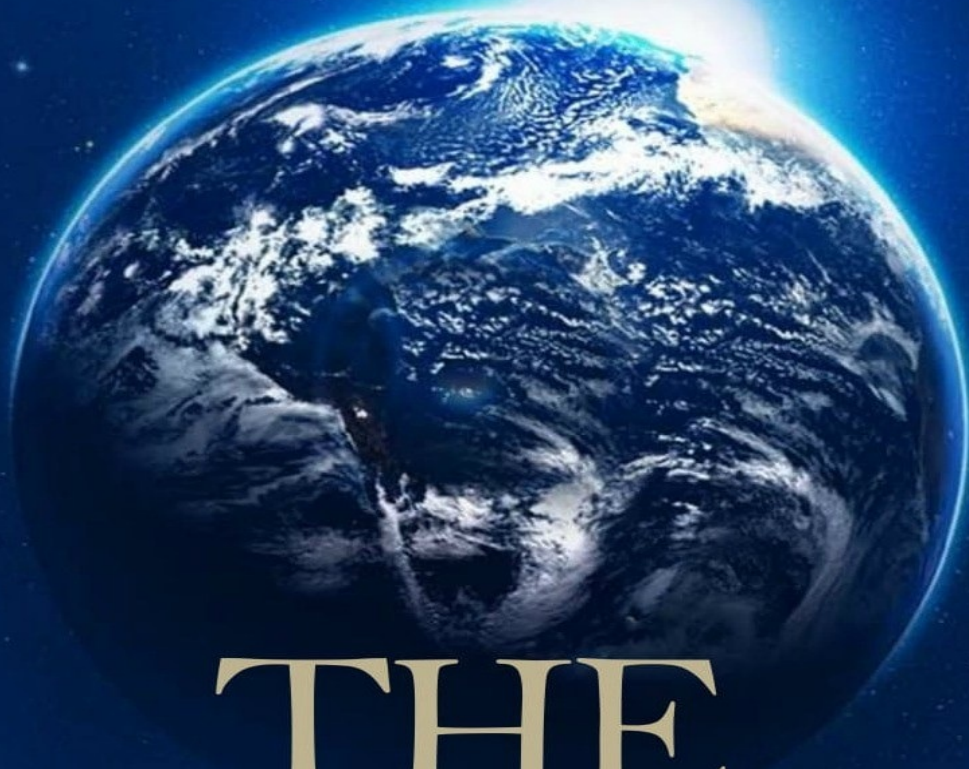


# MENSA OTABIL



## THE DOMINION MANDATE

Finding & Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life

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O TABIL

# THE DOMINION MANDATE

**Dr. Mensa Otabil © 2013**

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# **DEDICATION**

To my children and their generation. May each of you find and fulfill  
your highest potential.

# A CKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I thank the Lord for giving me this revelation of His Word, as the core scriptures of this book have been a primary inspiration in my life.

To my wife, Joy, I thank you for your continued love, encouragement and companionship. And to the congregation of Christ Temple for your questions and feedback over the years as I have preached the messages in this book.

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## INTRODUCTION

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

### **Humanity's Quest For Purpose And Meaning In Life**

It is a basic human function to question the fundamental purpose and meaning of life. In all times of human history, and across all cultures, human beings have philosophized about this question: what are we here for? The fact that we ask this question is what separates us from the animals. Humans aren't guided by the seasons, or by migration patterns, or by primal instinct, as the animals are. We are guided and we live our lives according to the answers we inherit—or come to on our own—to the most basic human questions: what is my purpose, and what is the meaning of life? We all want to know what we are supposed to be doing here on earth, and throughout time, and across cultures, human beings have drawn different conclusions about that question.

As Christians, we turn to the Bible for answers and we all strive to live our lives according to God's Word. Different aspects of God's Word resonates more clearly for some of us, becoming the foundation for our spiritual philosophy and outlook, and it shapes our understanding of what we are supposed to be and to do. In trying to follow the example of Jesus Christ, some Christians are primarily led by the Ten Commandments, and some look first to Proverbs or Psalms to light their path. For me, the scripture that speaks most deeply to my spirit and is the foundation for my perspective, my philosophy and my mindset comes from what I call God's Dominion Mandate found in the Book of Genesis.

### **God's Purpose And Process For Creating Mankind**

*Genesis* is “the book of beginnings,” and by virtue of being the beginning, the very first chapter establishes two things for us to notice:

- God's purposes; and
- God's processes

By purposes we mean His intentions, and the processes illustrate how God executes them. Through God's acts of creation, we can see His mind and His ways, thus an indication of His purpose for all of His creations, including us.

The first five days of the Genesis account reveal God's creation of the heavens and the earth; the land and the sea; the birds, the fish, and the cattle. This was His preparatory work, and the prelude to the introduction of His masterpiece—man. Against the backdrop of the first five days of creative work, God paused in Genesis 1:26 to announce the arrival of His main character in the evening of the sixth day.

*<sup>26</sup> Then 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".*

This is God's grand introduction of the first man. It is the first time He mentions our species, and special attention is given to the details of His purpose for us. Three intentions are clearly stated regarding mankind.

### **God's Declared Intentions**

1. To create a being called man
2. For man to be a reflection of God
3. For man to have dominion over the earth

The creation of man was God's intention. He said, "Let Us make man." Man did not create himself, and, therefore, man cannot determine his own purpose. In all things, it is the creator who determines the purpose of his creation.

Notice that this passage is one of the few instances in the Bible where God refers to Himself in the plural, representing the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God did not only intend to create man; He also intended to endow man with God-like qualities. He deliberately planned for man to resemble Him, in His image, according to His likeness. This was so that we can reflect the power of the Father, the discernment of the Holy Spirit, and the salvation of the Son. God did not say that we could be Him, but that we can reflect His image and be what each entity of His image represents.

Let us pause here to consider that. An image is a reflection of something; it is not the original. When you stand in front of the mirror, you are seeing your image, not yourself. If you lift up your hand, the image of your hand will also be lifted. The image is not you, but it can reflect your physical abilities. Likewise, when God said, "Let Us create man in Our own image," He, in that declaration, endowed man, not to be God, but to reflect all that God is, and all He is capable of doing.

This is important for two reasons. First, in our age, where the social construct of race has shaped many cultures' approach and understanding to this scripture, we have wasted valuable time debating over which race was made in the image of God. I say the debate is wasted time because God is not flesh; He is spirit.<sup>1</sup> No one race reflects the image of God exclusively—they all do.

Likewise, it is important to also distinguish that God created both male and female in His image, despite some cultures' perceptions that believe otherwise. In the next verse, verse 27, it reads,

*27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

The image of God is in fact not “male.” When the Bible says “man,” it is not meant as male only. It is a reference to both male and female<sup>2</sup>—the two components of the human species. Both reflect the image of God, and neither is a more superior reflection than the other.

When we try to conceive of the image of God, and who reflects that image, we must keep in mind that God is spirit. In order to accurately discern the image of God in man, we must look more towards the spiritual image, the character and the godly attributes of people, rather than their pigmentation, their gender, or any other physical or biological feature.

Finally, after the intention of creating mankind, and endowing them with the ability to reflect God's power, God intended His grand creation to have dominion over all His other creations. He said, “Let them have dominion.” After creating everything on the earth, God mandated man to exercise dominion over it.

## **What Is A Mandate?**

A *mandate*<sup>3</sup> is an official order or authorization to do something. It is when someone has been authorized to perform a certain function or duty. So what is man's mandate? What authorization has God given to humanity? This is the central question of this book, and already from the passage in Genesis 1:26 we see that our mandate is to have dominion! From here, we will explore exactly what that means, what the criteria for having dominion is, how to achieve it, and therefore how to satisfy God's mandate for our lives.

## **God's Equipment Of Mankind To Fulfill Our Mandate**

God declared His intention to create man, to give him God-like qualities, and to authorize him to have dominion over everything He had created on earth. Then He blessed mankind and equipped us with unique endowments in order to be able to carry out the mission He had given us. The account in Genesis 1:26 and 27 establishes that God created man in His image; however, it is in Genesis 2:7 that He elaborates on the actual process. The verse says,

*<sup>7</sup> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

The significance here is twofold: man has an earthly, physical component; as well as a heavenly, spiritual component. The first man, Adam, was made both a natural and a spiritual being, distinct from all of God's other creations. This gives us a clue into how mankind would be able to have dominion over the earth.

### **Man's Dual Composition: Natural And Spiritual**

God created Adam by joining opposites:

- the earthly dimension-material and seen
- the divine dimension-spiritual and unseen

He started by creating Adam out of natural elements, the earth. The physical attributes of Adam are tangible; they can be seen. Then He equipped Adam with divine elements, the Spirit of God, which is an unseen and intangible attribute of Adam's makeup. This coming together of opposites is an instance of one of the key principles of God's processes, which we will explore further with the creation mandates.

What is important for us now, is that man—unlike other creatures on the earth—has been endowed with capacity from two different realms. He has physical capacity, and he has spiritual capacity. This makes us very special. Not only can we, as humans, do what is physically possible because we are physical beings, we can also do what is spiritually possible, because within us is the image of God and the power to reflect God's capabilities.

Isn't that exciting? What a blessing! That means that if you think you are insignificant, and only human, you are wrong. You are more than that. You have been created with unique qualities, and those qualities are not just human, they are God-like!

However, this should not be taken lightly, or for granted. It is not automatic

that we can exercise our God-like reflections; it requires something of us. Remember, the image of God in us is related to our character, our spirit. For man, therefore, to be in the image and likeness of God, and to assert that reflection, he has to conform his natural dispositions to the disposition of the spirit within him that originated from God.<sup>4</sup>

For us to have dominion, we have to join the two dimensions of our creation. We have to go beyond our physical nature, and tap into our spiritual nature. We have to merge what is seen with what is unseen; what is tangible with what is intangible. We have to conform our sight to our faith, so that what we can see will reflect what God can do. That is the only way to have dominion.

Man cannot have dominion by relying solely on his natural abilities. Limiting yourself only to your natural, physical and material makeup limits you to the realm of impossibility, but joining the natural with your spiritual endowment, the invisible, and the immaterial, elevates you to the realm of possibility.

### **What Is Dominion?**

The word *dominion*<sup>5</sup> is from the Hebrew word “radah”<sup>6</sup> and carries the idea of contending with something that is wild and untamed in order to bring it under your control. The intention of dominion therefore is to empower man with the authority and ability to contend with the wildness of the earth as it was handed over to him, and make it serve useful purposes. God gave us both the authority and the ability. Plus, He planted in man a hunger for this kind of dominion.

### **But The Big Question Is: How Is Dominion To Be Exercised?**

It is not enough to know that you must have dominion. In addition to that knowledge, there must be an understanding of how to have dominion. Dominion is God's intention, but all of God's intentions have a process for realization. Without a process for realization, we may understand God's intentions for us, but never discover the path to make them real in our lives. So in verse 28 of Genesis 1, God reaffirmed the intention for man to have dominion and He also set out the process for having that dominion.

*<sup>28</sup> 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.”*

In this passage, God declared a four-step process for attaining dominion:

- 1. Be fruitful**
- 2. Multiply**
- 3. Replish <sup>7</sup> the earth ("fill the earth")**
- 4. Subdue it**

He said to Adam, if you go through these four processes, then you will have dominion. These four processes work in sequence and in tandem. God stated them in that particular order, and stated those commands together with His Master intent. You do not start with multiply and then choose the next convenient process. No; you start by first being fruitful, move on to multiply, then replenish and finally subdue. If we proceed in that order, we will surely end up having dominion. To have dominion, therefore, is not a product of chance or brute force, but by adhering to a well- coordinated process that was set out by God.

Each command established a key process for having dominion and each one was spoken into the spirit and subconscious mind of Adam. Each command was meant to be an instinct. The primal need of man was to have dominion. That need is driven by four forces: the drive to be fruitful; the drive to multiply; the drive to replenish the earth; and the drive to subdue it. These drives are basic to all human quests. They are instinctive to human life and the human experience.

After declaring these four mandates to Adam, God then continued with His primary purpose for man when He said, "And have dominion." In other words, if you become fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it, then you will have dominion. In theory, it appears simple enough. However, there are a few missteps that mankind commonly makes.

### **How Mankind Has Fallen Short Of Dominion**

One way we fall short of God's purpose for us is by misinterpreting God's intention. As germane as these four mandates are to our quests as humans, their import on us have been lost. In the past, people have read that verse and interpreted it as God saying, "Have all the children you possibly can." As a result, one of the greatest natural problems threatening the planet and its resources today is overpopulation, which has come about because of a limited and narrow understanding of God's mandate to be fruitful and multiply.

The mandate to be fruitful and multiply is not limited to the ability to procreate. It includes procreation but is not limited to it. As a matter of fact,

there are far greater areas in which we can be fruitful and multiply than in the simple mating of male and female to produce children. It is time to take a look at everything God meant by His command to be fruitful and multiply.

Another way that we fall short of our purpose—God's mandate—is by misusing, or simply not using what God has equipped us with. We sometimes forget that we are made in His image. This causes us to limit our ability to reflect His power. We undervalue ourselves with the thinking that we are “mere mortals,” or having the attitude that we are insignificant. Low self-esteem cannot manifest in a person who understands his or her dual makeup. How can you think lowly of yourself when you know that the Most Powerful is a part of you?

### **Man's Place In God's Grand Scheme**

It is important to understand and appreciate the special place that man occupies in God's Grand Design. Though the first two chapters of Genesis effectively portray man's special status in relation to the things God created, additional clarity is provided by the reflection of the Psalmist in Psalm 8:3-9:

*<sup>3</sup> When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, <sup>4</sup> What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? <sup>5</sup> For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup> You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, <sup>7</sup> All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup> The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. <sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!*

This scripture has enormous significance for every human being. Words such as wonderful, huge, awesome, magnificent, gigantic fail to remotely capture the sheer wonder of the incredible things God created. Compared to the universe, the earth is like a grain of sand, for there are other heavenly bodies (such as other planets, suns, moon, stars etc.) that are a million, billion or trillion times bigger than this big earth we live on. There are steep mountains and deep valleys, vast oceans and long rivers, towering trees and expansive grasslands. And there are animals—huge elephants, tall giraffes, fearsome lions, massive whales and even the tiniest of His creations has such minute detail that continue to intrigue the human brain. When you consider all that, God still came down to man—that small, little, seemingly inconsequential being—and literally handed him total

dominion over these awesome creations.

This clearly baffled and overwhelmed the Psalmist as he wondered, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him?” Then he said, “For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your Hands...”

The scripture says in verse 6, “You have put all *things* under his feet,” and “things” is italicized. This small detail is instructive and very important. It is our divine right to have dominion over the earth and over the things God has created, but mankind is not supposed to have dominion over one another. Domination of man by man is an abuse of God's purposes.<sup>8</sup>

It is also significant to note here that the original Hebrew translation of this scripture says, “You have made him a little lower than Elohim.” The word “Elohim” is the word that was used to describe God in those times. If we use this translation, then God has not made man a little lower than the angels; He has made man a little lower than Elohim—Himself. So in

essence, man is placed a little lower than God, but higher and above the angels.<sup>9</sup>

We are the bosses of everything. We go to space and explore the universe; we take pictures of it, study it and understand it. Why? Because we are the ones who have been authorized with dominion. So despite our many shortcomings and failings, despite our human weaknesses and frailties, we are still the most sophisticated among all of God's creation.

Do not take yourself for granted. Don't ever diminish your value because you have been created with awesome power, with the capacity to “be fruitful, multiply, replenish and subdue the earth and, to have DOMINION.” This is the mandate God has given you. When you catch hold of this mandate, your life will be transformed and you will not struggle to succeed. You will know how to succeed, how to overcome and how to make your life count.

