

SERMON SERIES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

STORY OF FAITH: WEEK 2

In spite of God's sovereignty to rule over all of His creation, He chose not to do it alone. Instead, He created Adam and Eve as the crowning achievement of His creation. As we study Day 6 of the creation story in Genesis 1, we can see that God created Adam and Eve for a specific role: to bear His image while serving as His representatives in the world. Essentially, we were created to glorify God.

“SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. AND GOD BLESSED THEM. AND GOD SAID TO THEM, “BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY AND FILL THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT, AND HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND OVER THE BIRDS OF THE HEAVENS AND OVER EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVES ON THE EARTH.” (GENESIS 1:27-28 ESV)

To be made in the image of God is called the *Imago Dei* (Latin), a theological term that has caused quite a bit of debate over the centuries. Chris Bruno identifies a few possibilities when he states, “Some argue that the image of God has to do primarily with our ability to use reason and intellect. Others argue that the image of God is tied to our ability to relate to God and others. Still others say that it is linked to the task and commission that God gave to Adam and Eve. But it is most likely that the image of God is bound up in both the characteristics and the relational tendencies that we share with God” (p.21, *The Whole Story of the Bible in 16 Verses*).

Being God's image bearers, then, had two important roles: (1) to fill the earth and subdue it; and (2) to have dominion over the earth and over every living thing God created. So, if they were supposed to fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion everywhere, that means they were intended to leave the garden at some point and become the first missionaries. It also means they were to be good stewards of the earth and to bring glory to God by the way they took care of it.

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GENESIS 1:26-31 ESV

26 *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

28 *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

29 *And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.*

30 *And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.*

31 *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

on your own, with family, or with your small group

From Genesis 1:27-28 and the discussion on the other side of this page, how would you answer the famous question: What is the meaning of life?

Ponder what you think it means to be made in the image of God (the Imago Dei) from Genesis 1:26. Do you favor any of Chris Bruno’s four options listed above? Or do you think it means something else entirely? Explain.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Have you ever considered that you were created in the image of the Trinity? Ponder some of the implications for what this verse means for all of us.

In verse 27, we see that God created both Adam and Eve in His image; male and female He created them. If your image of God is an old grandfather with a flowing white beard, this might challenge you. Again, ponder some of the implications for what this verse means for all of us.

Does the idea of having “dominion” over the whole earth mean we can do whatever we please and eventually trash God’s world? If not, then how should we behave towards God’s creation?

Do you think God’s original plan was for humanity to eventually leave the Garden of Eden and be His image bearers around the world? If not, why not? If so, does that make you a missionary?