



Lord of the Earth

Profile

Definition: Man is created in God's image to rule and subdue the earth as God's representative.

Focus on

God: God the Lord of All, Creator, Supreme Authority, Judge of all men

Key passage: **Genesis 1:26–28**

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." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And 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."

Virtues: godly ambition—zeal to do the will of God, responsible, decisive, adventurous, visionary

Areas of

Application: frontier, nature, power, stewardship, responsibility, work

Vocabulary: image of God, World Mandate, authority from, divine attributes, rule, responsibility for, human attributes, subdue, be fruitful, territory, realm

Maturity Progression: from boy to mature man, a steward becomes a lord, a servant becomes a master, a clod to a king, a passive lump of clay to a ruling image of God; pioneer of a domain becomes established lord of it

Roles: conquerors, explorers, decision-makers, rulers, kings, lords, stewards, business entrepreneurs, viceroys, visionaries

Examples: Adam, David, Nebuchadnezzar, Paul

The God-Man Jesus, the Perfection of Masculinity

He is the Lord of the Earth—the whole earth is His territory.
He has paid for the world with His own blood.
All nations are a gift to Him from His Father.
He will rule the earth with a rod of iron.



L

ord of the Earth

Designed by God

God created man in His image to lead mankind in ruling the earth for His glory.

Section A LESSON OVERVIEW

The Question is ...

Who am I, and what am I doing here?

The Answer is ...

You are created in God's image to rule the earth for Him.

The Basic Text is ...

Genesis 1:26–28

²⁶Then 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." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And 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."

B Section About Identity & Purpose

Genesis 1:26–27

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Important Terms

image: a reproduction; a tangible or visible representation. (Webster’s)

image of God: humans are little statues, replicas, or miniatures of God. Our human characteristics are patterned after His divine characteristics.

“...the image of God in which man was created included the totality of his being as living, intelligent, determining, and moral.”
Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Victor Books: 1987), p. 192.

attribute: an inherent characteristic; one basic to the nature of the one who possesses it (e.g., horses have strong legs for running)

God, Man, and the Universe

What does it mean to be a man—a masculine member of the human race? Is it any different from being a woman? Is it any different in the long run from being an animal or a rock or an alien? Where did the idea of a man come from? Is he an accident, a process, or a design? If he is a design, who or what designed him? Why is he here on this particular planet? If we do not know the answer to these questions, we cannot know what a man really is.

We Are All Copies

The Bible gives us an eyewitness account of the origin and purpose of man from the only person who was there at the beginning, God Himself. Genesis 1:26–27 reveals the mind of the Designer when He was creating the first man and woman. From the beginning God plans for man to be a copy or replica.

1. What original model did God use when He created man and woman according to Genesis 1:26–27?

God used Himself as the model for man and the model for woman.

2. Read the definition of “image” in the sidebar. How is a star chart like the stars? How are they different? How are toy soldiers like, and yet different from, a real army? How is a model of a space shuttle like a real space shuttle yet also different from a real space shuttle?

The models represent the originals somehow in essence, function, or relationship. For example, a star chart reproduces how the stars look in the sky in relationship to one another. However, the dot on the paper tells us nothing about the billions of units of fiery gas making up the real star. The toy soldiers can be deployed to show the function of a real army in attack, defense, or ambush, but they are not real men. A sophisticated model of the shuttle could actually show us a lot about the working parts and pieces of the original, but of course it is far tinier and cannot actually escape the atmosphere. Scholars discuss how man is in the image of God in these three categories—essence (or structure, constitution), function, and relationship.

Studying a model or an image of something helps us to learn about the actual thing, especially if the actual thing is unknown, or majestic, or huge. A star chart can show us how the stars relate in space, but it cannot communicate the size and heat of the massive bodies.

3. According to your current understanding, how is a man like God? How is he different?

Personal response question. Purpose of question is to get an idea of where the class is in its understanding of the image of God.