In the next chapters, we will take a closer look at all of the four mandates and how they apply to our individual and collective quests as human beings. Each mandate shall be explored in great detail and expanded for both personal and corporate application, so let's begin. The first mandate is, 'Be Fruitful'!

PART ONE

BE  
FRUITFUL

## CHAPTER ONE

# BE FRUITFUL

**W**hen God revealed His purpose for creating man in Genesis 1:26, Adam had not yet been created, so he had no way of knowing his purpose except for God telling him. If Adam was to know the divine intention for his existence, he had to hear it for himself from the One who made him. So on the evening of the sixth day of creation, Adam is awakened to consciousness. He becomes a living being with all the faculties of a human being but without anyone to instruct him on his purpose, or how to live. He had no physical past. No ancestry. No past experiences to draw from. No information in his brain. He had been created at the stage of a grown man, ready to function as any grown man would, but without the benefit of any established body of knowledge to guide him.

In a sense, we can say that Adam was created empty. He was like a newly manufactured computer without any base programming. He stood before God fresh and empty, not knowing what, or how to do anything. He had the spirit of God in him but his mind was empty. He did not have time to grow through learning.

God looked at this creation of His, and the very first words He uttered to Adam were, “Be fruitful.” These are the first bits of information that filled Adam's emptiness; the first words he knew; the first knowledge he had. In place of an established culture to follow, and in place of the teachings of parents, Adam had only these words, “Be fruitful.” It was the foundational command to his operating system.

You can try to imagine the imprint this would make on Adam. In essence, Adam was a newborn. Imagine a newborn baby, coming into the world and its father saying to him the moment he arrives, “be fruitful.” Now a real newborn would not have any awareness of what those words mean, but Adam was born as a man, not an infant. He either had an intuitive understanding of what God's first words to him meant, or he would have had to seek their meaning.

**What Does It Mean To Be Fruitful?**

To *be fruitful*<sup>10</sup> simply means to grow, blossom and be productive; it means to produce results that are beneficial and profitable. God commands us to be productive so that our works will bear fruit. This is His first instruction to us.

### **Implications Of The Word “Be”**

The word “be” adds particular weight to God's command for fruitfulness. It commands that the thing we are told to be should be in our nature, woven into our identity and comprise our whole state of existence. When God said, “be fruitful” it was a command of permanence. We are not to occasionally be fruitful, because He did not qualify it as such. He said, “be” fruitful, which means at all times and in all things. The word “be” is a verb. It is an active word. It is a word that calls things into action. The command to “be” means three things:

**It is a declaration of potential.** You cannot be what you don't have the capacity to be. When God said be fruitful, He had already planted within man the potential for development and productivity. His command was a declaration of our potential. Likewise, “be” calls things forth.

**It is a call into existence.** Our fruitfulness must be evident. When God says, “be,” whatever He has called, appears. In Genesis He said, “Let there be...” and there was. So the command to be fruitful is God's instruction for us to manifest the potential planted in us. It must not be hidden; it must be brought into existence and be seen. Being fruitful is also something we must do.

**It is a command to obey.** God's command is not a suggestion. It is a command to obey; it is imperative. He said, “be fruitful.” He didn't say “try” or “attempt” to be fruitful; He specifically commanded us to be fruitful, and we must obey.

### **Fruitfulness Goes Beyond Procreation**

Implied in the concept of fruitfulness is the idea of growth. For an individual to be fruitful, therefore, there must be growth that results in something that is beneficial and profitable. When the earth's population was small and levels of production were low, having lots of children made economic sense for many fathers.

In those times, men would have as many children as possible by one wife. Then when she was exhausted with childbearing or died, they went out and married another young woman and started all over to produce more children.

The understanding was that in order to be 'fruitful and multiply' we had to prodigiously make babies, and in that time it was a profitable form of growth.

The more children a man had, the more labor he had for his enterprise—his farming, his trading, and for the functioning of his household. Now that the population and technological advances have lessened the demand for human resources, there are places on earth today where the pattern of prolific childbearing still continues. Many times, such people produce only enough food for one or two of their children, and the rest become a problem for the larger society. Clearly, this was not God's plan, nor did this limited understanding of His command cover the full scope of His definition of fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness has application for all areas of our lives. In the Bible, we find several references to fruitfulness.

### **Dimensions Of Fruitfulness**

**The fruit of the womb.** As we have discussed, one of the oldest and commonest ways a person can be fruitful is through the fruit of the womb. It involves bringing forth children into the world, and God intended us to be fruitful in this way. Psalm 127:3 says,

*<sup>3</sup> Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward.*

Admittedly, the procreation of children fits into this definition of fruitfulness. Children are a blessing from God and they should always be seen as such. But as much as bringing forth children is not a bad thing, we will soon find that child bearing isn't the only way a person can be fruitful. For example, there are people who have no natural children but are excessively fruitful in many of the areas I will now describe, because fruitfulness is not limited to the fruit of the womb.

**The fruit of the mind (thoughts).** The second kind of fruitfulness can be found in Jeremiah 6:19 which says,

*<sup>19</sup> Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—The fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words Nor my law, but rejected it.*

The fruit of the thoughts refer to ideas that are generated by the human brain and used to serve good and useful purposes. So you can be fruitful by bringing forth children into the world, and you can be equally fruitful by bringing forth good thoughts and ideas.

**The fruit of the mouth and lips.** Fruitfulness can also be manifested in words. Proverbs 18:20 says,

*<sup>20</sup> A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; from the produce of his lips he shall be filled.*

As a pastor, whenever I preach, I become fruitful because I convert thoughts and ideas into words, which I release through my mouth. And so though I will not be giving birth in the natural sense, I am still being fruitful because I am being productive with my ideas and my words. This is what the Bible means by fruit of the lips.

**The fruit (works) of the hands.** Fruit of the hands refers to our works. What you create or develop with your physical ability are the fruit of your hands. They are the things we accomplish by using our body. Proverbs 31:30-31 says,

*<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceitful, and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. <sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hand, and let her own works praise her in the gates.*

Though this scripture exalts the virtuous woman and the fruit of her hands, it has wider application for every human being. The Bible is saying that the quality of the works we accomplish with our hands will earn us tremendous praise and recognition. It says, a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised. In other words, the person who obeys God's command to be fruitful will be rewarded.

**The fruit of the Spirit (Righteousness)** . In Galatians 5:22-23, the Bible says,

*<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law.*

The fruit of the Spirit is character. The Bible exhorts us to bear fruit with our character by expressing love, joy, peace, kindness, self-control, goodness and faithfulness.

It is apparent from these verses that the female womb is not the only fertile ground for fruitfulness. We can be fruitful with our minds, our hands, our lips and our character. Our minds produce ideas, our hands manufacture products, our lips speak words and our character exhibits moral and ethical values. These are additional areas where we can be fruitful.

With this command to be fruitful, we are equipped by God to bring into being things that are not currently in existence. In this sense, we can apply all of our dimensions of potential fruitfulness in two general ways:

- By invention—bringing things into existence out of nothing, and
- By improvement—making new things out of what already exists

These two ways of being fruitful apply to ideas, words, products, and values systems.

Whether we are fruitful or not has serious ramifications that affect every aspect of our lives, including our relationship with God. In many respects, our fruitfulness determines how God deals with us. He will bless us or punish us depending on our obedience to His command to be fruitful.

The parable of the talents, in Matthew 25:15-30 is instructive. Jesus tells the story of a master, who in the parable represents God, and three servants, who represent us, His servants. The master gave each servant their own talents, and left them to be fruitful with them. The one with five talents utilized them and doubled his talents to ten. The one with two talents was also profitable, and increased them to four. However, the one with one talent hid his talent, doing nothing with it.

When their lord returned to hold them accountable, he said to the one who began with five talents, “well done, good and faithful servant,” and as reward, he was made ruler over many things. Likewise, for the servant who doubled his two talents, the Lord also said well done, and made him ruler over many as well. But for the servant who hid his talent, his lord called him wicked and lazy. Then he took his one talent away, made him an outcast, and banished him to the darkness.

### **How God Responds To Fruitlessness**

So the parable of the talents teaches us several things. It teaches us that what we do with our God-given talent has positive and negative consequences. Of the negative consequences, the most severe is that:

**Fruitlessness brings curse and punishment.** God does not deal lightly with an unfruitful person. In this parable as well as many other Biblical instances, His response has been swift punishment. Here, the unfaithful servant was banished and condemned to “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In Mark 11:13- 14, Jesus was disappointed and dismayed by the fruitless fig tree, so He rained curses on it. In another instance, Luke 13:6-9 speaks of a parable in which a man planted a

fig tree that yielded no fruit for three years. The angry planter told his servants to pluck the tree and throw it away. And in Luke 3:9, John the Baptist warned:

*<sup>9</sup> And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

A second lesson we learn about the negative consequences of fruitlessness is that:

**We lose our talents and possessions if we are unfruitful.** In the parable of the talents, the servant with only one talent who hid his gift and complained of the poor economy and the unjust system of the master had his only talent taken from him and given to the servant with ten. This was the consequence for squandering his gift, and complaining about conditions when he should have been utilizing what his lord had given him to work with.

Jesus concluded the story by saying that, those who are productive with their talents will be given more, but those who squander their gifts will have them taken away. As the common phrase goes, you must “use it,” or you are certain to “lose it.”

One question we may have from this story is why did the servant have his talent confiscated? It is simple; his talent was taken away from him because the original command to every human being—whether you have ten talents, or only one—is to be fruitful. So if you are not fruitful, you will reap diminishing returns, and even the little you have will be taken away from you.

### **How God Responds When We Are Fruitful**

On the other hand, the parable of the talents tells us what our reward will be if we are fruitful.

**Fruitfulness is the basis for receiving God's approval.** The two servants who were fruitful with their talents, received positive approvals from the master. He praised them and called them “good” and “faithful.”

When we are fruitful God not only rewards us with His affirmation, but the scripture says we will have abundance.

**We receive more for being fruitful.** The more fruitful we are, the more we receive. For being fruitful with their respective talents, the “good” and “faithful” servants got more cities to rule. The one with the most utilized talents was even

rewarded with an extra one from the unfruitful servant. God is saying here that if you use what He gives you, He will add His blessings to increase your work, and you will never lack.

This is the reason why God will sometimes bypass a born-again believer and bless an unbeliever because they are fruitful. It is why we may see a nation of believers who speak in tongues, pray and fast, continue to struggle with poverty and underdevelopment, while a nation of idol worshipers enjoy prosperity and productivity. It does not mean the secular nation will go to heaven, nor does it mean they are saved. It simply means that here on earth they are obeying God's mandate. So if we want to be recipients of God's overflowing blessing, no matter how much we believe, fast or pray, we will not see the manifestation of His promises unless we heed His command to be fruitful.

When God created man in the beginning, He was fully aware of the needs man would have for sustenance and comfort, yet He did not create those things for us. God knew we would need houses, clothing, furniture, knowledge, schools, hospitals, cars, and so many other items, yet He did not provide them for us. He left the development of all those things in our hands. The directive to be fruitful implied that man was responsible for the growth and production of all his beneficial needs. So, the question is, if man was expected to bear fruit, what was he to start with? In the next chapter, we will explore this question by examining the seed.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE SEED PRINCIPLE

In 1870, a young Ghanaian by the name of Tetteh-Quarshie,<sup>11</sup> who had been freed from pawn slavery, left his native land to seek his fortune abroad. He traveled to what is now Equatorial Guinea and worked as a farm laborer on a cocoa plantation. After working for eight years on the plantation, he decided to return home to his village in Ghana.

Although Tetteh-Quarshie's aim for traveling was to seek personal fortune, he returned with nothing but a few seeds of the cocoa plant taken from the plantation he had labored on. His return home was unheralded by the people in his village, because after eight years of sojourn and hard work in a foreign country, his fortunes did not appear to have improved one bit.

You see, when people travel to work elsewhere, they almost invariably bring back the fruit of other people's labor. But this young man realized that the key to fruitfulness was in sowing his own seeds. He did not return with the processed end products of cocoa such as chocolate, as was expected of him. He returned with the cocoa seed. Rather than bringing home chocolate, he aimed to plant the seed that would sprout the tree that produces cocoa fruit, which he knew would yield more seeds. With those seeds, he knew he could plant more trees and produce an abundance of chocolate.

He planted the few cocoa seeds he had in a small village. By 1911, just a time span of thirty-three years after this young man had sown his first seeds, Ghana had become the leading producer of cocoa in the world. Although the country has now lost its position as the leading producer of cocoa, its economy continues to depend on and benefit from the vision and foresight of a young farm laborer who had the right focus in life.

What the example of Tetteh-Quarshie teaches us is that in life, there are fruit eaters and seed planters. Fruit eaters are consumers; they gather the immediate, processed products of others. Seed planters, on the other hand, are producers; they plant, harvest and produce products for others to buy from them and consume.

It was one young man's vision that became the foundation for a whole nation's economy. Because one man saw the potential of a seed, twenty four million people experience the blessings resulting from his effort. The power of dominion starts with fruitfulness and fruitfulness is founded on the seed principle—discovering and sowing fruitful seeds.

Tetteh-Quarshie's seed was a literal plant seed. What he did with that seed is what farmers have been doing with seeds for a long time. Farmers know that to be fruitful or productive, seeds must be sown. In addition to seed sowing in agriculture, we also know that to give birth to children, the 'seed' of the male must be 'sown.' These are the common and natural ways in which we understand and use seed sowing and fruitfulness. However, as we discovered in the previous chapter, the four mandates that God set out for the first man were not only confined to man's procreative drive, nor was it confined to agriculture. God's command of fruitfulness upon our lives underlies every type of productivity we can have—material, social, economic, scientific, etc.

### **The Source Of Fruitfulness**

God's directive to all of mankind to be fruitful is the first step towards having dominion. However, God's command to be fruitful, presupposes that man has already been equipped with the capacity for fruitfulness. In the cycle of fruitfulness, there is the seed, and there is the fruit.

**A seed is the source or beginning.** It is usually a small material or concept that is used to start the productive process. The power of a seed defies its size or appearance but lies in the potential life force it carries within itself. In every productive process, there is a continuous cycle of fruit producing the seed, and the seed producing more fruit. It is like the old chicken and egg conundrum. The chicken produces the egg and the egg produces the chicken. The age-old debate has been, 'which comes first; the chicken or the egg?' I think the simple answer is to determine what you start with and then you can know what comes next.

### **The Law Of First Mention**

In order to confirm this proposition, we can employ a theological tool for understanding the Bible's sequence. As we know, the Bible is the word of God. It has within it the key to His purposes and processes. Understanding God's system of logic and His actions requires special discernment and insight. The way things are said in the Bible, the timing and order when they appear, and their context, all carry important meaning that may be lost if not read carefully.

*The Law of First Mention*<sup>12</sup> simply states that when something appears in the Bible for the very first time, God has placed it there deliberately, in order to establish a pattern. This approach to God's Word has critical application for us because it sets the stage for effective understanding of the relationship between the fruit and the seed.

So, applying the Law of First Mention, let us examine when God first mentions the word “fruit” in the Bible. In Genesis 1:28, God told man to “be fruitful,” but before that, He had already mentioned the word “fruit” in Genesis 1:11:

*<sup>11</sup> Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so.*

We find from this scripture that when God created plants, He did not start from the seed level. He said, “Let the earth bring forth,” and there were trees, not seeds. You can picture in your mind when God said, “let the earth bring forth,” a tree quickly sprouted out of nowhere, and then branches sprang out of the tree, then flowers appeared on the branches and finally, out of the flowers, developed fruits. Of those fruits, the passage says, “Whose seed is in itself.” This tells us that God did not start the creative process with seeds. He is God. He did not have to wait for a gestation period. He simply began a few steps ahead, creating trees that already had branches that bore fruits, and the fruits had within them seeds.

