

Genesis: The Days of Creation, part 3 – Man and Rest

Genesis 1:26-2:3

MPS God culminates creation with man to glorify Him as His regent in creation and rest in His divine goodness.

OBJ Every person can understand God's divine will for man by three creational distinctives.

READ Genesis 1:26-2:3

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."

²⁹And 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. ³⁰And 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. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. **Genesis 1:26-2:3***

INTRO **What picture of God in creation today do you hold in your mind?** I think the answer to this question likely speaks volumes to how you understand all of God. Today we see the culmination of God's creation, and God over His creation. The imagery of God Genesis paints for us in these verses should form a foundation for how we understand all of God.

In the opening chapter of the beginnings, Genesis, we have witnessed the revelation of God as Creator. And now we see Him in culmination and enjoyment of the beginning of all things. We are learning of the One for whom our whole life longs for because we were created to know and worship Him. And today we learn why we yearn for Him. Today we see...

God culminates creation with man to glorify Him as His regent in creation and rest in His divine goodness.

Gen 1:26-27: Day Six b – The Creation of man

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.

Day Six continues with the creation of man. This act is unique to all other creation. God begins with a plural reference and a decree. Commentators Keil and Delitzsch state, "The creation of man does not take place through a word addressed by God to the earth, but as the result of the divine decree, "We will make man in Our image, after our likeness," which proclaims at the very outset the distinction and pre-eminence of man above all the other creatures of the earth."¹ God also distinguishes man by pronouncing in His decree the purpose for which He creates man, to have 'dominion over creation' on the earth. **God distinguishes man in creation by the way and the purpose for which He creates Him.**

The phrases "*in our image, after our likeness*" have been the focus of much debate over the meaning of. **Who is God referencing here with the plural pronouns?** The earliest theologians believed it was a reference to the Trinity. While it is not regarded today as a direct reference to the Trinity, it is considered the foundation for our Trinitarian view of God. Keil and Delitzsch state, "No other explanation is left, therefore, than to regard it as *pluralis majestatis*,—an interpretation which

¹ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 38.



comprehends in its deepest and most intensive form (God speaking of Himself and with Himself in the plural number, not reverentiae causa, but with reference to the fullness of the divine powers and essences which He possesses) the truth that lies at the foundation of the trinitarian view, viz., that the potencies concentrated in the absolute Divine Being are something more than powers and attributes of God; that they are hypostases, which in the further course of the revelation of God in His kingdom appeared with more and more distinctness as persons of the Divine Being.”²

What does it mean for man to be made “in God’s image”? No one can fully say all that this means. The foundation for our understanding of man created in God’s image, *imago dei*, means there is a spiritual as well as our physical nature.³ G. L. Bray explains, it “refers to a permanent aspect of our created nature” and “it is the special characteristic of the human race, which distinguishes us from other creatures and makes our salvation a matter of supreme concern to God.”⁴ Whatever it means in its totality, we understand that man created in the *imago dei* resembles and represents God in creation in a unique, and distinctive way.⁵ I believe “*in God’s image*” includes the totality of man’s created being in the unique faculties to exercise intellectual distinction and advancement, moral reasoning and determination, spiritual longing and yearning, emotional depth and breadth as well as understanding and benefit, and willful direction and guidance, to exercise all these things among creation as God’s regents in harmony with knowing and relating to God who ultimately rules all. **God forms man’s whole being after the likeness of His whole personhood that we might live in relationship with the fullness of His Triune being.**

TRANS A second distinctive of man’s creation is important for us to see here.

God creates man as male and female; “*male and female he created them.*” Genesis uses the term “man” as the general title for humanity.⁶ Then we are told there are two genders of man, male and female. New Testament authors regard this creational truth as foundational. Mark writes, “*But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’*”^{Mark10:6} Defining humanity with two genders makes each one a “complement of the other” and establishes spiritual equality for each one.⁷ **Faithful Christian doctrine hold that both male and female are created equal in God’s image and given value, dignity and worth before God.**

OBJ I want us to see the first of **Three creational distinctives** that reveal God’s divine will for man.

God created man for a unique, divine glory

#1: by nature of our creation, to live as His regents in creation.

God establishes man as His unique representatives in creation. We are given a distinctive position in creation for a specific purpose, and endowed with influence, authority and power. Man as male and female live as image-bearers of God

² Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 38–39.

³ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 39. “Keil and Delitzsch states, “This consists rather in the fact, that the man endowed with free self-conscious personality possesses, in his spiritual as well as corporeal nature, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine life. This concrete essence of the divine likeness was shattered by sin; and it is only through Christ, the brightness of the glory of God and the expression of His essence (Heb. 1:3), that our nature is transformed into the image of God again (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24).”

⁴ G. L. Bray, “[Image of God.](#)” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 576.

⁵ Allen P. Ross, [Creation and Blessing](#). (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), Kindle Loc 1235. Ross writes, “The term ‘image’ has been variously explained as personality, nature (as body and spirit), or capacity for moral decision. It does not signify a physical representation of corporeality, for God is a spirit. The term must therefore figuratively describe human life as a reflection of God’s spiritual nature; that is, human life has the communicated attributes that came with the inbreathing (Gen. 2:7).”

⁶ John Sailhammer, [Genesis Unbound](#). (Colorado Springs: Dawson Media, 2011), Kindle Loc 1709. Sailhammer writes, “In verse 27 it is stated twice that man was created in God’s image and a third time that man was created “male and female.” The same pattern is found in Genesis 5:1–2a: “When God created man... male and female he created them.” The singular Hebrew word “man” is used to speak of the creation of a plurality, male and female.”

⁷ Derek Kidner, [Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 56. Kidner writes, ““To define humanity as bisexual is to make each partner the complement of the other, and to anticipate the New Testament doctrine of the sexes’ spiritual equality (‘all one’, Gal. 3:28; ‘heirs together’, 1 Pet. 3:7b; see also Mark 12:25). This is reaffirmed in Genesis 2:18–25, together with their temporal inequality (cf. 1 Pet. 3:5–7a; 1 Cor. 11:7–12; 1 Tim. 2:12, 13), and again in 5:1, 2.”



among all creation. Male and female are purposed by God to fill the earth and govern over it for His glory. Neither male nor female fully represents God alone, but both represent Him uniquely. And by God's design, together they complement each other and provide a more full representation of God in creation.

God created two genders, man as male and female. This has become very critical to clarify as gender confusion and deception has skyrocketed the last few years.

ILLUS TIME magazine released an article this week entitled "A Doll For Everyone': Meet Mattel's Gender-Neutral Doll".⁸ The article describes the doll as it "looks like a slender 7-year-old with short hair, but each comes with a wig of long, lustrous locks and a wardrobe befitting any fashion-conscious kid: hoodies, sneakers, graphic T-shirts in soothing greens and yellows, along with tutus and camo pants." Sharing how the company arrived at the doll it states, "Mattel tested the doll with 250 families across seven states, including 15 children who identify as trans, gender-nonbinary or gender-fluid and rarely see themselves reflected in the media, let alone their playthings. "There were a couple of gender-creative kids who told us that they dreaded Christmas Day because they knew whatever they got under the Christmas tree, it wasn't made for them," says Monica Dreger, head of consumer insights at Mattel."

The author, Eliana Dockterman, goes on to explain what has become known as non-binary gender identity, or Gender Theory, "Non-binary gender identity is just one term used to describe individuals who may experience a gender identity that is neither exclusively male or female or is in between or beyond both genders. Non-binary individuals may identify as gender fluid, agender (without gender), bigender, third gender, genderqueer, or something else entirely."⁹

I do not find it unbelievable today that we have this debate over the endless forms and expressions of gender, or Gender Theory. As we have already seen in our Genesis study, theories abound and deceive countless numbers of people. We have reached a point in our day that rivals Sodom and Gomorrah in sexual confusion and perversion. But God is neither unaware nor surprised. Paul exhorts us, "*Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*"^{1Cor6:18} [Sexual immorality of every form confuses and darkens to deceive the individual most of all, and mostly about their own identity, and to an ultimate degree. God is the Creator of order, not the author of confusion.](#)

Be very careful that you are not deceived to "hinge" your understanding of the sexuality or gender on philosophical positions nor ideological movements of today. It is not in the multiple choice of Gender Theory, the "roar" of the Feminist cause nor the misogyny of its polar opposite in which the image of God is faithfully portrayed. Confusion and chaos from endless man-made theories will continue to be a fracturing cause in this world because both strike against the created design, intention and purpose of God's divine will in the *imago dei*. [God created man as male and female. He did not create them to compete and win, but to complement one another and thrive.](#)

These verses lay a foundation not only for the doctrine of creation, but for the doctrine of man, of gender and sexuality, of work and vocation, of stewardship of all things in creation, and even of government and authority in this world. We long for God because we were created to live in relationship with Him. When we walk outside of God's will and in disobedience to His Word, we live counter to the very design with which we were created. And essential to understanding HOW we were designed in creation is that we live in fulfillment of the purpose for which God created us.

