

WORK MATTERS

"FAMILY BUSINESS: WORK AS REFLECTION"

GENESIS 1:27-29

This Week's Core Competency

Worship – I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me. Psalm 95:1-7

- 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
- 3 For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
- 7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

According to the psalmist, God deserves to be worshipped because he is "the great God," and "the great King above all gods." What's more, he is "the LORD our Maker." He's the Creator; we're his creation. Speaking about mankind, David says in Psalm 8:5-6:

"You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
You made them rulers over the works of your
hands;
you put everything under their feet" (NIV2011).

David's words, "crowned them with glory and honor" and "made them rulers over the works of your hands," allude to the thorny interpretive problem of

**When you work, you are doing
something that is very Godlike.**

– Doug Sherman and Willian Hendricks

identifying the "image" and "likeness" of God in mankind (Ge 1:26, 27). While the following survey of proposed solutions grossly oversimplifies the issue, it suggests that the "image," whatever it is precisely, it isn't one thing but involves "relationships with God, one another, and the creation" (Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity*, CCT, 73).

Here are some proposed interpretations (see also Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis 1-15*, 29-32). *The image is physical and spiritual*. While God is incorporeal—he does not have a physical body—our physical form reflects his capabilities. We have eyes to see, ears to hear, and a mouth to communicate, and although he has none of these, he possesses the same abilities. We also have an immaterial soul or spirit. One commentator explains: "According to the New Testament, humanity is both material (body) and immaterial (soul/spirit) (cf., Matt. 16:26). Some Christian theologians prefer to think of humanity as a trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Within this frame of thought, Christian philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas confine the 'image of God' to the immaterial component of humanity (man's intellect and mind) or at best to the immaterial component residing in the physical" (Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 216), i.e., that component capable of relating to God.

The image is mind and heart, referring to the rational, moral, and emotional dimensions of being human. In other words, human beings possess attributes that make them *more* like God and *less* like animals. Humans, unlike brute beasts, have the ability to reason, love, act morally (not just by instinct), and are self-aware—attributes that God possesses, which reflect the fact that God is a personal being. On "imagination" one commentator writes: "The word 'imagination', a Latinism, reflects this intellectual yet non-rationalistic, understanding of

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'image'. 'Imagination' carries with it the connotation of creative thought, not merely the technical exercise of reason; and it is in this sense that many Christian theologians have considered humans to be made in the image of God . . . We all, Christians or not, possess the 'image' (*selem, eikon, imago*) of God which constitutes our true humanity, the essence of our rational nature. This includes human freedom, and the capacity for creative thought; as noted above, it is perhaps best understood in modern terms as the imagination" (Sherlock, 78). If that is the case, the image of God is especially evident in painters and sculptors, composers and musicians, not to mention novelists and playwrights—any whose stock-in-trade is the arts.

The image is community. Put differently, it reflects the fact that as a person God is a relational being. Clearly, God's image includes social aspects, e.g., relating to others in speech and friendships, which also belong to humans, who naturally live in relationship rather than isolation. Another author adds: "Emphasizing the language of Genesis 1:27 ('God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them') some suggest that the relationships between men and women demonstrate God's likeness. They also note that God voiced His intention to create people while speaking of Himself in the plural ('Let Us make man in Our image,' 1:26), and they argue that the relationships between people reflect the relationship within the Trinity. As social creatures, all persons have the capacity to reflect God's image in this way" (Robert A. Pyne, *Humanity and Sin*, 54).

And finally, *the image is dominion.* While other proposed solutions to the "image" problem involve identifying shared *attributes*, this one involves identifying a shared *function*. Mankind is to "subdue" and "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Ge 1:28; cf., Ps 8:6). Theologians refer to this command as the *cultural mandate*. According to one commentator: "More than anything else, then, subduing and ruling gives people the mission of bringing order to their world just as God has brought order to the cosmos. A. Wolters has identified this as being accomplished through civilization. 'People must now carry on the work of development: by being fruitful they must fill [the earth] even more; by subduing it they must form it even more. Mankind, as God's representatives on earth, carry on where God left off. But this is now to be a human development of the earth. The human race will fill the earth with its own kind, and it will form the earth for its own kind. From now on the development of the created earth will be societal and cultural in nature. In a single word, the task ahead is civilization'" (John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary: Genesis*, 136).