This is how it happened, again and again until every fruit-bearing tree was created. So if we aim to be fruitful, we cannot request it from God. That would be like asking to be fed while you are holding a meal in your hand. God created fruit-bearing trees—trees with the potential for bearing fruit, and fruit with seeds within them. Instead of asking God for more fruit, we must go to the fruit we have been given, and plant the seed within it. Within the seed there is potential for another tree with more fruit and with more seeds; and in that seed there are more trees with branches, fruits and seeds, and on it goes. So in that first tree, there lies a whole plantation.

God took for granted that the capacity to produce on all levels was already existent in man. For every fruit we are to bear, there is an already-made provision of seed.

### **Seed To Sow, And Bread To Eat**

In his second letter to the Corinthians, (2 Corinthians 9: 10) Paul wrote:

*<sup>10</sup> Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.*

Many times we quote this scripture in reference to giving financially, and although it can be used in that context, it has implications that go beyond financial giving. It establishes a core principle for being fruitful.

The principle is that God gives everyone seed to sow, and bread to eat. Every person, no matter their background, limitations or circumstances, has a God-given seed within them. That is God's great equalizer. He does this so that each one of us has the capacity to generate fruit. It would be unjust on His part to say, "be fruitful," when He has not given you the capacity for it. God will not say, "be fruitful," and leave you seedless. God is a just and a righteous God, and when He said be fruitful, He had already equipped you to be fruitful.

Now to understand the part about bread, you must realize that when you were born into this world, before you had a chance to sow your seed, you didn't come with the ability to sustain yourself. If you were born in a hospital, you were put on a hospital bed, which you did not manufacture. That was bread. You did not train the doctors and nurses who helped deliver you from the womb. That was bread. You enjoyed a lot of things because other people had already produced them. These things are all examples of the bread God promised everyone.

What the Bible is saying here is that, there are things that God has given to you that you must invest in this life, and there are other people's fruit that God will allow you to enjoy. The key is to know the difference and not mix them up. He gives seed to sow and bread to eat.

We know that the seed is God-given, and bread is man-made. God doesn't make bread. He has given someone the seed to make it. Then He gives you the bread that other people have made. Bread represents other people's work, effort, creation, or invention. To get that bread, a seed had to be sown. For example, wheat was harvested and processed into flour, and then other ingredients were added, mixed into dough, the dough was baked and from that process, we got bread. The Bible says that bread is for your eating. But the seed He gives you is not for eating; it's for sowing.

Now imagine this scenario. What do you reckon would have happened had Adam eaten the fruit as well as the seed of the first mango tree? Eating the fruit would cause no alarm, but by eating the seed, he would have eaten the future of

another mango tree because the power of re-productivity dwelt in that seed. For everything, therefore, there is fruit and there are seeds. The seed is an investment for the future; the fruit is sustenance for the present—a reward for prior investment. The seed reproduces, the fruit satisfies. In God's order, you eat the fruit and sow the seed.

Remember that it is the seed He multiplies, not the bread. God does not increase you by how much you consume, He increases you by how much you sow, and by how much you invest.

## **What Is The Seed?**

There are four characteristics of the seed:

**1. The seed is the source.** It is where you begin. Everything on this earth has its beginning in a seed. Trees have their beginning in a seed. Animals have their beginning in a seed. Human beings have their beginning in a seed.

**2. The seed is potential.** A seed is what you are capable of becoming in the future, that you presently are not. It is a king who is currently a servant; a masterpiece that is currently only a sketch; a maestro who is now an apprentice; a huge factory functioning currently from somebody's front porch; it is a massive church that is currently meeting in a classroom. God does not give you who you currently are; He gives you who you can become, and who you can become is the seed. Who you are now is the fruit.

**3. The seed is life giving.** It is the life force that begins the process of fruitfulness. A seed may look dormant but it is not dead. It is very much alive. It has the power and ability to produce. If you take the seed of any plant, its fertility will not be evident to the naked eye, as it will likely look dull and lifeless. Nevertheless, the vitality of the seed is not outside it; it is within it. If you judge a seed by its activity, you will be disappointed, because though it may look dead on the outside, something on the inside is explosive with life.

**4. The seed is powerful.** It survives all odds. In the right environment and with good nurturing, the seed will overcome every obstacle and thrive. It carries within itself the power of absolute victory. When God says, “be fruitful” He is not going to arm you with something that will be easy to defeat or crush. Whatever He puts inside you cannot be sabotaged by any outside force. He proclaimed in the Garden of Eden, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.” If you think there is a serpent, or a devil coming against you, the

Bible says you shall bruise the head of that serpent with a seed.

The question you may be asking is, “how do I know what my seed is?” The seed talents that God gives us all share a few distinct traits. If you are diligent enough to look for these traits within yourself, you will know what seeds you have.

Firstly, **seed talents are inborn**. They are wired into your genetic makeup. You are born with them. So the first step is to analyze what you are naturally good at. What were you drawn to as a child? Where did your curiosities, talents and interests lie at an early age?

Secondly, **seed talents are instinctive**. They are untaught. What do you know or know how to do, that you did not learn formally? What is it that you can do unexplainably?

Third, **seed talents are intuitive**. They come by instinct, not by thought. What do you have an unusual understanding of without thinking much about it?

And finally, **seed talents are inventive**. They easily create new things. Where do you find yourself being most creative?

Many times, people turn their gifts into hobbies. If you think you do not have a seed-gift, look at what you do for fun. Ask the Lord if, perhaps, that is your seed, which you may have undervalued. Or perhaps you have put it on a shelf and overlooked it altogether.

We all have seed talents, and in order to fulfill God's command to “be fruitful,” it is prudent for us to first discover, and then put to work the seed He has given us. Your seed may not always be a particular gift, or ability; some of the most fruit-bearing seeds we may have are mere ideas. However, when we write-off such ideas as “pipe dreams,” long-shots, or as just a fleeting thought, it is the equivalent to eating the cocoa seed that held within it a nation full of trees. On the other hand, when we nurture our ideas, valuing them beyond their small beginnings, the results can be life changing.

### **When Seed Ideas Take Form**

Part of the process of exercising dominion involves being fruitful by using the raw materials of the earth to bring forth the ideas God plants in our minds.

Every material invention of man has been developed out of the raw materials of the earth. When God impregnates our minds with His seed-ideas, they remain

invisible and immaterial until we are able to fashion a form for them out of the earth's resources.

Materials like iron, steel, platinum, gold and other precious metals derived from the earth have given form to the inventive ideas of men and women throughout the ages. Fabrics such as cotton, silk and nylon derived from the resources of the earth have given substance to the ideas of fashion designers. The same is true for vaccines, books, computer chips — all of these lay lifeless in the 'womb' of the earth until someone breathed an idea into them.

Imagine an engineer standing on the bank of a vast body of water. In his mind he dreams of a means of spanning that body of water with a bridge in order to facilitate the flow of communication and transportation. His idea is unseen and intangible, but at the same time, it is real. His idea is the seed he would use to produce a bridge. Without the seed idea, he would not be able to envisage a way to span that body of water.

Ideas of this nature are not acquired through research. They are first received as inspiration. Then the details are later worked out through research. Almost all inventors will tell you that the initial seed ideas they set out with were received through inspiration. It is after they receive the inspirational idea that they seek more information and knowledge to verify, develop and materialize their ideas into viable propositions.

So for the bridge building engineer, the beginning of his fruitfulness was the sheer idea of a bridge. It is a bridge nonetheless, but only the engineer is aware of it at this stage because he is the carrier of the seed. Seed ideas are invisible and immaterial. They require physical material—the earth and man—to move them from unseen to seen.

The next stage of making his unseen idea a reality is to go to the earth. He must combine his physical power—the fruit of his mind and the fruit of his hands—with the material resources available to him. The steel trusses and other components needed for his project lie buried in the womb of the earth in the form of manganese, bauxite, and so forth. This engineer must use them to give birth to his seed-idea. When he gets the right materials, he starts the process of transforming his invisible seed ideas into a visible, tangible bridge that vehicles and pedestrians can cross.

After that bridge becomes a reality, it will be considered the engineer's “baby” or “brainchild.” It is in this sense that having babies captures what fruitfulness is all about. The bridge is considered his baby because he gave birth

to something that did not exist prior to his labor; he converted a bridge from the realm of the unseen to the realm of the seen by the fruit of his mind and the work of his hands.

Everything around us—from such significant inventions like bridges, cars, and spacecrafts to seemingly insignificant objects such as hairpins—are the fruit of someone's mind and hands. Think about it for a moment. How did we get chairs, books, computers, clothes, toothpaste, telephones, buildings and all the other things that make our lives comfortable? We know that they did not materialize from Heaven. Someone was pregnant with a seed—an idea—and delivered them to us. Those seed ideas were developed. Physical materials were shaped to give life to them, and the people who brought them into existence did so in fulfillment of God's command to be fruitful.

Let me give you another example. An artist sits behind his easel to paint. In his mind, he conceives a concept and develops a mental image that expresses his concepts. Whilst going through this stage of conception, no one sees what is going on in his mind; neither can anyone tell what his intentions are. With the image in his mind now taking shape, he uses the medium of color through the skillful manipulation of paint and brush to bring the image inside his mind into being. As he paints out his image, he works until he gets to the point where he is satisfied that what he has produced represents the concepts he imagined. The picture is his 'brainchild.' It is the fruit of his mind and hands. For that artist, this is the way to fulfill his divine mandate to be fruitful.

In the next chapter, we will continue to examine the dimensions of the first command by looking at the process of becoming fruitful.

## CHAPTER THREE

# 6 STEPS TO BECOMING FRUITFUL

It is possible to work very hard and sincerely, and yet be fruitless. Fruitlessness is the opposite of fruitfulness. It occurs when we pursue an activity that does not yield beneficial or fulfilling results. Every work produces some result or the other, but not all results are beneficial or bring fulfillment to us. We become fruitless when we pursue activities that do not draw from the strength of our God-given seeds. To be fruitful, we must not just work hard; we must work with the seeds God has given us.

God has endowed every human being with unique talents, gifts, and ideas, which can be nurtured for beneficial use. These are our seeds. When they are discovered, valued, put to use and nurtured, they grow and bear fruit. Initially, our seeds are small in size, and as such they can easily be overlooked. As small as a seed may appear to be, we learned in the previous chapter that it holds within itself tremendous power to bring great things into existence. Therefore, the power of our seed should not be judged by its small beginning because there are a few basic truths that we must remember:

- Each one of us has something unique to offer
- Our uniqueness is the source of our fruitfulness
- We can all be fruitful in life
- We must chart our own path to fruitfulness

In Galatians 6: 7, Paul the Apostle referred to the process of fruitfulness when he said,

*<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

He described fruitfulness as sowing and reaping. Note that the principle of sowing and reaping relates to whatever a man sows—be they positive or negative. The nature and character of our harvest in life is directly linked to what we sow; therefore, it is important for us to be mindful that what we are sowing is

something from which we want to reap. This is why it is always best that we look to our God-given seeds so that we do not invest ourselves into things that will bring negative results.

## **6 Steps To Fruitfulness**

### **The Parable Of The Mustard Seed**

In Matthew 13: 31 and 32, Jesus tells the parable of the mustard seed, and through it, He sets out six steps to fruitfulness. He said:

*<sup>31</sup> ...The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, <sup>32</sup> which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.*

#### **Step 1: Identify Your Seed**

Jesus begins the parable by identifying what seed He was dealing with. He calls it by its name: a mustard seed. If it is a mustard seed, then it can produce a mustard tree. That is the first step to fruitfulness—the ability to name your seed-talent or idea. The reason this is the first step is that it helps you to see the potential within the seed even if it starts out very small and insignificant.

Remember, your seed-talent or gift is not acquired outside of you; it is in-born and naturally endowed. So, while it is good to have education and to acquire knowledge, education and knowledge do not in themselves impart gifts and talents. It can enhance or develop, but not impart. For example, a mustard seed does not learn to be a mustard seed. It is a mustard seed! Its true potential is within itself. A mustard seed does not spend its life trying to be an apple seed. The best that such a mustard seed will be is just a fake apple, and who goes to the grocery shop to buy fake apples? This helps explain why those who spend their lives trying desperately to be what they are not, end up as frustrated carbon copies who get bypassed by the world.

Your seed is the gift God placed within you. A gift is something freely given to you, something you did not pay for or earn. But in order to benefit from it, you must be able to recognize that it is there, and that it is yours. There are lots of individuals who spend large amounts of time and money moving from one school to another, and from one seminar to another, seeking to acquire a unique seed gift. The good news is that God custom-made us already fitted with the seed that would make our lives fruitful. The bad news is that it is possible to live

your entire life and never know what your seed is.

In Genesis 1:11 we read of an instruction from God that gives us a clue as to where the seed resides. Although the verse deals directly with plant life, it has wider application to all life.

*<sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so.*

God allowed plant life to have seed within itself for the purpose of perpetuating the creative process. The first trees and fruits were created directly by God; subsequent trees and fruits would come into existence when the seeds within the fruits were planted. God expected that when the seeds were planted, they would release the trees and fruits packaged within their tiny bodies. The fruitfulness of plant life therefore was dependent on the seed within.

That principle is so crucial to understanding where to locate our own seed gifts. Before you do any sowing, you must know that the seed is within you. This sounds straightforward enough, but for some this first step is their biggest challenge. If you are a person who does not know how to begin to discover your seed, there are five important signals in your life that have been trying to get your attention. Give them some thought, and watch your seed become clearer.

**Identify your seed by discovering the things you learn easily.** Each one of us discovers at some point in our lives that there are some things we are able to do far easier than others. This realization comes when we find that certain ideas, subjects or activities connect more deeply within us than others, and that there are specific areas in which we are more successful than our peers. In school, it makes particular studies and activities fun to learn or participate in. You feel a sense of command in that area of endeavor because it comes easily to you.

**Identify your seed by discovering the things that bring you fulfillment.** If you are going to spend the rest of your life doing something, it may as well be something you enjoy. There are things we do out of obligation, and there are things we do because we love doing them. These are things that we would do even if we were not paid to do them—a clear indication of a seed.

**Identify your seed by discovering your passion.** Passion is the energy that drives human effort. Passion makes us committed to a cause, giving it 110% of our attention and energy. Each one of us has something we are passionate about. When we are passionate about something, we devote time, money and other

resources to it, without those sacrifices being a burden to us. Passion is what drives us beyond tiredness, procrastination, and excuses, and propels us to achieve desired results.

**Identify your seed by discovering your native wisdom.** Native wisdom is different from acquired knowledge. It is not simply about having a gift, but having instinctive and intuitive understanding about how to put it to the best use. Native wisdom does not function in all areas of your life but in particular fields. For the schoolteacher, it may be that almost telepathic ability to effectively communicate knowledge to the minds of pupils. It is the clairvoyant timing we see in great performers, the ability to seize the perfect moment with clear and precise responses to perplexing issues. It is Billy Graham knowing the precise point in a sermon to make an invitation for people to receive Christ; or Luciano Pavarotti hitting the right musical note at the perfect time to send chills throughout your body. They do what we all do, but with a sense of precision and command that sets them apart. When you have it, you are able to come up with very fresh and innovative insights that sometimes amaze even yourself.

All of us have native wisdom in some area of our lives. The challenge is to find time to identify the way it functions in particular to us. I have seen little kids play soccer and observed one or two playing with native wisdom. When they play, it is almost as if the ball is magnetically attracted to their feet. They seem to understand the ball and the game better than the others. In Ghana, we say that they have 'ball sense.' Likewise, there are lawyers who have 'law sense' and journalists with 'journalism sense.' Such people will always be a step above their peers in particular areas of study or activity because they've tapped into their native wisdom.

**Identify your seed by discovering your flow.** When a fish is in water it does not struggle to swim; it simply goes with the flow. I once had a conversation with a well-known Christian communicator about how he is able to almost always have an overwhelming impact on his audience. He said to me, "when I speak to an audience I like to get into 'my zone' and when I get there, anything is possible." The flow is the place or state where you are able to continuously and consistently perform at your peak. There will always be things you flow in, and things you do not flow in. What you flow in is related to your seed and makes you effective every time. Fruitful people stay with the flow and in their zone.