TRANS This introduces the next section, the creational blessing and command given to man.

1:28-31 The Blessing and Command given to Man

⁸ Eliana Dockterman, "A Doll For Everyone': Meet Mattel's Gender-Neutral Doll". (TIME.com, Sept 25, 2019.) <https://time.com/5684822/mattel-gender-neutral-doll/>. Last Accessed September 27, 2019.

⁹ Elizabeth Boskey, "What Does It Mean to Be Non-Binary or Have Non-Binary Gender?". (www.verywellmind.com, Sept 17, 2019) <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-non-binary-or-have-non-binary-gender-4172702?print>. Last Accessed September 27, 2019.



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.

Once God creates man, he blesses them and commands them. His blessing to man is distinct because it is given to man, not simply stated about him, as with the animals. The blessing of God holds a specific purpose, as one commentator states, "To bless is to bestow not only a gift but a function"¹⁰ This function of blessing is further clarified in a command. God commands man to exercise dominion over creation. By the inclusion of all God identifies, sea, skies and land, fish, birds and animals, His command is an all-encompassing one that denotes bringing order through stewardship. [God's blessing and command places an inherent responsibility on man, both male and female, that they were created and assigned as God's regents on the earth and endowed by God to rule what He created.](#)

OBJ Here I want us to see the [second](#) of [Three creational distinctives](#) that reveal God's divine will for man.

God created man for a unique, divine glory, that

#2: [by order of His command to rule over creation.](#)

God gives two divine assignments to man, to exercise the authority and power given for the intended purpose for which it was created. Man is to procreate and fill the earth, and he is to exercise dominion and subdue the earth. [God assigns man to rule on the earth in accordance with the purpose and position in which He placed him on the earth, as His representative in creation.](#)

What does it mean to exercise "dominion" and "subdue"? Man, as he is created in God's image, is to exercise the continuing kind of work from God that is demonstrated in creation, with the unique faculties and position, authority and power we are given. We are to exercise authority and power over the earth to care for it, to order and structure it to produce good, and to maximize that production in every way, both quality and quantity.

ILLUS Legos and Dress-up Little boys form legos into spaceships to fly high, fast and shoot big guns to destroy the enemy, or into houses and buildings. Little girls play dress-up and twirl in circles. (Yes, little girls can also play with legos and build things. And, little boys can play dress-up and show the whole family his princess dress. And it is at that point that mother and daddy should say, "No. Stop doing that.") Like children who take toys and give form and substance to their imagination for enjoyment and to show momma and daddy for their pleasure, so we are to exercise dominion and subdue the earth for our Heavenly Father's glory, to make things beautiful and strong both for His pleasure over us and to demonstrate His glory over all the earth. God has given to us all we need for our provision. But, as my family instilled in me, He also gave us unction and wherewithal (whatever that is) to go make it happen. [As God's representatives on earth, man is commissioned by God to rule over creation by filling the earth with the good produce of our lives for God's glory.](#)

TRANS And with that, the sixth day, this "acme of God's creation so far"¹¹ comes to a close. The Christian's understanding of all things in life begins in Genesis' creation account.

[God culminates creation with man to glorify Him as His regent in creation and rest in His divine goodness.](#)

¹⁰ Derek Kidner, [Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 56.

¹¹ Victor P. Hamilton, [The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 141. Hamilton writes of day six, "First, "beautiful" now becomes very beautiful. Second, the preceding five days are all referred to indeterminately—a second day, a third day, etc. But this day is called "the sixth day." Both of these unique factors help to mark this sixth day as the acme of God's creation thus far. Note also that the sixth day is treated much more extensively than the earlier days."



Gen 2:1-3: Day Seven – The “completed rest” of Creation

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

When God finished his work in creation, He rested. While day six was the culminating glory of creation, the seventh day is like none other. On the seventh day, God rested. What we read of God here is likely not what we think of as rest, but far more. The imagery of God resting here is tantamount to Jesus “seated” after His resurrection to carry out the finished work on the cross; God is enjoying the achievement of His creation.¹² God’s rest means far more than ceasing from work because of exhaustion, but enjoyment in the completion of His work.¹³ Yes, renewal is inherent in this rest, but not as we think of tiredness or weariness. [God completed creation and took intentional pause to be renewed from His by the enjoyment of His work.](#)