God—The Original Person

What does it mean to be in the image of God? The simple and most frequent answer given to this question is that we as human beings have mind, will, and emotions. That is, we think, we chose, and we feel. We relate to one another as persons, not as machines or animals. In these ways we are like God Who thinks, choses, and feels. He is a Person, not a machine or an animal. To be more precise, we are like God in His specific characteristics and attributes. The better we understand God’s divine attributes, the better we will understand our human attributes. Stop and look over the partial list of God’s attributes in the sidebar.

4. Read the descriptions of your human attributes below to see how they are little replicas of God’s divine attributes. Draw lines linking your human attributes on the left with the divine attributes which they reflect on the right.

MAN’S ATTRIBUTES

Conscience (a sense of right and wrong)

Conscience (a sense of justice)

Will (ability to make responsible decisions and choices)

Personality/heart (capacity for love, grief, wonder, etc.)

Mind (ability to know, capacity for memory, logic, imagination, creativity)

Power (capacity to change the world)

Character stability (character traits become more fixed as we mature)

Immortality (with a beginning but without and end)

GOD’S DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Righteousness

Justice

Sovereignty

Love

Omniscience

Omnipotence

Immutability

Eternality

GOD IS:

Righteous: His character is the basis of all morality, law, and ethics. (It is wrong to hate because God is love. It is wrong to lie because He is a God of truth, etc.)

Just: He impartially punishes evil and rewards good.

Sovereign: God never loses control. His purposes are fulfilled.

Love: God is a person who always does the best for His creatures.

Omniscient: God knows everything actual and possible. He is all-knowing.

Omnipotent: God is all powerful; almighty.

Immutable: God is unchanging in character. His attributes do not change. (Immutability is not to be applied to God’s personal responses – He is happy, sad, or angry based on the situation, like any person. But no matter how happy or mad, He is always love, just, sovereign, etc.).

Eternal: God is without beginning or end.

Genesis 1:28

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.”

Important Terms

Three Main Parts of the World Mandate:

to rule (have dominion): to exercise power, control, or authority; to make decisions regarding a matter’s course and destiny.

to subdue: to bring under control by conquest and to keep under control by diligent maintenance.

to be fruitful (multiply and fill): to create value by multiplying, filling, and expanding in every area of life.

God patterned our human spirits after His divine Spirit. He modeled our finite human characteristics after His own infinite divine characteristics. This is the core of our imagehood and our humanity.

To summarize, the first thing God tells us about man is that he is a small copy of Himself. Man’s “working parts” are little replicas of God’s. Man can think, choose, love, award good, punish evil, and create even as God does. God’s will, personality, mind, and power are infinite. Man’s attributes are finite, nevertheless, he is a model of God Himself.

Copied for a Purpose: Born to Rule

Why would God make little copies of Himself? What did He want mankind to do? Read the first commands God gave to man in Genesis 1:28 (sidebar).

5. What five verbs communicate the essence of God’s commands?

be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue, have dominion

This commission given by God in Genesis 1:28 is often called the World Mandate (or Dominion or Cultural Mandate). A mandate is a formal order or authorization from a superior officer to a subordinate one.

It’s interesting to note that God’s first command to man and woman had nothing to do with evangelizing the world. His first command was to rule the earth for Him. God could have ruled the earth Himself. Instead, He commissioned man and woman to be His representatives, or viceroys. As viceroys of the earth, man and woman act as representative rulers or governors under and in place of the high king, who is God.

Look again at Genesis 1:28. In the World Mandate, God gives the man and woman three basic commands that can be expressed as the three verbs:

- **Rule**
- **Subdue**
- **Be Fruitful**

6. From your own life, list an example of an area in which you have: **personal response question**

ruled successfully _____
(ruling involves decision making)

subdued something that was “wild” _____

produced something of value _____

God created us to be His viceroys (see definition in the sidebar), so we could rule under His authority and continue the work that He started in the universe. However, this brings up another question. Why is there a universe anyway? What is Nature? What is the purpose and meaning of the cosmos? Why would God command man to work in it?