The cultural mandate implies that work is not a curse. In fact, it suggests that work belongs to the "image." Thus, the mandate implies that work matters to God because work has intrinsic value, and work has intrinsic value because God, who is himself a worker, has made mankind in his image. Doug Sherman and William Hendricks unpack this idea in their book. They write: "Most of us are already familiar with the profound and often misunderstood truth that man was created in the image of his divine Creator. But since God Himself is a worker, we would expect man, who is created in God's image, to be a worker, too. And that is precisely what the Genesis passage says about man . . . The concept of mankind ruling over the other creatures and subduing the creation and eating from the produce of the earth all point to man as a worker" (*Your Work Matters to God*, 81). Thus, work is a reflection of the divine image in mankind.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Genesis 1:27-29

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

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Cf., another translation

27 God created humankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them,
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I now give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the entire earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. (NET)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "image" in v. 27.
- * Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 27.
- * Underline "them" in vv. 27, 28.
- * Highlight "subdue" and "rule" in v. 28.
- * Box "then" indicating *temporal sequence* in v. 29.
- * Bracket "seed-bearing plant" and "tree that has fruit with seed in it" in v. 29.

day **2** EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. The NIV(c)2011 reads "So God created *mankind* in his own image, in the image of God he created *them*." Explain why.
2. If God created mankind in his "image," does that mean human beings *look like* God? Explain.
3. One writer says that God's "image" involves both what human beings *are* and what they *are to do*. What do you think he means by that?
4. In verse 28 God mandated that humans "rule over" and "subdue" the earth. What do you think that entails?
5. What practical value can such a broad mandate have for you *personally*?
6. God *speaks* to the man and woman in verse 28. What does that suggest to you *about God*?
7. What does it suggest to you about them?
8. Read Psalm 8:5-6. How does it add to the sense of Genesis 1:27-28?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the implications of Genesis 1:27 for any one of the following: social justice, the environment, racism, or work.

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It describes where the world as we know it came from, where we came from, and where sin came from. Having said that, it's not surprising that it would document where we came from and where sin came from because the book as a whole is about God's solution to humanity's sin problem.

The book has two parts. The first part, chapters 1-11, is about humanity's problem—our sin problem. The second part, chapters 12-50, is about God's solution to humanity's sin problem. Remember what God promised Abram? "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and *all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*" (12:3; Gal 3:8). This promise was fulfilled in God's only Son, Jesus, who was a descendant of Abraham. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

Neither is it surprising that the book would document God's purpose for human beings (1:26), for in connection with telling us where we came from, it tells us how sin frustrated our ability to achieve God's original purpose for us. Genesis 1:26 and 1:28 are key verses that are fundamental to our identity as humans and our purpose for being. The first one tells us that we are created in God's image and likeness. While the meaning of these terms is debated, practically everyone agrees that they do not refer to physical appearance per se. God is spirit; he is incorporeal, which means that he does not have a physical body. Instead, they must refer to something else, perhaps what we are and what we are to do. One writer puts it this way: "Man[kind] as . . . created was to mirror God and to represent God" (Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 67).

On one hand that means while God does not have a physical body, our physical bodies do mirror God's capabilities. Consider the psalmist's rhetorical questions: "Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?" (Ps 94:9). The implied answer is: "Of course, he does." One writer explains, "When we look into a mirror, we see a certain reflection of God: eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to communicate. The biblical mirror of God validates this inference by

using such anthropomorphisms (i.e., having the form of *'adam'*) as 'the eyes of God' and 'the ears of God.' Yet God is spirit, not corporeal, and so in his substance he differs from us. In sum, our human structure faithfully and adequately shows that God, though spirit, sees the needy and hears the cry of the suffering" (Waltke, 216-17). It also means that as persons we human beings mirror the fact that God is a person, for like him we have intellect, sensibility, and volition, as well as a sense of a moral law and a sense of self-identity. "Our ability to make decisions according to our intellect and sensibilities and to execute them reflects God's person as seen in the pattern of creation that finds its center in his commands" (217ff.).