## **Step 2: Take Hold Of Your Seed**

In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus said the man took the seed.

Identifying your seed-gift must lead you into taking hold of it. This is the second step to fruitfulness. To take hold of your seed-gift, three things must take place.

You must:

- Accept the seed
- Own the seed
- Believe in the seed

God's primary responsibility toward all of mankind is to provide each individual with a seed to work with. Part of our response is to accept what He offers to us with pride. Beyond accepting the seed-gifts that God gives us, we must own the seed in order to be good stewards of it. Owning our seed requires that we protect it, guide it, and nurture it as if it is our child. We must also have confidence in the seed and believe that it is able to produce its potential fruit plant. Many times after we have the seeds of God in our lives, we continue crying to Him to give us something to work with, when in fact it is already there.

When God called me into the ministry, all I had was a deep desire to serve Him and to make a difference in people's lives. In addition to that, I also recognized that I had the ability to explain things and to help people understand. That ability to explain things and to help people understand was the seed I started with. Beyond that, I did not have much by way of physical or material evidence to encourage me that I could do the work of the ministry. I did not have a congregation, a meeting venue, public address system, or chairs. I did not even have a decent suit and tie! But inside me, I knew I had a seed to plant, and in the eye of my mind I could see that seed feeding many people who were desirous to have the word of God made simple and applicable to their day to day lives. At first, I was the only one who could see the value in my seed. My natural temperament as a quiet person did not help the matter much. Because I could not vehemently defend what I had, I spent most of the early days of my calling, praying and nurturing the intense desires within my heart. I continued that way in prayer and preparation until the time came when I boldly stepped out to do what I had felt for a long time to be my life mission.

In those early days, if I had tried to convince many people to appreciate what I had within me, they would have mocked me to scorn. As a matter of fact, when I told one of my friends at that time about the stirrings in my heart and the desire to quit my job in order to enter the ministry, he looked me straight in the face and told me, 'you are a fool.' Looking back now, I know he meant well and I can understand his concerns for my wellbeing. Because I was a quiet person and did not say too much, he did not know that I had the attributes for ministry living

inside of me.

Without belief in your seed, you can be talked out of your destiny. Someone may only see your current fruit, not the seed potential within. At the seed stage, only you know the nature and future of the seed you carry, so take hold of it, and sow it.

### **Step 3: Sow Your Seed In The Right Environment**

Jesus said that after taking the seed, the man sowed [it] in his field. After you have accepted, owned and believed in your seed, you must plant it in fertile ground. If we return to the example of Tetteh-Quarshie, notice that he did not plant his cocoa seeds on foreign land, where their fruit could not benefit his people. He planted them in his homeland, where he could say that he contributed to the progress of his country.

Sooner or later, everyone has to win his own battles, plant his own seed, and work to bring forth his own fruit. Someone who tends other people's seeds, or plants his own in gardens others have claim to, will not be a happy or fulfilled person. He will always lack peace because he is not acting on God's first directive planted in Adam and inherited by all human beings.

To plant in your own field is to place your seed in an environment that is familiar and friendly to your aims. Don't force your seed in an arena that has contempt for it, because it will deplete your seed's potential, and stifle its growth. If you have been pitching a revolutionary idea to the same big corporations, and at each turn you meet rejection, take heed. God may be telling you that the soil you are digging up is not fertile. Perhaps, you need to start your own company, where you have control over how it is nurtured, and so you can establish a solid foundation for your brand on that idea.

### **Step 4: Allow Your Seed To Grow**

Every seed has a gestation period—the period during which the seed undergoes the changes necessary for it to germinate. After germination, there will be the various levels of growth before maturity is attained. I will never forget the anxiety my wife and I had with our first daughter. Being new parents, we had no experience as to the growth processes of a child. We had read a lot on the subject, but the readings did not agree on all the time frames required for a child to attain various phases of development.

First, we went into distress anytime the child showed any sign of discomfort.

Then we became anxious when she was supposed to be able to sit up all by herself and was not doing so. We had significant fears because we had read about certain medical conditions of the spine and bone structure that could result in a child not being able to sit upright. After she was able to sit up unaided, we turned our anxiety to when she would start crawling.

On and on we worked ourselves into panic and frenzy at every phase of her development. Nothing worried me more than when I saw a girl who was about my daughter's age—about two years old—who could write the letters of the alphabet. At that age, my daughter had no clue what the alphabets looked like much less, write them. I went home that evening and tried hard to give her a crash program on the A-B-C's. Strangely, she did not seem to share my anxiety to learn; instead, she laughed at my frenzied efforts, then began looking for more entertaining things to do. At that time I thought my daughter had a serious learning disability and would be daft forever. Well, just as she was able to sit up unaided and crawl at just the right time, she got through the alphabet also and emerged a very good student in school.

I recognize that in some very rare cases, such worries from a parent would have merit but in my case I simply allowed anxiety to control my responses. We do the same with our seed-gifts also. We look at the 'slow' process of our own growth and shift into the panic gear, perhaps because we don't realize that growth phases are particular to every seed.

Seeds must be allowed to grow. We must have enough faith in what we have to give it the time and nurturing to mature. Some seed-gifts grow automatically without any special interventions, whilst others may need some extra care and nurturing to bring them to fruition. Other gifts do well when the situations around them are comfortable, whilst others flourish under great stress and adversity. Whatever be the case, we should not press the panic button when we are not seeing the results in the time we expect.

A great example of this was featured in *Time* magazine when Corazon Aquino was named Woman of the Year in 1986<sup>13</sup>. She was the first woman to be President of The Philippines. Mrs. Aquino had lived a quiet life as a homemaker and wife of a popular opposition political leader in the Philippines. Her husband, Benigno Aquino, was the chief political opponent of President Ferdinand Marcos. When Marcos declared martial law in 1972, Benigno was imprisoned, and later exiled to the United States. Then in 1983, Benigno Aquino was assassinated as he returned to the Philippines.

Responding to pressure from the opposition groups in her country, Mrs. Aquino stepped out from the shadows and declared, “I would rather die a meaningful death than to live a meaningless life.” With that statement, a new leader was born to spearhead a revolt against the dictatorship in her country, and later become its President.

In the turbulent political situation she inherited, she was able to serve her full term in office against very serious security schemes and crises. I believe the capacity to lead had been in her during all those quiet years as a housewife, but an occasion never challenged her enough to stir up her gifts until this particular time and opportunity crossed her path. In her case, adversity forced her gifts to rise to the surface. A quino’s growth can be explained with a farming analogy.

When a farmer plants his seed in the ground, the soil tries to stop its growth. But there is something in that little seed that has the power to break the topsoil apart. The power within the seed is able to dislodge the systems that seek to sit on top of it, but they need time to begin their ascent.

### **Step 5: Watch Your Seed Become Great**

The passage says, when [the seed] is grown it is greater than. After germination, every plant goes through several phases. Each phase of growth has its joys and challenges. At each phase of growth, there will be things to take out and things to take on.

Let's say you are a recent graduate with a degree in architecture and you've just been hired as the lead on your first big project. Being your passion and your biggest opportunity thus far in your career, you put your heart and soul into the design proposal for your client. When you get their feedback, you will be disappointed that one of your favorite features of the design was rejected, and they ask you to replace it with something else. You may have considered that feature a signature of your work. Then the client tells you that rather than a ten-story building, they would like to increase it to twenty. Being inexperienced, you may become intimidated by the scope of the project and doubt your ability as the lead architect. However, you will have to take on your fears to get the job done. In the end, though the building will lack that signature feature that you had hoped to maintain, and despite your initial insecurities, you will always have that twenty-story building to look at and say: I designed that.

### **Step 6: Let Your Fruit Be A Blessing To Others**

At the end of the day, whatever you produce must be beneficial to mankind.

Remember, God gave us seed to sow and bread to eat. Although your seed is intended for you to sow, the final product may very well be intended as bread for the enjoyment of others. The parable of the mustard seed concluded by saying that the seed which had been sown, which grew, and which became a tree, then became a resource for birds to come and nest in its branches.

At the start of this chapter, we discussed the engineer who dreamt of building a bridge to cross a large body of water. Although it was a hypothetical example to illustrate our point about the seed, a similar scenario must have truly happened because today bridges are a common feature of commuting around the world. Someone must have invented them, yet because we have all had experience using bridges, it is clear that the creator did not make access to them exclusive to himself or herself.

Because of bridges, we can often take for granted our ability to cross bodies of water as we pursue our various activities. Many of us cross bridges everyday as we commute to and from work, and without them, our movement capacity would be limited to other means. Likewise, whatever we do shall also benefit others and be a contribution to our collective quest and purpose to fulfill God's mandate to us.

### **Stir Up The Gift**

In Proverbs 17:8, King Solomon said a gift should be a jewel to you:

*<sup>8</sup> A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. (KJV)*

Whichever way the owner turns that jewel, it prospers. So for your seed-gift to prosper, you must learn how to turn it. That means using it in multi-dimensional ways.

You must stir up the gift within you for it to mature. In agriculture, stirring loosens the soil and helps the plant make its way into the open. If you do not stir up the gift, it will be smothered in the dirt, and never sprout onto the surface. Stirring means stimulating, nurturing, and encouraging your gift. Turn it before people you know and they will shower it with kind words and affirmation. Use it in simple ways that you know will be a success, so that it will energize your gift and give it momentum.

It is not enough to sit down and thank God for the gift He has given you. To really appreciate all of the facets of your gift and to get the best use out of it, you

must keep turning it to find out how it may sparkle at different angles and in different settings. Practice using what you have in various ways. It is possible that each new way will reap fruitful results. Turning one's gift is part of the creative process, something we will now turn to in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

A century ago, on December 17, 1903, in the Kill Devil Hills of North Carolina, Wilbur and Orville Wright<sup>14</sup> made and documented the first successful, controlled, and manned flight in history. The brothers made four flights that day, with the longest lasting 59 seconds and traveling 852 feet. Their invention—the airplane—helped mankind to dominate the air space and travel greater distances than ever before. They shaped the history of the 20th Century, from the way in which we do commerce to the way in which we fight our wars.

The Wright Brothers had no apparent precondition for being makers of history. They were simple preacher's kids from Dayton, Ohio, with average education, and ran a bicycle and printing shop. In an interview,<sup>15</sup> Orville Wright described the beginning of their interest in flying as follows: “Our first interest began when we were children. Father brought home to us a small toy actuated by a rubber spring which would lift itself into the air. We built a number of copies of this toy, which flew successfully.” With such simple beginnings, no one could have predicted their record- setting feat.

In 1900 the brothers designed their first glider, with data that they had inherited from an earlier German flier—Otto Lilienthal. They had read everything they could lay their hands on in relation to flying. Their father had a few simple books in his library in which they read about flight in nature, and the Dayton Public Library had a handful of writings on flight as well. When they had exhausted the local resources, Wilbur wrote to the Smithsonian Institution asking for more information on flight.

From the outset, they recognized that they had two problems. They had to figure out how to build the flying machine, and they had to learn to fly it as well. This meant they had to train themselves as pilots as they went along learning how to craft their machine.

From the late 19th Century, up to the very early years of the 20th Century, the “race for flight” had a lot of competition. The most prominent competitor to the Wright Brothers was the secretary of the Smithsonian, Samuel P. Langley.

Langley had the education, experience, ambition and significant government funding for his obsession to be the first to fly a manned aircraft. Even as their competitor, Wilbur and Orville Wright were actually inspired by Langley's early work.

Other experimenters had thought about flight as two- dimensional. The Wrights saw it as something that happened in three dimensions. Whereas others focused on the stability of the aircraft as the key to its movement, the Wright brothers went in a completely different direction. They were much less concerned about stability than they were about control. That's not so surprising—they were cyclists, after all. Other experimenters were saying that if you tried to develop a control system that put the airplane at the command of the pilot all the time, it would drive him crazy. No human being, they thought, could keep up with the motion of something that was essentially balanced on nothing.

On October 7th, 1903 Langley made his attempt. His huge 54- foot-long flying machine was launched from a catapult on the Potomac River, and it fell like a sack of cement into the water. On December 8th of that same year, he tried again. This time the rear wing caved in before it got off its catapult. Just nine days later, on the 17th of December, 1903, the Wright brothers flew a trim little biplane, with almost no fanfare at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Their advantage was that they'd mastered the problem of controlling the movement of their plane.

So how did such simple people achieve what the experts failed to achieve?

- **They started with their talents.** They were engineers and experts in cycling. They used their knowledge and applied it to their passion.
- **They received inspiration.** The flying toy from their father triggered new ideas. Rather than dismissing that initial fascination as child's play, they continued to pursue it.
- **They learned all they could .** When they had exhausted all the books in their reach, they reached out to someone who had access to more. They didn't discriminate on where they got the information from, nor were they too proud to learn from their competitors.
- **They were not intimidated by the experts.** Langley clearly appeared to have an advantage over them. His education and money was significant, but neither stopped the Wright Brother's from using and having faith in their own talents.
- **They looked at the problem differently.** With so many others

attempting the same feat, they found a fresh perspective that no one else had considered. They focused on controlling the aircraft, while everyone else focused on stabilizing it.

- **They kept working on their idea.** Their commitment and curiosity wasn't easily satisfied. They constantly built new kites and glides, learning from each one and building knowledge, insight, and experience in the process.

**They allowed their achievements to do the talking.** They focused on the objective, not on accolades. They did not over-expose their experiments, or concern themselves with how many people saw what they had done. Quite astonishingly, the first accurate reporting of their monumental achievement did not appear in the *New York Times* or *Scientific American* but in an obscure journal for beekeepers known as *Gleanings in Bee Culture* in 1904 and 1905. The Wright Brothers were publicity shy and fiercely secretive about their invention so they did not invite reporters to witness their historic first flights.

### **The Creative Spirit**

God Himself demonstrated the enjoyment He had in being creative. If you go to Genesis you will notice a phrase after nearly every creation God completed. As God created heaven and earth; day and night; man and beast, He paused to say, “and it was good.” The creative process for God was not exclusively laborious. He enjoyed it as well. As He turned His Great Imagination, this way and that, He enjoyed what He was doing. As with all things, we can look to God's processes to learn how we should also behave.

In the case of the Wright Brothers, we observe that they did not have a heavy, serious burden on them to create an aircraft. The creative process for them began as child's play. One lesson we can learn from this example is that the creative process of sowing your seed doesn't have to be burdensome. It should be fun and enjoyable. We are reminded from their example to tap into the openness of a child's mind as we apply creativity to our seed ideas. When we draw up sketches, or jot down notes envisioning the development of our seed, we must do so without limitation. When we imagine and invent, we are simply seeing with our minds, a seed that God intentionally planted within us. If we develop that seed from the perspective of our inner child, where our creativity is boundless and pure, we may very well come up with something amazing, because what your creative imagination reveals to you is often a piece of the purpose God has planned for your life. So recall the dreams you had as a child and see if you still

have a passion for them.

Like the engineer who eventually built the first bridge, you must first give your mind the freedom to imagine the unseen. The creative process is critical for being able to bring things from the realm of the unseen to the realm of the seen. If you cannot first visualize it, mind-map it, or brainstorm it, it can never be developed into something tangible.

One of the ways in which adults 'eat their seed' is that they stop allowing themselves time to play. As children, many of the games we played required our imagination. We used to play “good cop, bad cop” and “dress-up.” The girls would take mud and pretend they were baking pies and cakes. The boys would jump on chairs and furniture, pretending to be riding horses and space ships. They would tie towels or bed sheets around their necks to flow behind them like capes as they ran around, and imagine they were super-heroes. What the Wright Brothers did was also child's play. They built a device and pretended they were flying inside of it. They did not know at the time that their simple pretend game would grow from imagination to reality, and that it would continue on to greatness.