Learning About God From His Realm

7. Check the best description(s) of the universe as you understand it. The universe is: **personal response question**

___ an illusion

___ a reality

___ an unsolvable mystery

___ a clear message

___ a chaotic accident

8. According to the verses in the sidebar, what is the purpose of the universe?

The purpose of the universe is to display the character and glory of God in tangible ways.

9. What parts of the universe interest you the most? If a complete stranger walked into your room and studied your stuff, what would he learn about you from seeing your territory?

personal response question

Important Term

viceroys: the governor or ruler of a country, province, or colony, who rules in the name of the King. As such, the viceroy’s decision is considered to be the same as one made by the King himself.

Psalm 19:1

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Isaiah 6:1–3

In the year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: ... ³And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

Romans 1:20

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Intelligent design:

For 130 years evolutionists have searched diligently for the mechanisms of chance which built this universe. They have not found them. Instead, what scientists are finding is a staggering information density at the molecular level. They have also developed precise methods for distinguishing objects that are intelligently caused from ones which are not caused by an act of intelligence. This has produced a new area of study called “intelligent design.”

This universe is too complicated and intricate “to just happen.” On the contrary, the evidence shows that it was made by Someone Very Smart. Thus, the unbelieving have shifted their quest for Random Chance as a cause of everything, to search instead for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. Meanwhile the Bible plainly tells everyone who the Very Smart Someone is and why He did His work. (See *Mere Creation*, edited by William A. Dembski, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pp. 16-17.)

More About God

The Bible tells us much more about God in addition to His attributes. From His attributes, we learn that God is both personal and infinite. He is also Triune and Masculine. We will be learning more about these parts of God’s character in coming lessons since they have great bearing on who you are and who you should become as a man.

Just as we can learn about a man from looking at his dwelling and territory, so we can learn about God by looking at His universe.

10. Below are some parts of the universe. Beside each one, briefly describe something we can learn about God from this part of His creation.

seeds: **God’s great ability as an encoder, placing vast amounts of information in a small and safe format for future use. God’s great ability in doing variations on a theme, considering the number and different kinds of seeds in the world.**

computer science: **not something God has created directly. God has created electricity and used mathematics as the “language” or “alphabet” of His universe. As men harness the power of electricity and understand the application of mathematics, they learn how to manipulate vast amounts of information quickly with small machines. The intricate and densely rational nature of the universe and man’s ability to manage it are evidence of God’s great wisdom in creating nature and man as its ruler.**

large sea creatures (hint Psalm 104:26): **God made them for sport—for the fun of it! If you have ever watched a spinner dolphin you can’t help but believe that his designer was having fun. In this area we get a glimpse of the joy of God.**

There are over six billion people on earth today. Mankind has explored and mapped all the earth and has begun to explore outer space. Vast knowledge about God’s creation has been accumulated, and countless crafts, technologies, arts, and sciences have been refined to amazing levels. A lot of ruling, subduing, and producing has already gone on for a long time. However, history is not over.

You have been born into the world, and you still have God’s image. You, too, are to rule, subdue, and be fruitful.

A Place to Start

God commissioned Adam to rule and pointed him to the whole earth, sky, and sea (Genesis 1:28). However, God gave Adam a beginning piece of the world—the garden of Eden. God planted it and placed Adam in it to start his work (Genesis 2:8). One of the ways we are different from God is that He can create out of nothing; we can’t. We must always have something to start with. God gives each of us what we might call “starting capital”—our bodies, intellects, talents, families, heritage, and so forth. Some young men have a lot of assets, such as intelligence, good looks, money, property, and a godly heritage. Others are poor, not too bright, with no family connections. However, all will be held accountable for what they are given.