Rest was the form of the seventh day but not the ultimate purpose of its function. The Bible says, “*God blessed the seventh day and made it holy*” because of His rest. As one theologian states, “God’s rest was pregnant” with more than simply rest.¹⁴ There is promise in God’s practice and blessing on the seventh day. The seventh day is set apart unto God to fully take in and enjoy all that He has accomplished. At the culmination of creation, God is not exhausted but rejoicing in His work. The highest moment of creation is not in the work, but in God’s glory and enjoyment in it. [God’s creation culminates in the renewing enjoyment and pleasure of all the work of His hands.](#)

God created man for a unique, divine glory, that

#3: [by God’s blessing of sabbath, we would rest in His goodness by honoring Him with the rhythm of life.](#)

God blessed the seventh day as His to enjoy His creation. By the order and pattern of creation, God blessed a day for enjoyment of Him and the goodness of His provision. We need the rest and the renewal it brings. But we need far more than only the physical return of energy and strength. By God’s practice and model, He ordained that we would pause our lives to enjoy and glory in Him. This pause in rest and enjoyment of God’s goodness demonstrates our complete trust in Him first and serves to renew our whole being. [God established sabbath that we might take regular pause to worship Him and demonstrate our complete trust in His provision for us.](#)

ILLUS Papa sitting on the porch of his building. My grandparent’s house sat on top of a hill from the street. As you drove up the hill to their house, he had a recreation building at the end of their driveway in back and above their home. As you drove up the hill, you would find him leaned back in his metal, lawn chair, cooling off from the day’s work, whittling on a little piece of wood, and enjoying the accomplishment of his week’s labor and the blessing of God’s favor on his life.

God is actively involved in His creation, especially in the enjoyment of it. As He hovered in preparation for originating (1:2), so He now rests in enjoyment of finishing His creation because He rules without threat. God is the beginning and the end, even in Genesis’ creation account. Every day God looks upon as good. Only one day God blesses, the seventh as a

¹² Derek Kidner, [Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 57. Kidner writes, “‘God’s finished task is sealed in the words he rested (2, 3; literally ‘ceased’; from s̄abat, the root of ‘sabbath’). It is the rest of achievement, not inactivity, for he nurtures what he creates; we may compare the symbolism of Jesus ‘seated’ after his finished redemption (Heb. 8:1; 10:12), to dispense its benefits.”

¹³ Allen P. Ross, [Creation and Blessing](#). (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), Kindle Loc 1250. Ross explains, “‘The word actually means “cease,” more than “rest” as understood today. It is not a word that refers to remedying exhaustion after a tiring week of work. Rather, it describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion.’”

¹⁴ Derek Kidner, [Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 57–58. Kidner expounds, “‘But God’s rest was pregnant with more than the gift of the sabbath: it is still big with promise for the believer, who is summoned to share it (Heb. 3:7–4:11). As G. von Rad has well said: ‘The declaration mounts, as it were, to the place of God himself and testifies that with the living God there is rest ... Even more, that God has “blessed”, “sanctified” ... this rest means that’ the author ‘does not consider it as something for God alone but as a concern of the world. The way is being prepared, therefore, for ... the final, saving good.’ The formula that rounded off each of the six days with the onset of evening and morning is noticeably absent, as if to imply the ‘infinite perspective’ (Delitzsch) of God’s sabbath.’”



sabbath. If you want to live in God's blessing you must honor Him with a day that is holy. [When we dare to rest regularly in a time set apart unto God, we display ultimate trust in His will and hand for our life as we glory in the grandeur of His handiwork.](#)

"Remember the sabbath and keep it holy" Exodus 20:8 is our command to live so that we trust and honor God first in everything. Sabbath is not simply a day to be observed because we are exhausted by our busyness, nor is it a practice we can dismiss because creation has had its goodness perverted by sin, but a principle of life whereby we honor and worship God as worthy above all by resting in His eternal goodness above trusting in our own striving and pleasure and goodness.

When we fail to sabbath, to rest in the goodness of creation, we deny God His glory in the design and purpose of creation. In sabbath we place our trust in Jesus to rest in God's eternal goodness by the gift of new life through Jesus Christ, our eternal rest. In the regular practice of sabbath we live by trusting fully in the Father's sovereign will for our life through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, in forgiving and cleansing us from sin and giving us new life.

[By command and blessing, God created and invites you into a life of glory and enjoyment of Him through Jesus Christ.](#)

[God culminates creation with man to glorify Him as His regent in creation and rest in His divine goodness.](#)