### **Don't Let Your Babies Face Giants**

The story of the Wright Brothers teaches us a useful lesson based on Biblical principles. In bringing their brainchild to birth, they followed an example that God had set when He brought His son to the world to dominate Satan and sin for all mankind. Before Jesus could be manifested as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, God protected Him as a baby and hid Him from those who sought to kill Him. When King Herod found out that a new King had been born, he set out to have baby Jesus eliminated. God had to instruct the parents of Jesus to take Him out of harm's way and hide Him for a while in Egypt. Jesus was God's seed for the redemption of man from sin. He could not allow that seed to be killed before it had the chance to become fruitful.

The big lesson here is that when ideas or seeds are little, they can be easily destroyed. If you expose your seed when it is too small, it will be easy for someone to steal it or kill it. No matter how great you are going to be, as a baby you are vulnerable. A fully-grown goat can kill a lion cub. Wise lionesses do not leave their cubs unprotected. It is not wise to let your babies face giants who are intent on killing them. Yes, Jesus was the Son of God but He had to be hidden from His enemies until He was strong enough to defeat them. After King Herod died, the parents of Jesus were instructed to bring the child back from Egypt but

even then, He kept a low profile until the day of His manifestation.

Your ideas are like your children. So keep your own counsel about them until they begin to come forth. Some ideas seem ridiculous when they are in their formative season because they are new and different. New ideas appear crazy to a world that is set in its own ways. However, once they have been worked on and nurtured to fruition, people begin to take them seriously, and seek after them.

The world is full of seed stealers and seed mockers. The Wright brothers kept their “baby” from the Herods of their time who were intent on killing any new idea that did not fit into the thinking of the establishment. If you have an idea that is in its formative stage, I advise you to take this wise counsel: allow your seed to be incubated in you until the day you can give birth to it. Take time to meditate on that seed, build on it, and develop it before you bring it out into the open and expose it to giants.

The scriptures teach us that everything is designed to produce its fruit in season. Do not be discouraged if it seems the seed within you is taking a long time to sprout and become seen. Harvest does not immediately follow the germination of the seed. It needs time to grow, mature, and blossom.

### **Develop Your Gift Into Useful Skills**

We came into the world with our seed talents already programmed into us. The world cannot give you the seed, and neither can education. The benefit of education is to help you acquire the requisite skills and technology to bring the seed within you to life and blossom. However, just because your seed gift is not learned, does not mean you should stop learning. Remember, your seed is the beginning; it's the spark. On its own it is just potential, and in order for its potential to manifest, it must be nurtured and developed, combined with skill and knowledge to grow to maturity. Education—whether formal or informal—can develop your seed. By learning new and creative applications, tools, and theories, you can enhance the development of your seed, and bring you closer to the height of your seed's potential.

The books we read, classes or seminars we attend, and the subjects we study, therefore, are all part of the fruitfulness of mankind. When we read books we receive new seed ideas to help us continue to be fruitful. It is a cycle: fruit produces seed; seed produces more fruit. One person's fruitfulness will inspire seed ideas in another person, and from that inspiration they will produce more fruit. One person's invention will inspire new ideas for new inventions by someone else. This process of building fruitfulness upon fruitfulness is part of

the second mandate, which we will now turn to: Multiply.

# Declare the Word

Quote the following scriptures as you ask God to help you fulfill His command to be fruitful:

**Genesis 1: 26-28** —Thank Him for making you in His image; for blessing you and for considering you special enough to have dominion over what He has created.

**Genesis 2: 7** —Thank God for breathing the breath of life into you, and for equipping you with not only natural abilities, but a supernatural nature as well.

**Psalms 8: 3-9** —Thank Him for being mindful of you, and for the place He has given you in His grand scheme.

**Psalms 127: 3; Jeremiah 6: 19; Proverbs 18: 20** —Pray that God anoints the fruit of your womb; and that the fruit of your thoughts and of your mouth will honor Him and fill your stomach with His goodness.

**Proverbs 31: 30-31; Galatians 5: 22-23** —Ask that the fruit of your hands will earn you praise and recognition, and that you will have a righteous character of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self control.

**Mark 11: 13-14; Luke 3: 9; Matthew 25: 15-30** —Pray that your tree bears good fruit and is not cut down; that God will call you good and faithful for being fruitful with your talent.

**Matthew 13: 31-32** —Pray that though your seed may be small, let it be like the mustard seed, and that it grows greater, so that birds will nest on its branches.

For any aspect of fruitfulness that you may be struggling with, or any area in which you need guidance or wisdom, ask God for it based on Genesis 1: 26-28 and the mandate He has placed on your life.

# **Affirmation**

Make the following declaration over your life:

My life has divine purpose.

I am gifted and blessed above the angels.

For I am made in God's image.

Like Him, I am creative and fruitful.

I will sow my seed in fertile ground.

And my fruit will be a blessing to others.

PART TWO

MULTIPLY

## CHAPTER FIVE

# MULTIPLY

**W**hen a musician goes into a recording studio to create a song or an album, his work includes several hours of meticulous labor. He may spend weeks or months laying all of the elements and tracks for the production of his final recording. First, the band or producer must play all of the instrumentation with precision, synchrony with one another, and perfect rhythm. If the horn player misses a beat, or the bassist is in the wrong key, they must start again from the top, until the music is recorded with perfection. Next, the singer comes in to lay his vocals. He must hit every note, stay on key and deliver the right emotion. If he forgets a line, or stutters a lyric, he must begin again, until his vocals are just right. Then backup singers come in and go through the same process.

The end result of all this labor is the master tape; the first-fruit of the musician's efforts, and the first manifestation of the musical seed within him. With great satisfaction in his heart, the musician receives the master tape after the last detail has been perfected. However, even with all of the satisfaction and fulfillment he has at that point, he knows the project is not complete until he moves to the next step. No musician writes songs, records them and spends so much time in the studio in order to be the only one with access to the end product. Musicians write songs, practice playing, and record albums in order to spread their music around, selling it to as wide an audience as they can reach. In order to do that, however, they must duplicate the master recording. That one simple master tape holds the potential of a million copies that can be made and sold. In multiplying the fruit of his labor, the potential reach of his music and the potential profit from his fruitfulness also expands. At this stage, the musician in our illustration has progressed from the level of fruitfulness and is advancing on to multiply.

### **What Does It Mean To Multiply?**

To multiply<sup>16</sup> means to increase, to expand, to greatly abound, or to exceed in number, in size and in depth. So when God says, be fruitful, He means produce something. However, after you have produced something, don't leave it at the

first stage. Go to the second level and multiply it; increase it, expand it, abound in it. The word “multiply,” as found in the English language, comes from two words: “multi” and “ply.” The word “multi” comes from the word “multitude” meaning plenty or abundance. And the second word, “ply,” means layer.

If we look at the makeup of plywood, we will gain an understanding of the command to multiply. The reason it is called plywood is because it has many plies, or layers of wood stacked on top of each other. Likewise, the word multiply means that you will have to add layer upon layer of something in order to multiply it. Applying this to God's command to multiply, it means that if you are that musician, you must go to the studio and produce the first layer—the instrumentals. If you sell what you have produced at that stage, it is not multiplied; it is just the first fruit. However, if you keep adding to it—lead vocals, background vocals, riffs, and emotion—it creates height, depth, breadth, and weight to the first layer. So God said to Adam, “don't just be fruitful. Add to what you have produced. Add layers onto it.” To multiply, therefore, is to increase by adding new layers or levels on top of each other. This principle applies in every field of endeavor. Whether you are a musician, a businessman, an architect, or a banker, you must first produce the prototype of your seed talent; then, you must multiply it.

Take a scientist as another example. She may spend years researching the components for a vaccine, which can cure a certain disease. When her efforts become fruitful, and she develops a vaccine that works, the next logical step will be to multiply that vaccine in order to replenish the earth with the fruit of her mind and hands and subdue that disease across the face of the earth.

But you don't have to be a musician or a scientist to multiply. It is the same process carried out by the author, salesman, industrialist, teacher, farmer, fashion designer, and any other producers. First, they use the seed-gifts within them to produce the fruit; then, they multiply that fruit. God has woven this pattern intricately into the fabric of all human activity. However, it is not automatic. We must consciously direct ourselves towards multiplication, as it is possible for us to become stagnant if we don't. When we regress or digress from this pattern, we set into motion the Law of Decay, and fail to fulfill our dominion mandate.

### **Getting Stuck As A Start-Up**

As a young boy growing up in my country, there was a local fast food that was very popular with children of school-going age. We called it “yooke gari.” It is a combination of boiled beans, palm oil, and gari (a cassava product). On my

way to school, I would stop to buy from a particular lady who sold this product. From primary class two until I moved on to high school, this was part of my routine. Later in life—about seventeen years later—I went by those market stalls again. To my surprise, I saw the same woman selling the same product in the same bowls and containers, wearing the same clothing she had worn so many years ago. It was nice to see her again, but I kept asking myself, “What has this lady been doing in the past twenty years?” She was fruitful all right, but she had failed to excel and expand. In essence, her business got stuck as a start-up.

Many people become so self-satisfied and complacent after becoming fruitful that they get stuck where they are and never advance to the next level, or multiply their initial productivity. People who may have thought starting a business was out of reach, or an exceptional feat get their business off the ground and feel that is it. They stop innovating, stop thinking of new ways to reach more clients. They become content with the income stream that meets their basic needs, and don't hunger for more. Even those who are not aspiring entrepreneurs fall into this trap. People get a job and think that's it. As long as they receive their monthly or bi-weekly paycheck, they are happy to be getting by, and never aspire for a better position. You may find that same janitor who used to whistle down the halls of your school as he mopped the floor, still there at your twenty-year reunion, whistling the same tune.

This kind of stagnation not only happens in the professional arena. Unfortunately, quite a lot of good preachers fall into this rut as well. They only preach first-generation messages, never building on them, never expanding, or contextualizing them for a new generation of listeners.

As a preacher, I spend hours, days, and sometimes months incubating and preparing a message that God has dropped into my spirit. I labor in prayer until I know the word is ready to be presented to my audience. On Sunday mornings, I stand before my congregation and give them the fruit of my seed-message, which often has taken more time and effort to produce than to deliver in the pulpit. The congregation in turn, eats the fruit of my labor, and I can say I have been productive.

However, if I only preach that message one time, only to one congregation, the only way the seed of the message will thrive and bear subsequent fruit is based on how much of the message that group remembers, and whether or not they will use it to minister to someone else. However, if we go beyond my one-time fruitfulness on that Sunday morning, record the message on a CD or in a book, then God's Word is multiplied through me. In those multiplied forms, my

fruitfulness will continue to multiply as long as copies of those books and CDs exist and new audiences receive them. In addition, the multiplied versions of my fruit will go places that I cannot, and reach people that I wouldn't otherwise be able to minister to in person.

## **God Is A God Of Multiplication**

We are all creators of things whether we are preachers, bankers, investors, real estate developers, or software engineers. But whatever we do, we must start first by producing the fruit and afterwards we multiply the fruit. That is God's principle: be fruitful, and then multiply. He has wired this principle into every process on this earth. You first produce the fruit and then you multiply it.

We illustrated this in nature where a single seed produces a tree that goes on to multiply its fruit. One seed does not produce only one fruit; it produces many. On top of that, it even produces more seeds. We know this process works in childbearing as well, though it sometimes gets confused. What often gets misunderstood is that the multiplication is not in the number of children you give birth to. That is merely being fruitful in the biological sense. Your children, no matter how many you have, are only your fruit. God did not intend His command to be fruitful and multiply to be one and the same thing. They are not synonymous with each other; they are separate. In terms of natural birth, multiplication does not occur until the next generation, when your fruit produces their own seed. In this sense, your fruit does not multiply until your children begin to have children of their own. Those of us who view our fruitfulness and multiplication as being achieved when we procreate, are moving at a very slow pace. You will wait a mighty long time to get to God's second command when you view multiplying in this narrow way.

Being fruitful is only the first step God ordained to us. Once we have become fruitful, our work towards fulfilling the total mission of mankind is not done. Sometimes we use so much effort in producing our first “masterpieces” that we find it too demanding to move on to the second principle, which is multiplication. That was probably the problem that the *yoo ke gari* seller had. I am sure over the years, she tweaked her recipe a number of times to have an advantage over other *yoo ke gari* sellers, and this is what made hers so particularly appealing. But why didn't she build a bigger establishment or expand into a dine-in restaurant?

Once we harvest our first fruit, we must excel and expand with it. That is God's way. Though the devil is the minimizer and divider, God is the Multiplier.

He gave Adam the second law of productivity on the very same day that He gave him the first. He didn't pause, or give Adam a chance to conquer being fruitful before He set any additional expectations. No, in the same breath that God told Adam to be fruitful, He also commanded him to multiply. The instructions came in tandem. God said, "Adam, apart from being fruitful, you need to multiply, and increase beyond being fruitful." Being made in the image of God and having His spirit breathed into us makes us responsible to be a reflection of Him. Just as God is fruitful, we must also be fruitful. Just as God is the Great Multiplier, we must also honor our capacity and responsibility to multiply as well. In the next chapter, we will look to the life of Isaac as an example of how man can embody God's multiplying nature.

## CHAPTER SIX

# ISAAC: THE EPITOME OF MULTIPLICATION

The story of Isaac in Genesis 26:12-14 graphically captures the principle of multiplication. The Bible says,

*<sup>12</sup> Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. <sup>13</sup> The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; <sup>14</sup> for he had possession of flocks and possession of herds and great possessions of servants. So the Philistines envied him.*

Take special notice that the words prosper, prospering and prosperous are used here, remembering that God is very deliberate about how He reveals His Word. Within this passage, two crucial concepts stand out.

- The fruitfulness concept
- The principle of multiplication

First, it is clear that Isaac was fruitful. The Bible says he sowed, and he reaped; he began to prosper. We already know that it is the seed that produces the fruit, and that you cannot reap where you did not sow. Isaac obviously sowed a good seed, in good ground, and he reaped the fruit of his labor. From this we know that he fulfilled his responsibility to be fruitful.

Secondly, Isaac did not just sow and become fruitful, he moved to the next level, adding new layers. After he began to prosper, the scripture says he continued prospering until he became very prosperous. This is the essence of multiplication. Had he only been fruitful, God would not have described his prosperity in these three distinct ways. What this passage reiterates to us is that God does not want us to stop at the level of fruitfulness; He wants us to multiply. This is a command from God. We must add more layers to what we sow and to what we reap. Isaac fulfilled God's desire in this way as well. How can we take the example of Isaac and apply it to our own lives? I believe that within Isaac's

story, there are four steps we can follow. Let us look at them now.

### **The 4 Levels Of Isaac's Progress**

A closer look at Isaac's wealth reveals four levels or layers of progression, which, if we also emulate, can produce the same

#### **Level 1—Initial Success**

The first layer of Isaac's prosperity came as initial success. He sowed and he reaped. He began to prosper. That was his initial success. You have initial success when you undertake a project and it begins to yield results. This is actually the hardest stage, and if you have ever planted a seed, you will understand. When you plant a seed in fertile ground, at first, it just seems to be a buried seed. You cannot see the effects of your watering, or what is happening while it absorbs the nutrients of the soil. A few days after planting it, you return to see if it has emerged to the surface, but you are faced with an empty patch of soil. To you it appears nothing is happening. You may see no evidence at all of the seed you planted for a while. You may contemplate the possibility that it was a dead seed, and even consider digging it up. Nevertheless, after what seems like a long time of no evidence that the seed has ignited life, you see a tiny sprig coming out of the soil. Just as you were amazed at how long it took to show itself, you may equally be surprised at how fast it will then grow. The initial growth, however, is the longest waiting period and you cannot give up in the time between planting, nurturing, and seeing the initial evidence.

