

Introduction

My granddad was a man. His hands were strong and calloused. The son of a tobacco farmer in rural Tennessee, he was well acquainted with hard work. By the time I was born the family farm had been sold and he had moved to town. Even still, his days were full of work. He spent eight to ten hours a day working in a factory that made transmissions. He would return home each day after work to several acres of garden in the spring and summer. In the fall and winter, his evenings were given over to cutting and splitting wood. He was a man of work. Work makes a man tired.

Rarely, did I ever attend church with him when he did not get in a good five-minute nap during the pastor's sermon. As soon as he began snoring, my grandmother would poke him in the ribs to wake him up. One Sunday morning the church's deacons were all seated on the front row ready to serve communion. Halfway through the pastor's sermon, my granddad drifted to sleep. My grandmother wasn't next to him to wake him up. So the man next to him poked him in the ribs. For fun, he said, "Hoyte, the pastor wants you to pray." Thinking the deacons were about to serve the elements, my granddad stood up and said, "Let's pray." The pastor stopped preaching long enough for him to finish his spontaneous prayer. Upon saying, "Amen" my granddad looked around confused as to why the deacons were all still seated. He then just sat back down. The pastor, also confused, went back to preaching.

While my granddad was a faithful churchman, this story gives us an image of most men in the church. We are often awakened from our slumber with a call to serve. We know we're supposed to be doing something. We just don't know what it is. We try to step up but feel awkward. We are often embarrassed and confused as to why no one is following our lead. We eventually sit back down content with a status quo existence in the church.

What must change? *For men to do all God has called them to do, they must understand who God is and who He has created them to be.* These realities do not change over our lifetime. A clear, God-centered view of their life and purpose in the world is what will drive and sustain them for decades in the service of King Jesus.

My prayer is that this walk from Genesis to Revelation considering the Bible's teaching on manhood will be more than a poke in the ribs; that it will wake us from our slumber with clear direction and purpose for the supremacy of Christ in all things.

Created to be God's stamp on the world

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.

-Genesis 1:26-31

In declaring that man was created in God's image, we not only have a description of our essence but also an explanation of our purpose. We have been created in God's image. We are also to be God's image.

The word image means to stamp or cut out. The word can refer to an imprint or carving. The picture in our mind must not be that of a paper stamp we use for postage. It cannot even be that of a rubber stamp used for official documents. The idea of the image of an emperor or president stamped onto a coin gives us a better idea of the kind of image we are talking about. And yet the best imagery to communicate what it means to be created in the image of God is that of a heavy piece of metal forged in fire. Iron that has been shaped

with raised markings to be pressed on something for a permanent imprint or brand. As men, God has forged us and equipped us to be a lasting stamp on the world.

To Be Like God

The truth that we have been created in the image of God is further explained by saying we are made after His likeness. The word likeness means similar or of the same kind. To say we are similar or of the same kind as God in no way means we are little gods. It means we're like God in that we are distinct from creation.

Before Adam and Eve were created, everything functioned according to the order God established. But there was to be more to creation. There was to be a different kind of creature with all the capabilities of establishing dominion. Just like God who stands apart from creation in this way, God created man in His image to execute His purposes in the world.

To Take Dominion

The heart of our purpose is reiterated throughout the passage in the use of the word 'dominion.' *Dominion* means to rule, reign, and assert authority. We are to be God's stamp on the world by being like Him in that we establish authority in the world. As we will see in Jesus, this dominion or authority is to be used for the good of others through sacrifice.

To Bring Order to Chaos

Moses intensifies the idea of dominion by adding the word subdue which means to bridle for an intended purpose. It's the idea of taking a wild horse and bridling it by force to go in the direction you desire. So in His likeness, you have been designed to take what is chaotic in the world and harness it for your purposes.

In Genesis 1, God subdues the world in this way over the first six days of creation. Each day He harnesses His creation and puts order to it for His purpose. God did this same work when he created Adam. On the sixth day, God took chaotic dust particles, subdued them, and gave them order to shape them into man.

To Bring Forth and Steward Life

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

- Genesis 2:7

This verse describes the intimate scene when God, face to face, gave man the gift of life. Then in Genesis 1:28, He commissions Adam to use the gift of his life to steward life on planet earth. This would involve embracing the responsibility to be fruitful and multiply and fill the world with more life. So in the likeness of the Giver of Life, we as image bearers are to put our stamp on the world by stewarding life and bringing more life into the world.

So what?

God has created you to be His stamp on the world by subduing chaos to bring about order for the good of others. This dominion includes stewarding life, cultivating life, and bringing the life of more image-bearers into the world. This means you don't just exist. Your existence comes with a purpose. This means you cannot be passive. You are actively looking for chaos that needs to be subdued. Problems that need to be solved. You approach the responsibility to cultivate and steward life with gravity and joy, not flippancy or misery. You embrace the responsibility of a wife and kids with freedom and focus. You don't see your family as a distraction or burden.

Read: Genesis 1-2

How does considering *how* and *why* God created you help clarify not only your purpose in life but also specific steps you should be taking each day to accomplish this purpose?

Where are all the places God has put you in His world to put His stamp on the world? What skills and resources has God equipped you with to accomplish this purpose in your life?