On the other hand that means while God is sovereign, we were made in God's image to represent him. God created human beings to be his vice-regents and commissioned them to rule over all the earth and subdue it. Some call God's command to do this the creation mandate or cultural mandate. One writer describes it this way: "Theologians refer to the command to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it as the cultural mandate (our blessing and responsibility to develop culture under the lordship of Christ). All human beings are—by nature in their reproducing of themselves and in the shape of what they are—culture makers. The role of Adam and Eve is inescapable. Before the Fall, Adam named all the animals and composed a poem for his wife. After the Fall, Cain and his descendants began the arts (music, poetry) and science; they became cattlemen, musicians, tool producers, city builders. University researchers develop civilization by their jargon as their doctoral dissertations exhibit, and authorized pedagogues teach the new speech to the next generation and thereby shape our understanding of reality. This issue is not whether human beings will develop culture; the only issue is what kind? Will it be godly or ungodly?" (220). In the end, it all turned out to be depraved (268). And so, as his representatives, we are commissioned to care for the environment, develop its resources, its potential and our own to the glory of God. As we pursue God's purpose for us, acknowledging the value of what we do in response to his mandate, we affirm that our lives

are meaningful rather than meaningless. We affirm that our work is meaningful rather than meaningless.

Before you conclude that all the above amounts to no more than irrelevant theological claptrap, keep in mind that what we believe dictates how we behave. We believe God is a personal being who has made us personal beings so we might have a relationship to him. What's more, he has

created us in his image and likeness to mirror him and represent him. Our worldview values such as the sanctity of human life, the dignity and worth of the individual, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the significance of art and music, the value of education and research, the worth of our work, and our sense of social justice are all rooted in the *Imago Dei*.

The Message of the Passage

God made mankind in his image to be his vice-regents in order to serve as stewards of his creation and to develop human culture to its full potential.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 26 **Let us** "Only in the case of man, because of his special importance, does Scripture allude to the Divine thought preceding the act of creation" (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, part 1, *From Adam to Noah*, 55). "These plurals do not explicitly refer to the triunity of the Godhead but do allow for that doctrine's development through the process of progressive revelation" (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 112). *The NIV Study Bible* assumes that God is addressing his heavenly court. "God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8; see also 1Ki 22:19-23)" (note on Ge 1:26). As one commentator explains: "'Let us create man' should therefore be regarded as a divine announcement to the heavenly court, drawing the angelic host's attention to the master stroke of creation, man. As Job 38:4, 7 puts it: 'When I laid the foundation of the earth . . . all the sons of God shouted for joy' (cf. Luke 2:13-14)" (Wenham, 28; see also Waltke, 213).

v. 27 **man** Heb. '*adam*. Cf., "mankind" (NIV(c)2011; ESV); "humankind" (NET, NRSV); "human beings" (NLT, GNT). The Hebrew term can refer to man as opposed to woman. The term here refers to humankind, comprised of male and female. The singular noun is clearly collective.

v. 27 **image** Heb. [*tselem*]. "Of its 17 occurrences, 10 refer to various types of physical image, e.g., models of tumors (1 Sam 6:5); pictures of men (Ezek 16:17); or idols (Num 33:52); and two passages in the Psalms liken man's existence to an image of shadow (Ps 39:7 [sic; v. 6]; 73:20). The other five occurrences are in Gen 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6" (29). But in Genesis "it does not signify a physical representation of corporeality, for God is a spirit" (Ross, 112). In other words, "the image" isn't physical because God is spirit and because humans are both material (body) and immaterial (soul). Therefore, "the image" must define humanity as a psychosomatic unity—a unity of soul and body (see Waltke, 215-19). "The image of God must characterize man's whole being, not simply his mind or soul on the one hand or his body on the other" (Wenham, 30).