11. Inventory your assets, the starting capital that God has given you. Use the following categories to get you started: physical, mental, spiritual, financial, social, unusual circumstances.

personal response question

A Territory to Expand

No one man or boy can explore, know, love, or rule over all of God's creation. It's too huge and complicated. However, we can and are doing it as a race of human beings. The wonderful thing is that there is a piece of the universe for every man to conquer and rule, his piece of God's glory to understand and reflect. This portion of creation can be called a man's *territory, realm, or domain*. **Whatever a man is given by God, the command is the same: rule, subdue, and produce.**

12. What have you already done with some part of your assets (a talent, possession, or money) to improve or expand it?

personal response question

13. Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 in the sidebar. How seriously does God take the responsibility He's given you?

God takes our lives very seriously, so seriously He will personally judge us and all that we do in life, down to the casual words that we say (Matthew 12:36 "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."). Being saved does not mean that our lives will not be judged. Being saved means that we will not go to Hell for our sins. However, all believers will stand at the judgment seat of Christ to receive reward and loss of reward for what they did in the flesh.

Your Turn to be Adventurous and Visionary

At your age, the sense of adventure should be great. You should desire to go new places, do new things, and even want to risk hardship and danger for the excitement and thrill of conquest. You should be dreaming of doing important work and accomplishing great things. Some of your dreams may be foolish or unrealistic. But God has made you to be a "lord of the earth," and it is good and right and even necessary for you to think about the big picture. These questions should be in your mind: How can I start with what I've got and conquer more for God? How can I go out into the world and be productive and successful? Where can I carve out a territory, a domain, a realm of my own?

Important Terms

realm or domain: all that an individual is responsible for before God, including body, soul, time, money, relationships, talents, words, actions, thoughts – everything one will answer for at the judgment.

my personal realm, territory, or domain: everything God gives me responsibility for during my lifetime and for which I will answer at the judgment.

decisive: able to make decisions and follow through with them in a determined and resolute manner.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

14. According to what you know about yourself right now, in what area of God's creation would you most like to rule during your life? scientific research? applied science such as engineering? the arts? working with people in ministry? management or sales? military arts/science? agriculture? athletics? other?

personal response question

15. What will you have to subdue and make fruitful in order to rule in this area?

Help the students to see that most achievements require a great deal of education and practice. For instance, if they want to be doctors, there are 12 years of education and practice before they pass the rank of intern. Give other examples appropriate to your group.

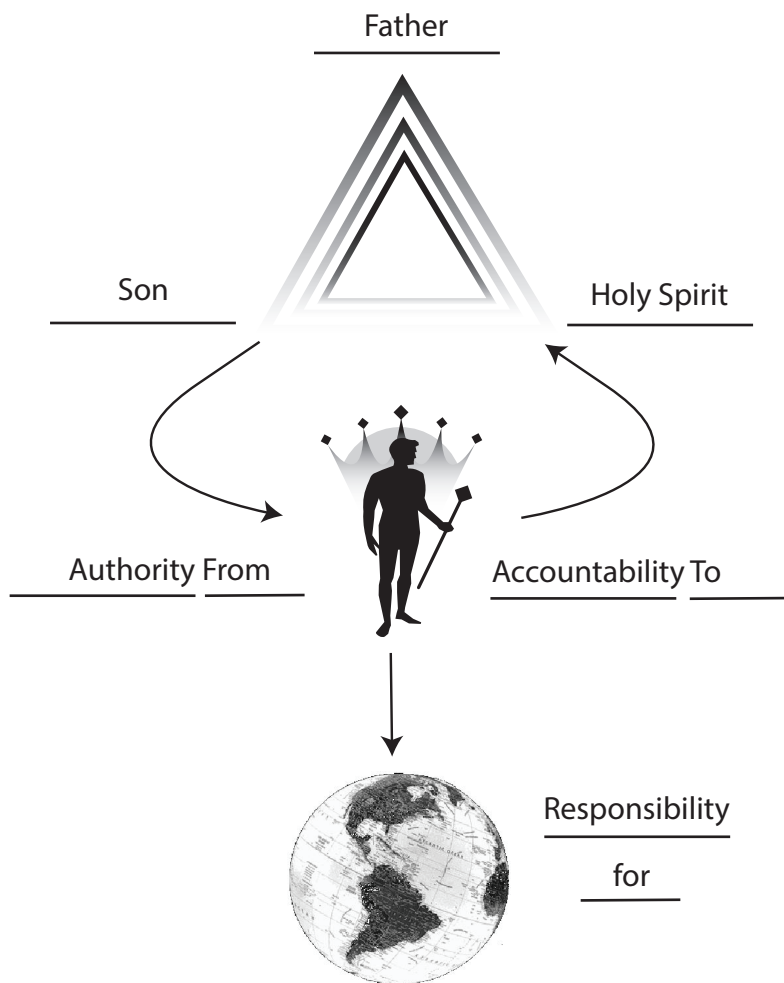
16. What would you like to do with your life? Even if you do not know what you want to do for a career, do you at least know some specific things that you would like to accomplish before you die?

