God pours out upon the obedient.

9. (a) What is one way in which Jesus exercised rule during His earthly ministry? (Mark 11:15–16)

(b) In Jesus' subsequent teaching, what did He say to explain His actions? (Verse 17)

We rule with authority over those who are under our care but who refuse to follow us, as God's representatives, of their own free will.

10. The apostle Paul dealt with a situation of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church in which a man was openly sleeping with his father's wife and was unrepentant. The church was looking the other way instead of addressing the issue. Paul's instruction was to put this man out of fellowship with the church in hopes that he would be forced to come to his senses and repent, and thereby be spared the judgment of God. (See 1 Corinthians 5:1–5.) The Corinthians followed Paul's advice, and the discipline worked. Yet the Corinthians turned out to be so zealous in their rule that they continued to shun this man even after he had repented. What did Paul tell them to do at that point? (2 Corinthians 2:7–8)

11. What reason did Paul give Titus for rebuking those in the church who were rebellious and idle talkers, and who were deceiving people in regard to the truth of the gospel? (Titus 1:13b)

12. Why does God chasten, or discipline, us? (Hebrews 12:10b)

Conclusion

Human beings were designed to “*have dominion,*” or to rule. They were created as God's legal representatives to apply or enforce His kingdom laws on earth. After creating Adam and Eve, God put them into the garden of Eden, which was the environment of His presence. The garden of Eden was the base of operations or starting point. From the garden forward, they were to expand God's rule throughout the earth, bringing His glory with them. The mandate God gave humanity began with “*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...*” Here we see the concepts of both our calling to expand and our representation of God's image. The principle of multiplication is eternal. Human beings were meant to continue to fill the earth with God's kingdom through succeeding generations born from Adam and Eve and their children. God's kingdom is a limitless kingdom. It is an ever-expanding realm. It has always existed, it exists now, and it will continue to exist throughout eternity as it expands in ways we cannot now know or imagine.

To enable human beings to fulfil their role in the kingdom, God gave them a built-in desire and ability to lead and rule. He designed them with the ability to think, to address challenges, and to be creative, and

He gave them the desire to exercise their power. This is why every human being has the instinct and need to exercise power in some form.

However, no one person, alone, could “*fill the earth and subdue it*” (Genesis 1:28). The dominion mandate is therefore a collective mandate. Together, human beings were to fill the earth and subdue it, each performing the unique purpose for which he or she had been created, as they all worked in unity to fulfill God’s purposes. In a similar way, through our redemption in Christ, God has assigned each of us a portion of “territory,” or “territorial power,” where we can exercise the measure of our dominion on earth. This dominion is based on the faith, anointing, and gifts He has given to bless us and to further His kingdom.

Prayer of Activation

Father, Your Word says in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” We ask You to activate us in the dominion works You have prepared for us as we expand Your kingdom in our “territory,” or sphere of influence, on earth. Let us exercise leadership with grace and apply rule with discernment. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Action Steps

- ▽ What good works has God placed in your heart to do? Write them down and take action each day toward fulfilling them.
- ▽ Whom might God have placed in your life to receive the benefit of your servant leadership? Determine how you will fulfil your role using the pattern of servanthood Jesus provided.
- ▽ Whom has God placed in your life who needs firm but loving “rule”? Determine how you will respond to this challenge, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is to help people be established in their faith and become more like God.