v. 26 **likeness** The two terms, "image" and "likeness," appear to be used interchangeably in Genesis 5:3, which suggests that the distinctions between them are not particularly significant. In fact, the term "likeness" may simply be added to "indicate the precise nuance of 'image' in this context" (Wenham, 30). Taken together the two terms refer "to both humanity's being and function. It involves both what '*adam* is and what the man and woman do" (Waltke, 219).

v. 27 **so that** Cf., "and let them" (NIV(c)1984, ESV, NRSV); "so they may" (NET).

v. 27 **male and female** "Each individual, whether male or female, is in the image of God, but humanity cannot bear its image to the next generation apart from the contribution of the male and the female. The text bears witness to the equal dignity of the man and the woman as God's vice-regents to subdue the earth and to rule the creation. Neither the male nor the female on their own can fulfill this mandate; they depend on each other, certainly to reproduce and probably in connection with complementary physical and psychological strengths. Neither sex is ontologically (i.e., in their essential being) superior to the other" (Waltke, 221). "Moses doubtless intends to imply the equality of the sexes, for both male and female display the glory of God's image with equal brilliance . . . To sum up: Man was created as royalty in God's world, male and female alike bearing the divine glory equally" (Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male and Female Equality and Male Headship," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 97).

v. 28 **subdue, rule** The divine image makes man God's vice-regent on earth—here enjoined to rule all creatures in earth's three cosmic spheres of heaven, land, and sea. "God's purpose in creating man was that he should rule over the animal world (v. 26). Here this injunction is repeated and defined more precisely . . . Because man is created in God's image, he is king over nature. He rules the world on God's behalf. This is of course no license for the unbridled exploitation and subjugation of nature. Ancient oriental kings were expected to be devoted to the welfare of their subjects, especially the poorest and weakest members of society (Ps 72:12-14). By upholding divine principles of law and justice, rulers promoted peace and prosperity for all their subjects. Similarly, mankind is here commissioned to rule nature as a benevolent king, acting as God's representative over them and therefore treating them in the same way as God who created them" (Wenham, 33).

v. 29 **food** Genesis 1 doesn't explicitly forbid the eating of meat, but some think a prohibition "is clearly to be inferred" (Cassuto, 58). Others suggest that meat eating is "envisaged from the time of the fall" but only explicitly permitted after the flood (cf., Ge 9:3) (Wenham, 34).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

There is a portrait of me that I kept in my Bible for years. I recently took it out as the newsprint it was drawn on is falling apart. When my son was in preschool he proudly presented it to me one day after class. "It's you!" he said. I'm glad he told me because it looked like a one-armed, three-fingered pear. One eye was noticeably larger than the other and my legs were toothpicks of uneven lengths. I was also bald and didn't have a nose or ears. However, I was sporting a large happy smile. Though it looked nothing like me, I cherished it and carried it with me until recently. It reminded me of some pictures of me during junior high and I hoped I really didn't look like that! Sometimes I struggle with my *imago Dei* too. It's the Latin phrase for the image of God. Genesis 1:27 reminds us that we are created in the image of God. We are a likeness of Him. Do others recognize His likeness in me? As a parent I want to accurately portray God to my kids. I want to love and serve well. I want to obey. In the moments I fail and my actions and words do not reflect Him, I want to be quick to repent and come back to Him. Our little image bearers are learning what God looks like by watching us. I'm praying for you as you reflect Him well.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Ge 1:27-29

Fill in the blanks. "So God created _____ in his own _____, in the image of God he created him; _____ and _____ he created them."

What Do You Think

1. What two things did God ask Adam and Eve to do?
2. In what ways do we rule over the earth?
3. How does it make you feel to know we are to take care of it?

What R U Going To Do

Draw a portrait of yourself and one for every member of your family this week. Post them somewhere in your house and write Genesis 1:27 on another piece of paper. Remind each other often that you are God's image bearers!

Core Comp

Worship - I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:14 - *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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