personal response question

Section Lesson Review

Review the main points of the lesson with the following diagram:

1. Write **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** at the corners of the large triangle to indicate God as the Ruler over all.
2. Write **Authority From, Responsibility For, and Accountability To** in the appropriate blanks beside the appropriate arrows.



Words And Terms

Select from the following vocabulary words to fill in the blanks below. Beware! You have more words to select from than there are blanks!

image	attribute	to fill	world mandate
decisive	glory	to rule	viceroy
to subdue	accountable	realm	domain

As a man created in the **image** of God, I am a copy or replica of God. I have authority from God because the whole human race received the **world mandate** from God in Genesis 1:28 which commands us to rule, **subdue**, and **fill** the earth. Because I am made to be like God in my person and to imitate God in His works, I can see and understand the **glory** of God in His creation. I am **accountable** to God for what I do with my part of His commission to rule the world.

Essential Points

1. God made man in his own image. This means the finite human attributes are small replicas of the infinite divine attributes.
2. God made the universe to reveal His glory, and He gave it to man to rule, subdue, and fill.
3. Every man, woman, and child have their own piece of the Mandate, their own domain for which they are responsible, in which they can learn the glory of God, and for which they will give account to God.

Thought Questions

1. List one or two adventures that you have had thus far in your life. Were they fun, scary, or both? Why? What are some adventures that you would like to have?

personal response question

2. What is the difference between a real lord of the earth who is actually taking ground for God and a “recreational lord of the earth?” Is it possible for a man to play at being macho, while he is really being irresponsible?

Real Adventures which actually conquer new ground for man and God should be contrasting with “recreational adventures.” Backpacking in the wilderness, white-water rafting, skydiving, scuba diving—all of these may be good for expanding your skills or adventures. However, don’t confuse these recreational activities with the real lord-of-the-earth feats of history such as sailing uncharted oceans with primitive tools, figuring out Newtonian physics, or getting back from the moon with the math in your head and help from men on the ground using slide rules (see Apollo 13—Lost Moon by Jim Lovell).

Mental examples of Lord of the Earth: strategizing on the big scale; for example an engineer planning how to harness the water of an entire river system; a businessman considering how he can take his product into another state; a physicist contemplating what comes after quantum physics.

Spiritual examples: the apostle Paul taking the gospel to Europe on foot; St. Patrick evangelizing Ireland, St. Aidan evangelizing the Vikings.

3. Why do many famous and successful men take ground in this world for their own glory rather than for God’s?

Many times, the strength, courage, and intelligence by which men are successful, also makes them arrogant and autonomous from God. They forget where their strength, courage, and intelligence came from, and they forget that it is only on loan.

