

LESSON I: THE DIVINE MANDATE TO MANKIND

Theme Verse: “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Lesson Aim

To understand God’s purpose for creating mankind and God’s mandate for mankind.

Introduction

We know from the Scriptures that God created mankind for fellowship with Him, thus man was created in the image of God and is the only created being capable of intimate fellowship with the Creator. Fellowship with God is then the greatest purpose for which we were created. The Bible details God’s plan to restore that fellowship which was broken by man’s fall into sin. God calls all mankind to restoration with Him.

Our continued purpose on earth then closely relates to God’s plan of restoration and fellowship. We express that restoration by our fellowship with God and by our use and stewardship of what God has given us.

As we are faithful stewards of life and over what God has given us dominion, we glorify Him in a world that knows little of God’s will for mankind.

Lesson Outline

A. Created in God’s Image (Genesis 1:26-30)

1. Mankind is the crowning part of God’s creation (Luke 12:7; Psalm 8:4-8; Hebrews 2:6-8).
2. We are creatures of choice to fulfill God’s purposes (Joshua 24:15; Psalm 63:1).
3. We are created to glorify God (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Revelation 4:11).

B. Created to Have Dominion (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:6-8)

1. To have rule and control over the earth.
2. To manage and use the resources God has given for His glory and for present and future generations.
3. To multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28).
4. Man's task became laborious after the Fall (Genesis 3:17-19).
5. God renewed the covenant after the Flood (Genesis 9:1-7).

C. The Stewardship of Life

1. The gift of life is from God (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Acts 17:24-31).
2. Our responsibility to preserve the gift of life (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 10:29-31; Romans 12:19-21; 1 Peter 4:15).
3. Fulfilling the purpose of life (Genesis 1:26-28; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Colossians 1:16).

Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways do we continue to fulfill the responsibilities God gave mankind at the Creation?
2. What does it mean to *have dominion*?
3. How does Christian faithfulness in having children assist in the spread of the Gospel?
4. How can Christians be good stewards in preserving life in relation to conception and birth, respecting the lives of those around us, and as life draws to a close?

LESSON 2: DIVINE OWNERSHIP AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Theme Verse: “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

Lesson Aim

To better understand God’s ownership of mankind and the material world and God’s call to faithful stewardship.

Introduction

Our society tends to think in selfish terms. People imagine that what belongs to them is theirs to do with as they please. This carnal attitude can easily rub off on believers. We tend to resist advice from the church and individual believers when it interferes with what we want to do. In resisting the counsel of others, we may also be resisting what the Bible says.

Our attitude toward material things will be right when we look upon all that we have and are as belonging to God. Divine ownership will be our guide in decisions relating to stewardship—stewardship of life, time, material possessions, and the Gospel.

All our activities must be brought into harmony with divine ownership. If we ignore divine ownership, the Scripture condemns us as transgressors. Only in submitting to divine ownership do we find purpose, fulfillment, and peace in life.

Lesson Outline

- A. The Earth Is the Lord’s (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 24:1; 50:9-12; Leviticus 25:23)**
- B. The Lord Is the Sustainer (Genesis 8:21, 22; Matthew 6:33; Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:1-3)**
- C. God’s Claim on Mankind**
 1. By creation (Genesis 1:26).
 2. By redemption (Romans 14:7-9, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:15).

3. Serving God while on earth (Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).
4. Biblical examples of God's claim on mankind.
 - a. Eliezer (Genesis 24:2-4, 10).
 - b. Joseph (Genesis 39:2-6).
 - c. Paul (Galatians 1:11-16).

D. God's Call to Mankind

1. Called to manage or administer (Genesis 1:28; Luke 12:42-48; 16:1-13).
 - a. Jesus is Lord (John 13:13).
 - b. We are servants (Romans 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; James 1:1; Colossians 3:23, 24).
 - c. Chosen by Christ (John 15:16).
2. Stewardship is an individual responsibility (Matthew 25:14-30).
 - a. Responsibilities vary (vv. 14-18). Some were given five, some two, and some one talent. Our talents are our abilities, resources, and opportunities.
 - b. There will be a time of accounting (vv. 19, 20).
 - c. Faithfulness required (vv. 21, 23; 1 Corinthians 4:2).
 - d. Good stewardship rewarded (vv. 20-23).
 - e. Poor stewardship brings destruction (vv. 28-30).
 - f. Our capacity is increased by using our talents (v. 29).