Every day, we're to be like God by bringing order to chaos to make life better for others. How are you currently doing this?

Is the thought of a family distracting to your life goals? Do you consider your family a burden to “real” life goals? How should the life-giving purpose inherent in man’s creation and commission give perspective on the gift of family? How should it change the way you think about success, investments, and the things you seek to accomplish with your life?

What is one desire you have to take dominion and have not done so out of fear? What plans, goals, or dreams do you have? What steps need to be taken toward this goal for the glory of God? Write this out and begin to pray for God's guidance, strength, and boldness to take the first step. Ask the men in your group to hold you accountable for this step.

Celebrate God's Stamp On the World

¹ O LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouth of babies and infants,

you have established strength because of your foes,

to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,

and the son of man that you care for him?

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings

and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;

you have put all things under his feet,

⁷ all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,

whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- Psalm 8: 1-9

David writes Psalm 8 in awe of the honor God has given man as His image in the world. Small flesh and blood creatures display capabilities to harness the magnificent while accomplishing wonderful things within God's created universe. The globe is right now sprawling with billions of image-bearers taking dominion. The world teems with life as we take the planet and harness its resources for our purpose. Among the created order, it is obvious who God has designed to be the kings and queens. This reality causes David to praise the Lord. It should cause us to celebrate God's stamp on the world.

It's crucial for us to be aware of and amazed at humanity's assignment to put God's stamp on the world. It is helpful for each of us to see this glory on display in our lives daily. If you spend your days subduing rock, dirt, wood, and metal for your purposes, consistently stop and appreciate the dominion God has given you. As you subdue numbers that represent money so others can make sense of expense reports to give order to your company's agenda see this as image-bearing. Thank God for the dominion taking of those who spend their days harnessing science, medicine, and technology to subdue bacteria, viruses, and sickness. Praise Him for those who fight the chaos of sin by pursuing justice through law and order for the good and safety of others. Even as you dominate your front yard by subduing weeds and growing grass you must see the glory with which God created you as a dominion taker.

So what?

Instead of living life with your head down just trying to make it through another boring monotonous day, learn to live with fascination. Focus on the intrinsic value in others as image bearers. As men challenge one another to live out God's glorious design in our lives. Stop and praise God for the way He has gifted you to take dominion in His world!

Read: Psalm 8

List some of the amazing things you see men and women doing in the world that should invoke amazement and praise to God for His image in others.

In what ways do you see the glory of God in the image of God as you observe the lives of others daily?

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Surrender to God's Stamp On the World

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

- Colossians 1:15-21

Jesus is God's Image

In this passage Paul gives an elaborate declaration of the supremacy of Jesus as God's King. Jesus wasn't created in the image of God. Jesus is the image of God. He is God's stamp on the world. He will put God's stamp on the world.

Jesus is God's likeness

Jesus wasn't created in the likeness of God. He is the likeness of God. Hebrews 1:1-3 tells us He is the exact expression of God. He is and expresses everything it means to be God including God's rule over all things. He wasn't made to reflect the rule of God. He is the rule of God.

Jesus is God's dominion

He wasn't just given dominion over creation. He is the king of creation because He created all things. He is actively subduing the universe, refusing to allow the chaos of sin and death to thwart His purposes for human history. He will eventually bring everything to order and restore the goodness and life God first established under His rule.

Jesus is the life giver

He is the head of the church, His body, His bride. He has taken dominion for her by subduing sin and death. Back from the dead, He gives her resurrection life and access to God through the blood of His cross. This life is experienced and multiplied as the Spirit empowers each of her members to witness His dominion over sin and death.

This is where God's purposes for you as a man begin. You must embrace the life only Jesus can give. By faith, give up on yourself and believe Jesus has taken dominion to reconcile you to God by giving His life for your sin on the cross. Once you do this God grants you a life-giving desire that naturally begins to fold your life into the church's mission to be fruitful and multiply by making disciples of all nations.

Jesus is the man we praise

As we look back on Psalm 8, we see that Jesus is the ultimate man who God has crowned with glory, honor, and dominion forever. All we are meant to be as image bearers is found in Jesus. He is God's final dominion taker under whose feet all things have and will be placed. We don't just praise God for the creation of mankind, we praise Jesus as the man in whom all His purposes for man have been fulfilled.

So what?

Your purpose in life isn't generic. You exist to take dominion for the supremacy of Christ in all things. To do so God's King must be your King. Before you can take dominion for Jesus, you must surrender to God's dominion in Jesus. Before you can bring order to chaos in the name of Jesus, He must bring order to chaos in your life through the gospel. Before you can lead others to life in Jesus, you must follow Jesus.

Read: Colossians 1:15-21, & Hebrews 1:1-3

Are you following Christ? Have you ever given up on yourself and turned to Jesus trusting in His cross and His obedience as your only hope to be accepted by God? Talk to a guy in your small group or someone at your church about what this means. Visit www.twowaystolive.com and consider what it means to trust and follow Jesus.

Why is the truth that Jesus is God's *final* stamp on the world good news?

How does faith in the gospel, Jesus' righteous life, death, and resurrection in your place make much of Jesus?

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

How would the goal of making Jesus supreme change your...

Marriage?

Kids?

Friendships?

Work/Career?

Recreation?