As much as initial success is desirable, you cannot relax in your determination. You have not arrived at Isaac's level of success just yet. Your drive must remain and your focus must be intact because you can have initial success and still fail overall. Isaac had initial success; things started working for him. He began to be fruitful, and he kept striving.

#### **Level 2—Sustained Growth**

The second layer of Isaac's wealth was that he achieved sustained growth. The Bible says he continued prospering. He did not have a one-hit-wonder, or a lucky break, but once he had the initial success, he managed to sustain it and continued to grow. Sustained growth is characterized when the duplication of your fruitfulness becomes almost automatic. Let's say you start a business that provides only one product or service. Once you are able to employ people to meet the needs of more clients without your direct supervision or monitoring, you have achieved sustained growth. You have ironed out all the kinks in your

product or service and are able to deliver it consistently with customer satisfaction. Isaac did that, and, at that point, he began to diversify.

### **Level 3—Diversified Stocks**

The third layer of Isaac's progress was that he diversified his stocks. The scripture says he had flocks, herds, and many servants. It is interesting to note that the scripture makes no mention of any cattle or flocks that he owned at the start. We are only told that he sowed agricultural plants in the land, his seed began to grow; he began to prosper and ultimately became very prosperous. This implies that if he did not start with diversified stocks, he must have started using the return from his success in plants to expand his enterprise by purchasing cattle, buying herds, and hiring more people.

Once you sustain the growth of your initial success, you are ready to advance to the next level and further entrench your prosperity by diversifying. You can do this by adding new products or services that you can perfect and attain customer satisfaction with, or you can start a new business perhaps in a different field that has a need you can fill and master.

Isaac was wise not to make his initial plant agriculture the sole basis of his prosperity. If you are successful in only one area, and you keep all of your money in that layer without adding more layers and diversifying, when the enemy kicks at your foundation you are in trouble. Isaac exhibited good judgment and foresight; he diversified by acquiring other assets, creating multiple streams of prosperity, and giving his enemies a much harder time to try to defeat him. This was the key turning point from fruitfulness to the multiplication process; Isaac added layer upon layer to his fruit by sowing a new seed at each turn of his success.

### **Level 4—Accumulated Assets**

Isaac rounded out his financial acumen by gaining control of large resources in a diversified portfolio. He had accumulated assets, growing beyond the position of a small operator who could easily be frustrated or defeated by his enemies. His resources were so formidable that he could stand against political and state instigated persecutions from the Philistines.

The king, his generals, and the whole nation fought Isaac's investments and businesses at every turn. They tried and tried but simply could not stop him.

When they targeted his plants for destruction and seized his wells, growth in

cattle and flock offset Isaac's plant losses; when they targeted his cattle, profits from his plants wiped out the losses in cattle. In the end, rather than going after Isaac, the Philistines signed a memorandum of understanding with him for peaceful coexistence because they realized they could not stop him. They could not defeat him because he had built layer upon layer of wealth, power, and influence.

The lesson we can take from this is that if the Philistines in your life—the government, enemies and competition, natural disaster, a declining economy, etc.—can stop your business, it means your position is weak because your layers are not deep. Learn from Isaac to build strong layers, so that even if your adversaries come to attack you, they cannot uproot and destroy you. Isaac was protected by his layers. He could not be stopped because he understood that after fruitfulness, he had to multiply. He multiplied his stocks, his wealth, his labor force, and his influence. Recall from the plywood illustration that as you pile up layers on top of each other, what you started with assumes new dimensions. Your fruits begin to show height, depth, breadth, and weight. Dynamics such as these are not easy to defeat.

### **One Caution**

At the end of the scripture detailing Isaac's multiplication, it cautions us to one thing: the envy of others. As with most things, there are pros and cons. Multiplying your fruitfulness is no exception because as your prosperity multiplies, you will attract your share of envious people in equal measure. This detail helps us to be prepared, and to avoid being caught off-guard when it happens. You will likely find that as you prosper—financially, spiritually; in your family or in your business—the people who begin to show up at your doorstep will not all be well-wishers. In fact, you will probably hear more words of envy than of congratulations from the people around you. This is merely man's lower nature at work, and it can destroy or distract you if you are not careful.

### **What Does A Multiplied Fruit Look Like?**

A general observation I have made about examples of multiplication is that it usually happens faster than fruitfulness. Usually it takes a longer time for something to be produced, to start, than it does for that thing to be multiplied. It may take years to get a project or a product off the ground, but within a short period once that thing is produced, it begins to quickly assume dimensions quite different from the original. It takes on a new look as people study it, copy it,

modify it, and improve it. In the end, the original product looks very different than the multiplied versions of it.

Take airplanes for example. Travelling by air has become a normal part of many of our lives, but did you know that for two thousand years, man dreamed of developing a machine that could fly before that dream became an actual reality? Dozens of people made various attempts to design and build a flying instrument, including Leonardo Davinci, who drew one such plan in the 15th Century. Many dreamed, but none was successful until 1903 when the Wright brothers built the first motorized plane. After all the anticipation, their plane flew for eighty-nine seconds and came down. That was a huge feat!

Then, after two thousand years of failed attempts, a mere fourteen years after the first successful flight, airplanes were being used in an assortment of ways. At the peak of the First World War, aircrafts became a tool of warfare, making long journeys, and now incorporating a new dimension—dropping bombs and shooting artillery. By 1919, the first transatlantic flight was made, setting the stage for a revolution in aircraft engineering and inter- continental travel. Isn't it mind-boggling that for two thousand years flying was only a dream, but within a very short period of time when the first plane was produced in 1903, leaps and bounds expanded its usage from experimentation and wonder, to combat, to the transport of people and cargo, culminating in a reality where air travel has become a vibrant and standard industry?

It takes a long time to bring something into being but once it is birthed, people will imitate, change and steal the idea. If wise measures are not taken, the one who produced the original idea will miss the benefits of its multiplication. Starters don't usually become the controllers of industries they've begun because those who come after did not have to labor to create the fruit; they spend their energies laboring to multiply it. The originators are often exhausted of innovation after a long time of working to bring something into being, and as a result they are often left with only the fruit, as others sow and reap the multiplication.

That is not where God wants us to be. He does not want us to just be fruitful where we are living only on our fruit; hand to mouth, or paycheck to paycheck. Many of us are operating only at the fruit level, but never enjoy the blessing of multiplication, because others come in and reap the multiplication. The Wright Brothers are a good example. Though they are the originators of the first successful aircraft, they have no ownership in the flight industry. Others are benefitting more from what they labored for. You must be careful that others do

not eat what you have labored for.

Normally when things are multiplied, it is knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that multiply them. A multiplied product has certain qualities, so in the next chapter we will take a closer look at the anatomy of a multiplied fruit.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE ANATOMY OF A MULTIPLIED FRUIT

As a new idea or product multiplies, people bring new knowledge, wisdom and understanding to bear on it, and as they modify the original idea, it begins to assume the following attributes:

- Complexity
- Simplicity
- Availability
- Affordability

### Complexity

When a product reaches the multiplication stage, it becomes more complex than the initial prototype and is able to do more. The story of the modern telephone is a case in point. It has been an extraordinary journey from the days of the telegram to the modern smart phone. It is an understatement to say that the first telephones were quite tedious to use. You had to wind them up before you could place a simple call. The transmission was slow, and the process was very long. Then came the Rotary phone that required poking your finger in a hole and arching it in a sequence of semi-circles around the dial. After that arrived the Pulse phone, with numbers that you punched to ring someone near another phone.

Each one of these added a new complexity to the telephone experience, but then there was a quantum leap. Enter the mobile phone, which revolutionized our way of staying in touch with our network of friends, family and business acquaintances. I am sure many of us remember what the early cell phones looked like. I had one that looked like a chop box. It was huge, yet all it could do was make a call. Within twenty years of those first cellphones, now there's almost nothing you cannot do with one, and to illustrate this, they've renamed a whole subset of cell phones smart phones. You can now use mobile phones to text, listen to radio and music, take and send pictures and video, play games, browse

the internet, make video conference calls and access dozens of other features and applications. In multiplying, the cell phone has become so sophisticated and so complex in comparison to its simple and clumsy beginnings. It is now able to do more, way more. This is what God means when He says don't leave ideas at the fruit stage; you have to multiply them and add complexity to them.

### **Simplicity**

It is ironic but complexity often brings forth simplicity. As something becomes more complex in its application, it also becomes simpler to use. Using the example of the cell phone, it happens that what once seemed complicated because of its newness, is now easily utilized by little children, the elderly and the uneducated. Market women use cell phones to make calls, to send texts, and even to send and receive money. There was a time years ago when market women did not know how to send a simple telegram. Now look at the options one single device has opened to them. So in complexity lies simplicity.

### **Availability**

A multiplied product does not only become complex and simple as it grows, it also becomes more readily available. It becomes easy to obtain. Again, there was a time when cell phones were used by Fortune 100 CEOs, doctors, lawyers, living in big commercial cities. As a result of increased knowledge, a product, which was once only available to an exclusive few, has now become a common tool for people in the remotest corners of the world. Part of its multiplication is in becoming more available.

### **Affordability**

The availability of a product is useless if it is not affordable. So as a product multiplies and becomes more complex, simplified, and more available, it becomes cheaper. We can explain this through simple economies of scale. The more you multiply something, the cheaper it becomes. Think of simple home economics to understand why. When you buy rice in small quantities at a retail shop, you will pay more for it than if you bought the rice in larger quantities at wholesale prices. If all you want is one cup of rice, you will pay more per grain than if you bought one ton of rice. When you are making a product on a large scale, you can purchase its components at a lower cost than if you were making only a few. When your cost of production is lower, you can afford to sell the final product at a reduced price and make your product affordable to a greater potential consumer base. This is the kind of product you need to replenish the earth with. You cannot replenish the earth with a product that is unavailable,

unaffordable, and does very little. You need to have a multiplied product to replenish the earth, just as the cell phone has.

## **The Building Process (How Things Get Built)**

In Proverbs 24:3-4, the Bible states:

*<sup>3</sup> Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; <sup>4</sup> By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*

This scripture has three important levels. It states first that *through wisdom a house is built*. The word that is translated as “wisdom” in the Bible, means “technical skill,” or “technical knowledge” in the original Hebrew version. We know from architecture that to build a skyscraper first requires **technical knowledge**.

Secondly, it says, “*by understanding it is established.*” In Hebrew, the word “understanding” means “the ability to do or to discern the right things.” Establishment does not necessarily require technical skill, it requires a **capacity to discern right**; it requires logic. That means although technical skill can get you started, you require discernment to establish what you have built.

I can relate to that as a pastor because starting our church didn't need any administrative or management skill. All that I needed to start this church was a calling from God, an anointing, prayer, Bible study, and the ability to preach. Those are my technical skills. With them, I started the church; I preached, I prayed, and people gathered. As more people gathered, it began to require more than just technical skill; it was beginning to require discernment to do the right things. Management skills, human relation skills, and a number of other unexpected skills became more important and more essential as the church grew.

Sometimes I look at the kinds of jobs I do and ask what pastoral work has to do with all these things. We must have an accounts office; I have to make financial statements. As the head of the church, I have to respond to all kinds of things, which require that I have counseling skills, management skills, even building skills, and familiarity with sound technology. I've become like a sound engineer. It wasn't part of my calling as a pastor, but by virtue of the fact that I have brought something to life, it requires that I develop another level of wisdom, understanding, and discernment beyond just ministering in order to establish what I have started. That is why a lot of people are able to start but are not able to establish because although they have technical knowledge and skill,

they do not have discernment.

The third aspect of this passage says *by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches*. The Bible uses the word “knowledge” but when I checked the origin of that word knowledge, I was very amazed. That is why it is always good to study the Bible in the original languages. Sometimes the words are clearly rendered when translated to English, but other times the original meaning gets completely lost. The original word for knowledge meant **morality and integrity**. So, with technical skill, you can start to build something; with discernment you can establish it; but for the abundance to come and fill your rooms with riches, you must have integrity and morality.

Let's say, you start a carpentry business. A carpenter has technical skill, he has a hammer, saw, plane, nails and knocks things together and puts a signboard up: “Anointed Hands Carpentry Workshop” and people come and say, “we want this.” He knocks things up and he constructs it for them. He is very fruitful and he has built something. But then, he now has to keep invoices; he has to learn how to balance things. When he employs one or two apprentices, he has to learn to pay them, file their income taxes, and pay into their social security and all of that. That is a different level of knowledge which will further establish his business, but that doesn't mean he will prosper.

Then people will give you a job and will expect you to deliver at a particular time. If you tell them it will be ready on Monday at one thirty in the afternoon, and they come to find you are not there, you begin to jeopardize your business. You may have built, and you may have established, but the knowledge that brings you the wealth is morality and integrity. If you don't keep your word, the business will begin to collapse. When this happens, you may want to blame it on the devil, but the devil has nothing to do with it. God says through skill you will build, with discernment you will establish, and with integrity you will fill the house with all precious and pleasant things. If you miss that level of knowledge—moral knowledge—although you have given birth to something that works for you, somebody else who has the integrity will jump on your fruitfulness and become greater than you. Anytime you start an idea, remember you may have brought it up, but you may never eat the fruit. When the Bible talks about multiplying, it is not just increasing your product, but also building the character—integrity, morality and management skills—that is required, so that the fruit you have multiplied will benefit you, and you can continue prospering until you have conquered the world with your fruit.

## **How Products Conquer The World**

I am sure many of us are familiar with the modern computer. It fascinates many of us, and whether at home or at our workplace, it makes life much easier as it facilitates and simplifies our various tasks. I recall the very first computer we bought for the church office. It was an IBM and it had about 256 MB of memory. Back then, there was nothing like Windows; everything was in Dot matrix. You had to memorize various commands to use it, and those of us who could not memorize them, could not use it very effectively.

Dot matrix was the state of the computer until Bill Gates opened a new window with his Microsoft Windows system. This breakthrough simplified the usage of computers for good. Within a very short time after the introduction of Windows, we moved from 286 to 386 to 486 and then we started using Pentium. Now it is difficult to keep track of where we are. Hard drive memory has risen from being measured in megabytes to gigabytes to terabytes. Only the imagination can foresee where we will be in the next ten years.

Did you know that the amount of power in your cell phone is now greater than the power of the world's biggest computer fifty years ago? As a matter of fact, NASA, which sent the first man to space, said the technology involved in the making of a cell phone today is more advanced than the technology that took man to the moon in 1969. The technology that you use to text your husband what time to be home for dinner, and to vote for the contestant you want to win on a popular reality TV show, is much more sophisticated than what transported man to the moon. It has taken us only about forty or so years, and look at how much the knowledge has grown.

When a new product is launched, it becomes fruitful but through knowledge, it is multiplied. It grows, increases, and becomes complex. As it gets more sophisticated, it becomes simple to use, and more available. Once this happens, and it becomes affordable to a wider consumer base, then it is poised to conquer the world.

Let me end with some notes of wisdom. Ideas are private; products are public. When God gives you an idea, and you share or implement that idea, it becomes public property. That is why it is important to take ownership of your ideas by patenting and copyrighting them. When you give birth to an idea, it is your responsibility to name it and own it. Patent your ideas; copyright your ideas because if you don't, somebody else will eat the fruit of your labor. If you don't multiply your fruits, remember somebody else will. God said to man, if you are going to have dominion, if you are going to take charge of your life, be fruitful but don't only be fruitful, multiply.

