

The 5 Blessings of Genesis 1:26-28 – Are They for Today?

²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, 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. ²⁸Then **God blessed them**, and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹And God said, "See, I have given you every herb [that] yields seed which [is] on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. (Gen 1:26-29)

A. What Are They?

1. **Authorizations** (The **Right** to Do These) God gave us **permission** to carry out these five blessings.
2. **Blessings** (The **Privilege** to Do These) God considers each of these 5 as **good** and **desirable**.
3. **Commands** (The **Responsibility** to Do These) Each is an **imperative** – a command.
4. **Directions** (The **Path** Which Will Be Taken) Each is a **course** set in motion by God that will be followed.
5. **Enablements** (The **Ability** to Do These) God gave us the **capacity** and **desire** to do the things commanded.

APPLICATION: God Is...

- The **Creator**: We are to understand God's design and desire, and work by and with His plan.
- The **Explainer**: We must interpret life and culture by God's revelation, not by man's practice or culture's direction.
- The **Sustainer**: We can see God's creative work still in force today, though marred and actively rejected by man.

B. What Do They Mean?

The first three directly involve procreation (bearing children). The last two involve man's relationship to God's creation (specifically the earth, and the creatures within it).

- **Be Fruitful** (to bear fruit) – to **have children**
- **Multiply** (to become many, to become numerous) – to have **numerous** children
- **Fill the Earth** (to fill) – to have numerous children to the point of eventually **filling** the **earth**
- **Subdue It** (to take control of) – to become **master** over the earth, and **responsible** for it
- **Have Dominion** – to rule **over** the **creatures** of the earth
 - Over the Fish of the Sea
 - Over the Birds of the Air
 - Over Every Living Thing that Moves on the Earth

C. Are They for Today? (Do They Apply to Us Today?): 12 Reasons for "Yes"

1. (A) **Practice** – We still practice each as though we have permission to do so (if not for today, why still do them?)
2. (B) **Blessing** – They continue to be something that is good in God's eyes (a blessing).

- Each of these is still something to be considered a privilege, something good & desirable.

- Example: Throughout Scripture, God blessed and cursed by means of children (no change from Gen 1).

Gen 17:20 – And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

Deut 1:11 – May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you!

1 Chron 26:4-5 – Moreover the sons of Obed-Edom [were] Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him.

Job 42:12-13 – Now the LORD blessed the latter [days] of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters.

Psalms 107:38 – He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly; And He does not let their cattle decrease.

Psalms 107:41 – Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction, And makes [their] families like a flock.

Psalm 127:3-5 – Behold, children [are] a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb [is] a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So [are] the children of one's youth. Happy [is] the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

3. (C) **No Condition** Is Stated – “Be fruitful UNTIL this specific state or condition is met, etc. ...”
4. (C) **No Timeframe** Is Given – “Be Fruitful UNTIL this specific time...”
5. (C) **No Reversal** – Cancellation – There are no commands from God to rescind, repeal, or revoke any of these 5 blessings. (Human argument & logic is insufficient to counter God’s commands. Many seek to do so for all of God’s commands.)
6. (D) **No Ceasing** – Cessation – There is no evidence of any of these five stopping. (Executive; laws of nature)
7. (E) **Continuing** – Continuation – The enablement for each continues. We still are able to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue the earth, and to have dominion over fish, birds, and all living creatures. (Hamburger?)
8. **Repeating** – Repetition – Some commands are repeated. Others are never repeated.
Gen 9:1 – So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.
Gen 9:7 – And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it."
Gen 35:11 – Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.
Non-Repeating – Subdue is only commanded HERE, and “have dominion” only HERE in this context.
9. **Incomplete** – Completion – The world is not full, fully subdued, nor can it be once & for all ruled. (Side Note: There is no hint that the world’s problem is overpopulation and its results, but the Bible clearly teaches that God is the Supplier, and the world’s problem is sin and rebellion, with the resultant judgment from a holy God.)
10. **Necessary** – Necessity – We cannot survive or function without any of them. The human race would die out in one generation (first three) or in days (last two).
11. **Partial** – Inconsistency – People still embrace the last two (without hesitation or question). Our claim to the right (or authorization) to any necessitates our acceptance of all 5.
12. **Connected** – Connection – They seem to rise and fall with marriage.

The passage is an overview of the creation of the first man and woman, and it encompasses Genesis 2 as well. God spoke all of the blessings to THEM, which would have required the blessings to be given after the woman was created at the end of Genesis 2.

²⁷ *So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

It would appear that Genesis 2:7-25 would fit after the third clause of 1:27 (“male and female He created them”), and before Verse 28. It is textually accurate, and also logical and rather obvious that that the commands to “be fruitful and multiply” would be given **after** the creation of both the male and the female, and thus after the events described in Genesis 2.

If Genesis 2 lays any lasting demands on us by pattern and principle (which it obviously does, given that the passage is referred to over and over again in the New Testament), then it would seem that the blessings of 1:28 would equally be relevant and applicable for today. You cannot separate chronologically what is chronologically a unit.

APPLICATION:

- Be Careful Not to Discard Lightly What God Has Clearly Stated and Commanded
- Be Cautious Not to Embrace the World’s Views Rather than God’s Revelation
- Be Critical of Any View that Diminishes God’s Authority or Ability
- Be Confident that the Creator Knows More than His Creation!
- Be Creatures that Enjoy the Blessings of the Creator!