Give depth, give character, give sustenance, increase the availability, the affordability of what you have done, and if you multiply and add more layers, you will become like Isaac. People may not like you, but they cannot stop you. That is what we must all aim at; if I am building a church, I have to build a church that is unstoppable because it has depth and layers. Look at ICGC; we started a church, then a university, and primary schools. We do community services, and a number of things to benefit our community, so if any enemy tries to attack us, the people in the community will stand behind us and say, "These are the people who give us water. Don't touch them." We also give scholarships, so if in 20 years' time, the people we gave scholarships to are in high places, we will have deepened our roots. You must build layer upon layer, entrenching yourself so that he who wants to push you under has to be formidable, otherwise they will hit you and you will not fall, because like Isaac, your roots are very deep. May God help you, not only to be fruitful but also to multiply the fruit of your labor, so that you can go on to replenish the earth.

## Declare the Word

Use the following scriptures in order to Declare the Word over your fruit, so that you may multiply it and obey God's second mandate.

**Genesis 26: 12-14** —Pray the anointing of Isaac over your life; ask God to multiply your seed one hundred fold this year; pray that you will prosper and continue prospering until you become very prosperous with your fruit. Pray that your success is followed by sustained growth, diversified stock and accumulated assets. Ask God to protect you from those who envy you, as He protected Isaac from the Philistines.

**Proverbs 24: 3-4** —Ask God for wisdom, understanding and knowledge so that all your rooms will be filled with precious and pleasant riches.

**Genesis 1: 26-28** —Again, thank God for giving you purpose and for blessing your efforts. Thank Him for making you in His likeness and giving you the power of multiplication.

# **Affirmation**

Make the following affirmation over your life:

I am fruitful and I will multiply because my God is the Great Multiplier and I am made in His Likeness.

I will have success and sustain my growth.

I will diversify my gifts and accumulate wealth through wisdom, understanding and knowledge, for it is written and it shall be so.

PART THREE

REPLENISH  
THE EARTH

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# REPLENISH THE EARTH

**A**s we examine the third command in God's dominion mandate to man, we have to look to both the original and new King James Versions of the Bible in order to fully grasp our mission at this stage. Just as we utilized the Law of First Mention regarding the relationship between fruit and seed in chapter three, we will have to pause here and take our time to get the full intention of God's Word.

In the original King James Version of the Bible, the third command in Genesis 1: 28 says, *replenish the earth*. In the new King James Version it says, *fill the earth*. For our purposes, neither word on its own fully encapsulates the intention of God's third dominion command, as there are times when replenish is appropriate, and other times when fill is more precise. For our general understanding, I will say that understanding both terms will give us the broadest comprehension of our mission at this stage to help us know which one to apply in our particular set of circumstances. Therefore, let us examine what each word means and how it applies to our purpose.

### **What Does It Mean To Fill?** <sup>19</sup>

To fill means two things:

**1. To occupy available space.** We are to fill empty spaces and uncharted territory. As we fill the earth, we must blaze new trails and carve new paths. The space we fill may either be an empty space or a previously occupied space.

**2. To overwhelm with your presence.** Your presence being felt in a place is important. This relates to the presence of your idea, product or service. To occupy a place you must have a stronger presence than that which currently exists in that place.

So when God says, “be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,” He means to say, let your presence not just be confined to a localized area, but spread it into new territory. Let your presence be felt beyond your immediate geographical location or sphere of influence.

## **What Does It Mean To Replenish ? <sup>20</sup>**

As a matter of pure aesthetics, I like the word 'replenish' better than 'fill' because 'replenish' sounds more exotic. After all, we fill things all the time. At the same time, replenish is slightly misleading in certain contexts, as it does not render the full meaning of the original Hebrew text. Literally, re-plenish means you have to 'plenish' again. 'Plenish' means fill; 're' means again. So, it gives the sense that the earth was once filled, then emptied, and now needs to be filled again. Had God uttered this command after the flood, then replenish would be fitting as an absolute. But since He gave the command before the flood, 'fill' would have been more appropriate for that era. For our purposes, we will bear this in mind and say that replenish means the following:

**To refill.** When God commands us to replenish the earth it is possible that somebody else may already have occupied the space we are supposed to fill. There may be people who have taken an early lead ahead of us and the space we need to occupy may already have people operating in it. In empty spaces we must be pioneers. However, when we re-fill a space, we enter as a competitor to what is already there. The dynamics for occupying an empty space is quite different from that of competing to occupy an already functioning place.

**To restore.** In some cases, the places you are called to replenish may be filled with unproductive elements, practices or beliefs that do not serve God's purposes. In these cases, you will need to clear out those elements, and reestablish that space with beneficial and useful substance.

These collective definitions illustrate that at times replenish will be the fitting term for particular contexts, and at other times fill will be more appropriate, so from here on, we will use the words replenish and fill interchangeably, bearing in mind our understanding of the essential meaning of the command, which we will continue to uncover in this chapter.

In previous chapters, we introduced the analogy of a musician in order to bring home the point about his various stages towards executing this mandate. We likened being fruitful to the arduous task of recording the music and generating a master CD. Multiplying in the musician's business was about duplicating the music on several CDs in order to make them widely available to as many people as would buy them. We established that without multiplying, all the effort that goes into being fruitful would have been useless.

Imagine what would happen if the musician went through the trouble of

recording the music, mastering and duplicating the original, but didn't bother to distribute the copies afterwards. His music could be a potential chart-topper lying dormant in a warehouse. The third mandate to fill the earth refers to the process of distributing your work to ensure that it is available in all places where it is needed. God demands that human beings become fruitful with their 'seed talents.' He also demands that we multiply in fruitfulness. Then, He demands that after we have multiplied our fruit, we must touch lives and the world with what we have produced.

This does not only apply to the initial phase of distribution. Let's say the musician has dominated his local environment with his music. Everywhere he goes in his town or city, people are listening to his latest song. This is the beginning of filling the earth. To complete the task, he must cross over beyond his immediate environs. His next level would then be to take his music beyond his familiar zone. That effort will require several changes in the way he operates or packages what he has produced. That is the instruction God gave to Adam. He told him to start by producing something, multiply it, and then distribute it all over the world.

### **What Are We To Fill Or Replenish?**

The third command has all the meanings we've discussed above, but we are not only told to fill; we are told what to fill. The Bible says explicitly that we should replenish the earth. It is not enough to only replenish your local community or even your nation. It is not even enough to replenish the continent on which you live. There is a larger arena you must strive for so that you can fill the ultimate capacity available to you. The entire earth is our agenda. Yes, the whole of the earth is our scope.

In chapter three, we introduced the Law of First Mention to help us understand God's system of logic as it related to the relationship between fruit and seeds. We did that because it was a case where, if we did not take special notice to God's deliberate use of words and their sequence, we could have missed an essential part of understanding His Word. As we continue to explore God's command to fill or replenish the earth, we come to another instance where we must read the Word with discernment and insight. If we examine the phraseology of the four dominion mandates, we notice that the first two commands are very succinct. God simply says, "be fruitful and multiply." However, the final two commands are not worded in a similarly succinct way. God does not simply say, "replenish and subdue," He deliberately says, "replenish the earth and subdue it." The fact that God specifies the earth and

then re-emphasizes it, indicates a level of importance, which He says twice so that we do not miss it. The fact that “the earth” is referenced in two different ways also indicates that it has two specific, yet different applications. Our understanding of these applications will be critical to our ability to carry out the command, yet a surface reading would only highlight half of what is being said.

When the Bible talks about earth, it means:

- the geographical space of the earth
- the cultures of the earth
- the people on the earth

So, to fill the earth we have to deal with the elements and inhabitants of the earth. We have to move what we have produced from place to place. We have to deal with different cultures and how their senses of value and appreciation differ from our own. We have to deal with different kinds of people and their tastes.

The first two parameters—geography and cultures—entail the surface reading of what it means to fill the earth. It includes, in the first sense, land, sea, air and wilderness. When God spoke to Adam, the earth was an unoccupied wild place. Although there is much less wilderness now than there was at that time, we still have to deal with the elements of nature in order to fill the earth. We have been given dominion over the earth, and to execute that dominion responsibly, we must be good custodians of our natural habitat.

We cannot take our planet's habitability for granted. When our climate is warming at an alarming rate, rain forests are disappearing, and plants and animals are becoming extinct, it is an indication that we are currently failing in our task.

In the second sense, the earth in this context refers to cultures, industries, institutions and ideologies that define the function of the world. Much of the earth in this regard is currently filled with practices and beliefs that are not in line with God's purposes. In a sense, parts of the earth have become overgrown; societies have become overgrown with violence, injustice, immorality, corruption, and other things that we must correct. Obeying the command to replenish the earth in this sense means that we must enter the institutions and industries that fuel these elements and restore their functioning to reflect God's glory. These are the most apparent readings of the meaning of filling the earth, and we will return to the third aspect later in this chapter.

## **Filling The Earth Is A Battle**

Many businesses have gone through the crucial stages of bearing fruit and even multiplying their fruit without executing the third aspect of filling the earth. Distributing your fruit or filling the earth can be difficult because it is an uphill battle. As we endeavor to take our work beyond our geographical location, we will encounter totally different environments and circumstances that sometimes seem to contradict what we are doing, conspire against us, and stall our progress. Factors such as the climate, people, language, cultural differences and even government policies or regulations can become obstacles.

A musician who seeks to take his music beyond his local environment will find himself contending with formidable challenges like the language and culture of people in different countries. If his music was localized, with no appeal to an international audience, his efforts at expanding beyond his borders will predominantly appeal to nationals of his country who reside abroad. He will, therefore, not be able to really fill the earth as required by the divine mandate.

I can almost imagine Adam and his wife beginning their lives in the Garden of Eden. They work hard, become productive, have many children, and develop new tools and new inventions. Because of their fruitfulness, they have a chair, a table, and tools for their farms. These are all things they didn't have before, but now they can look around with pride and see things that were not created by God, but by themselves. They see the fruit of the womb, the fruit of their minds, and the fruit of their hands. At this time, they are living comfortably in the Garden. Then God says, "Fill the earth." That means whatever Adam and Eve have created in the Garden, they must take to other places as well.

For illustration, let's imagine that the Garden of Eden is located in Accra, Ghana, in West Africa. In obedience to the command to replenish the earth, Adam and Eve must move from Accra, which is close to the equator and on the Greenwich Meridian, where the climate is tropical and humid. They begin travelling north as they set out on their journey to replenish the earth. When they get to the northern part of Ghana, they realize that things are not the same in the north as they are in the south. The south is tropical and humid and the north is dry grassland, and therefore some of the conditions that allowed them to be fruitful in the south are not existent in their new location. Furthermore, some of the solutions they developed in the south simply cannot solve the problems of the north.

As Adam and Eve go a bit further north into the area of the Sahara, they meet

another environmental change. The new environment is harsh, hot desert. If, for example, they had developed a certain kind of shoe, which worked well in Accra, they may realize that in the desert those shoes burn under their feet. So, again, they have to find new ways of altering what they had created in order to suit the conditions of the desert.

Continuing on their mission to fill the earth, Adam and Eve venture further north attempting to enter southern Europe. But before they can, they will have to develop a way to cross a large body of water. Once they are fruitful with that task, they will be met with yet another climate reality – freezing cold weather, and they will realize again that the clothes they manufactured in Accra are significantly inadequate for the new terrain. The solutions that worked well somewhere else are no longer sufficient at all. This is part of the challenge of filling the earth.

Replenishing the earth can be very frustrating. Every effort you will make to fill the earth with what you have will be met with resistance. That is why a lot of talented and productive people sometimes hide their gifts in small places. That is why great ideas get shut out from the rest of the world. Replenishing the earth is frustrating. But it is doable. God has wired us with the capacity, and it is His expectation that we live up to our potential.

### **The Intimate Relationship Between Earth And Man**

We have defined the earth both as geography and as culture. One less obvious reading of the replenish command addresses filling or replenishing the composition of earth's people. In order to explain this third interpretation of what God means by the earth, we must revisit the important relationship between the earth and mankind.

We have established through the Law of First Mention that God's words are always a model for how we should live. Though He said fill the earth, this command also has application to ourselves. Remember our discussion of the dual composition of man in chapter one. We are both spiritual and earthly. To omit this point would result in having only a surface understanding of God's Word, and we would miss the more subtle but still substantial part of its meaning. Just as the notion that procreation fully achieves God's commands to be fruitful and multiply is incomplete, a similarly simplistic interpretation of the third and fourth commands will also cause us to fail in our mandate.

To explore this further, let's return to the two scriptures that discuss how we were made. In Genesis 1: 26-27, it simply says, “*God created man...*” It does not

tell us how we were made, only who created us. In chapter 2 verse 7, however, we are given a little window into what happened during the creation of man. It reads,

*<sup>7</sup> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

When you read that verse in English, the picture is not as clear as it is in the Hebrew version. In the original Hebrew text, there is a play on two words that helps us to understand the intimate relationship between man and the earth.

First, the translation of the word *man* in Hebrew is *adam*,<sup>21</sup> which is why the first man was called Adam. As a matter of fact, Eve was also called Adam, as the name is a species designation; it refers to mankind as a whole. The literal meaning of *adam* is in reference to the reddish-brown earth that man was created from. This builds further evidence of our close relationship with the earth, and it also gives us an indication of the skin pigmentation of the first man. He came out of reddish-brown earth.

The second word we should examine is ground. In Hebrew, the word ground is *adamah*.<sup>22</sup> God made *adam* from *adama*; man from the ground. The similarity indicates simply that the first man and his kind were earth people. We came from the earth. The *adam* came from the *adama*. God breathed into the *adam* the breath of life and transformed the *adama* into a living, dual-natured being.

This sheds a new light on God's command to replenish the earth, and what it persuasively implies is that when God says "earth," He means the part of us that is of the earth—our flesh, our personalities, and our imperfections. Therefore, as we strive to fill the earth, we must not only do so in the literal sense of occupying and restoring the planet and society, we are also expected to fill and restore the earthly part of ourselves.

We cannot have dominion if our bodies are depleted, so we must replenish ourselves with proper nutrition and exercise and eliminate toxins such as drugs, alcohol, sleep deprivation, etc. Furthermore, we cannot have dominion if our minds are not well. Romans 12:2 states,

*<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The third dominion mandate suggests then that we must replenish our minds.

<sup>23</sup> We must eliminate thoughts and beliefs that are not beneficial, such as fears, negative attitudes, self-doubt, phobias, and all things that deplete our psyches. Finally, we cannot effectively pursue dominion if our spirits are not filled with the knowledge of God's glory. If we do not know the spiritual side of our composition, we cannot live up to our full potential, or fulfill God's purpose for our lives. Our natural self is simply not adequate on its own.

These definitions above are all essential parts of the earth we must fill. We will return again to this aspect of the earth when we discuss the fourth mandate, as it has carryover implications that we must look at closely. From all of this, we are being told that it is not enough to only replenish your local community or even your nation. It is not even enough to replenish the continent on which you live. There is a larger arena you must strive for so that you can fill the ultimate capacity available to you. The entire earth is our agenda. Yes, the whole of the earth is our scope. You have to literally conquer the earth. And in order to have the physical strength and God's supernatural power to help you, you must first be sure that your own being—the earth that is you—is appropriately filled and replenished.

Filling the earth is the biggest battle because no conquest comes easily. It is at the distribution stage that you meet the greatest obstacles, because at this level there will be people, institutions and forces that don't want to be filled or replenished. It is at this stage that familiar spirits of insecurity, doubt and fear will rise up in your mind and convince you that you cannot do what you are attempting. It is at this time that the voices of people who abused and belittled you in your childhood will become loud in your head.

Whether the obstacles you face are in the realm of the outer earth or within the realm of the earth that resides in you, they will do their best to prevent you from filling the earth, and the reason is simple. Fruitfulness and multiplication depend more on you than on others. You can be fruitful without coming into contact with other people. You can multiply with minimal interaction with other people. However, to replenish you have to deal with people, customs, lifestyles and places. When you are replenishing, that is when you are taking what you have to other places, potentially to spaces filled by other people, other institutions, or other norms.

People may not mind that you have been fruitful. That old spirit of negativity may not mind that you have multiplied your fruit to some degree. But they will

mind if you threaten their territory by trying to take your fruit and your God-filled presence beyond where you are to where they are. There, you are going to fight forces. The command to fill the earth is wrapped in warfare of many different sorts that are both earthly and spiritual.

## **What God Wants Us To Fill The Earth With**

Have you ever asked yourself what God's greatest desire is? What does God desire most from us? What are we supposed to fill the earth with? Many times in the Bible, the concept of filling something is used in relation to the glory of God. Right from the beginning of the Bible, we see the presence of God filling the earth He created. Genesis 1:2 states,

*<sup>2</sup> The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

At creation, the Spirit of God overwhelmed the earth with His presence as He moved over the surface of the waters. Numbers 14:20-21 says,

*<sup>20</sup> Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word;  
<sup>21</sup> but truly, as I live, the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."*

Then Habakkuk 2:14 says,

*<sup>14</sup> For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."*

In the Old Testament, we come across other phrases indicating that the glory of God also filled a place, a tabernacle, or a person's life. From these passages, we learn that God desires that we fill the earth with two things:

- **His glory, and**
- **The knowledge of His glory**

He expects that we fill the earth with His glory, that we touch the earth with His glory. What does His glory entail? It includes His power, His mercy, His grace, His abundance, His love, His forgiveness. God's glory is goodness and kindness. It is so many things. There are people filling the earth with alcohol, pornography, drugs and all kinds of dangers. <sup>24</sup> We, the children of God, must counteract those things and fill the earth with fruit that honors God, that honors family, that builds human life and encourages people, and that makes the world a

better place. Let's fill this earth with the knowledge of the glory of God. Let our lives be a reflection of Him, so that when we come in contact with people who do not know Him, they will begin to seek Him because of our example. God wants us to walk and work with Him, and touch our world and touch our generations with so much of His glory and power that the world will know that you came and you lived, you made a difference, and it is because God lived in you.

## CHAPTER NINE

# EVERYONE CAN FILL THE EARTH

**R**eplenishing the earth is not necessarily about becoming famous or world-renowned. For some people it will be; fame will be part of their purpose. But for most of us, it is about having a standard of excellence in what we do, and being morally upright while we are doing it. It is about touching people, impacting the arenas of our influence, and allowing our lives to be a testament to God's glory. Because you never know who is watching, you may inspire someone and not even know it. If you are living according to the purpose that God planted in you, it is likely that you will inspire many others, even if only in small ways. If you live by excellence and righteousness, your impact on others will surely ripple to the corners of the earth.

So if you are not a musician or a businessperson, don't be discouraged or dismayed. The dominion mandate applies to whatever it is that you do. For example, if you have discovered you have a passion for teaching and you live in a very small, remote community, you can also replenish the earth with your seed. It starts first, of course, by discovering your seed. Then you begin teaching. You can multiply your talent by improving your skill. Maybe you will go to a conference to learn new techniques or become a specialist in teaching your subject area to students with learning challenges—like how to help students overcome dyslexia or how to foster confidence in students who are insecure with their abilities. With each year that you teach, you can make an impact on the world, because some of those students will relocate to near and distant places. They will take with them the knowledge, the confidence, or the imagination they developed as your student. Perhaps because of your encouragement or because you gave them a solid foundation in math, they might become someone who distributes their seed on a global level. If you teach English, they may become best-selling authors. If you teach Chemistry, they may become the scientists who cure AIDS or cancer.

The students you touch may later find themselves in parts of the world with very different standards, codes and values. If they have picked up an aspect of

your character that glorifies God, and exhibit it in their own lives, they may introduce it to others through their realm of influence. By sending out generations of students, strong in your academic subject, confident in their knowledge and ability, and inspired by your role modeling, you will be contributing to the goodness of humanity. The more young people there are who enter adulthood as nurtured, confident and skilled individuals, the better the world will be. So in your vocation as a teacher, you have the power and influence to be able to impact the world in this way. Let's turn now to another example of one person who was not famous, yet she filled the earth with her seed.

### **How One Mother's Dream Filled the Earth**

I have said several times before that people often get stuck at the earlier stages of their dominion mandate. Some never master the task of being fruitful; others plateau at the multiplication stage, and therefore many people never reach the stage of replenishing or subduing. They never achieve the dominion God intended. I have contemplated the reason for this, trying to identify how I can help people climb out of that rut. The explanation that comes to me is two-fold: either people get ensnared in the misinterpretation of replenishing-as-childbearing, or they are intimidated by the scope of the command to fill such a wide space as the earth. We have dealt conclusively with the first issue, so let us now take time to address the second.

Doing anything that includes the entire earth is quite a daunting undertaking, I will admit. It's understandable why the second half of our dominion mandate feels overwhelming to us. But it shouldn't because if at all times, you keep your focus on the seed and you keep turning it and nurturing it, developing it and multiplying it, before you know it, you will have achieved something grand. Let's look at an example I often reference to illustrate this point.

Dr. Ben Carson<sup>25</sup> has a remarkable story. He was a young African American boy raised in poverty by a single-mother who had dropped out of primary school. Early on, he was a difficult child, prone to rage and was a very poor student. However, this same person ultimately graduated high school, continued his education at Yale University and entered medical school at the University of Michigan. He continued to excel as he went on to become the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Most notable of all, in 1987 Dr. Carson became the first person to successfully separate Siamese twins joined at the head.

Now you might be saying, *but he's a famous person, at least, in the field of medicine. How does his story relate to me?* Fair enough, he is well known, but his story still illustrates how you can impact the world without being famous, and without initially targeting the earth as your goal. If we take a slightly different perspective on Dr. Carson, we can argue that his mother, Sonya Carson,<sup>26</sup> is the true agent of change. So let us take a look at her story.

Mrs. Carson was a poorly educated woman, who raised her children in very difficult social and economic circumstances. Rather than using their situation as an excuse to justify her children's poor school performance and behavior, she was deeply disturbed when she saw her two sons begin to go down a wayward path. Seeing her sons' delinquency sparked a conviction and a determination in her heart to ensure that her boys would be more than their behavior and school performance suggested. She was determined that they would achieve more than she had. It was a passion and a purpose rooted deep within her. It was a seed.

In order to nurture the potential, she knew resided within her children, Mrs. Carson took bold steps to correct their course. For one, she strictly limited their leisure and playtime, allowing them to play only after they had completed their homework each day. On top of that, she demanded that they read two books each week from the local library, and though she could not read them herself, they were required to write reports on each, which she would pretend to scrutinize and correct. They had a healthy fear of her disapproval, so they always put their best effort into their book reports. Her sons were much older when they discovered their mother could not read their work all along, but by that time, the change in them had already been made.

Through acting on her conviction and faith in the seed-idea that her sons should be more, Mrs. Carson transformed her sons from poor students to focused, disciplined pupils who had a hunger for knowledge and a joy for reading. She turned her angry and misbehaving boys into respectful, composed young men. Just stop for a moment to consider it; who would Dr. Carson have become without the determination of his mother? Had she not taken the measures she did, going so far as to hide her illiteracy from him, would he have developed the level of discipline it takes to complete medical school and become a brain surgeon? Had he not been afraid of her disapproval and scrutiny of his reports, would he have developed the habit of excellence required to be the first person to successfully detach two people joined at the head?

Remember, it was not Mrs. Carson who became famous, but nonetheless, the

world was improved because of her contribution. Remember, her seed was a notion, an idea. It was the notion that her children would surpass her limitations. That was her goal. It was an idea, and eventually that idea became real even beyond her expectations. Because of that seed-idea, one of her sons went on to improve the lives of Siamese twins all over the world. In this way, we can argue that Mrs. Carson replenished the earth, even as humble and insignificant as her individual story may appear to be. Let's take a step-by-step look at how she did it, and subsequently, how you can too.

### **How She Became Fruitful**

First, Mrs. Carson identified her seed, and had faith in it. This was an easy process for her because it was right in front of her eyes. Her seed was both literally her children, and it was also a notion about their potential. Her seed-idea, to mold them into becoming greater than she, was both intuitive and instinctive. As a mother, she felt it was part of her purpose in life. Her method of turning that seed was also inventive. She started by re-planting it in fertile ground when she took the bold steps to redefine her sons' regiment and routines. As a result of her nurturing, her seeds became good, fruitful students and obedient, respectful children.

### **How Her Seed Multiplied**

Once she achieved the hard part of being fruitful, her seed easily multiplied. Her son Ben decided to become a physician, then a neurosurgeon. In this way, her fruit began to produce its own fruit, containing new seeds. One of the seeds Dr. Carson nurtured and became fruitful with was the idea to surgically separate Siamese twins who were joined at the head. In time, that seed developed and sprouted fruit of its own as doctors around the globe duplicated it. All of this, because of one woman's faith in a seed-idea.

### **How She Filled The Earth With Her Seed**

Separating Siamese twins was unimaginable to most people at that time, and for the twins who were separated from each other, it was nothing short of a miracle, improving the quality of their lives in immeasurable ways. This is how Mrs. Carson's seed filled the earth with the glory of God. To this day, the technique that was developed by a young boy groomed by his illiterate mother is still being practiced all over the globe.

If people like the Carsons, with the odds stacked against them, can fulfill God's command to touch the world, so can you. How do you do it? You start

from the beginning.

### **Start From The Beginning**

Let's say, for example, you set a financial goal for yourself or for your business to make one million dollars; where would you begin? Do you set out to close a one-million-dollar deal from the start? No, you start small, focusing on developing a product or offering a service that you know will get steady patronage. You work that product or service, offering it to clients and improving upon it based on their feedback. You focus on the seed, not the fully-grown fruit tree. After some time of nurturing that seed—perfecting your product's functionality or your service's customer satisfaction—you will look at your accounting records, adding up all the small payments of fifty dollars here, and three hundred dollars there, to discover that the seed you planted and nurtured has brought in one million dollars in revenue.

That is what Mrs. Carson did. Her long-term goal was to turn her children's trajectory around. She saw that they were headed down the same path of poor education and limited opportunities that she had, but she wanted them to become more. On the day she decided this was her aim, she didn't expect change to occur overnight. Once she set the long-term goal, she stored it in faith, in the back of her mind. Then she put all of her focus and attention into the small steps it would take to achieve it. She focused on establishing new values and character traits in her children, by setting new routines and structures that would encourage them in the right ways.

In Ephesians 3:20-21, it says,

*<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

For many of us, this is how we will fulfill our dominion mandate. We may not go to the ends of the earth ourselves, but when we focus on our seed, and nurture it diligently, God will add His grace and power just as the Bible says—exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, and He will stretch our efforts to impact far more than what we had even hoped for. Don't feel paralyzed by the scope of the command to fill the earth; and don't preoccupy yourself with fame if it is not your destiny. You can still fill the earth with your ideas, with a notion, with a determination, and a faith in your seed.

Another aspect of that scripture in Ephesians I want to highlight is where it says that God will do above all we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. This goes back to the first chapter of this book, where we discussed the dual nature of mankind. In this scripture, we are reminded of three important things:

**1. Combine your natural abilities with your spiritual ones.** This is the only way to achieve dominion. A person can be fruitful and multiply with their natural abilities alone. However, to reach beyond that requires tapping into your supernatural capacities.

The discipline Mrs. Carson instilled in her son came from her natural ability to set boundaries and standards. Her natural self probably desired only that he completed high school and secured a good job. But additionally, Mrs. Carson employed her faith—her supernatural ability—to make manifest achievements in her son beyond her natural sight of possibility. The completion of his education fell inside the realm of what she could do; she could raise him and encourage him to achieve that much. But what he did beyond his education fell into the realm of what God can do. God planted the idea, opened the avenue and made it possible for Dr. Carson to do the impossible, and perform a miracle.

When you remember to utilize the divine part of your dual makeup, there is something else you must remember to do:

**2. Be open to avenues of replenishing the earth that you had not anticipated .** It was not Mrs. Carson's goal to raise a man who would perform medical miracles; her goal was probably not that specific. All she knew was that the seed God had given her was destined to be an improvement from her generation; that he would build upon the level she had reached in life, and go beyond it. With a focus on the small details, the small accomplishments and incremental measures of growth, I am sure that the end result of what her son Ben accomplished and who he ultimately became, even surpassed the goal she had envisioned in her mind. That is how our spiritual nature works. When we employ it, it stirs up the unseen, the unimaginable, and the impossible, and through the power that is in us, God gives us more than what we desire.

A final reminder that the Carson story prompts us to remember is that:

**3. You are wired to replenish the earth.** No matter what your seed is, or how small or simple it may appear to be, God has already pre-programmed it to replenish the earth. Put your faith in that truth and put your effort into nurturing

and multiplying your seed. If you do this diligently, you will invariably fulfill your life's mission.

The story of Dr. Ben Carson's mother vividly sums up the point of our earlier illustration about Adam expanding outside the Garden of Eden. In that illustration, I mentioned that in replenishing the earth, you—or by extension, those whom you influence—will come into contact with new realities that vary from the conditions you were in when you were creating your original fruit. I stated that in order to effectively replenish, there must be change, adjustment, and adaptation. In the next two chapters, we will examine this point in further detail by uncovering the five dimensions of filling the earth, through the case studies of two biblical examples to guide us.

## CHAPTER TEN

# 5 DIMENSIONS OF REPLENISHING THE EARTH

**W**hat do you need in order to replenish the earth? Let's say that God has given you something, you have a solution or an idea, and you have been fruitful. You have multiplied, and let's say you are working well within a particular space. When you want to go beyond where you are, what are the things you need?

There are five stages you must go through to successfully move from the stages of fruitfulness and multiplication to filling the earth. Each of them is important and you will therefore need to deal with them in succession so that you can optimize your results.

### **1. Extend**

Fundamentally, you have to extend. To extend means you must stretch your limits. It is critical that we have a sense of adventure and a hunger to see and do new things. We must test ourselves, and see how far we can go; explore new territories and go to places we are not familiar with. History has shown that if you are not willing to explore and discover new things, you might very well be “discovered” by a more ambitious explorer. Throughout history, we have seen the difference between those who were filling the earth and those who stayed in their Garden of Eden. Despite the perception that Eden was a paradise, the outcome for those who stayed was usually not good.

Take for example, the history of the Americas. According to the record of history, Christopher Columbus “discovered” the New World in 1492. That is the official record. However, the truth is that Columbus was actually lost, and he stumbled upon a foreign land. People were already occupying the land he stumbled upon, but history does not emphasize that point. The people who had been residing there when Columbus arrived are not credited as discoverers of America. Christopher Columbus is called the discoverer, but before he discovered the New World, people were already there. The problem is that the indigenous people of the New World were content where they were, not curious

or concerned about what existed beyond their borders, and in their contentment, someone came and discovered them.

The lesson that the discovery of America teaches us here is that if you stay where you are and make no movement to explore new grounds and stretch your reach, somebody from somewhere else will come and discover what is yours, taking credit for what you have built. If you go to all the islands in the area that Columbus stumbled upon, you will find that the official names of the islands are not the names that the indigenous people assigned. The names of those islands, recorded in maps and recognized by the rest of the world are the names that a foreigner gave them.

The Americas as a whole is named after the explorer Amerigo Vespucci. The original inhabitants of that land were Cherokees, Apaches, Mayan, and other ethnic groups. However, the name America does not come from any of their native languages. What this illustrates is that if you don't move, stretch, expand beyond your comfort zone, somebody will expand into your territory and impose his authority over your life. The parable of the talents, which we discussed in chapter 2, affirms this. The servant who did nothing with his one talent had it confiscated and given to the one who had the most talents. He did not explore or try to stretch it, so in the end it was given to the one who had more talent, more curiosity, and explored wider territory. God says, don't just produce in Eden, go out beyond Eden and replenish the earth. The problem is that Eden is sometimes so comfortable and familiar to us that we stay there and we don't want to go anywhere else, but we have to extend.

## **2. Contend**

In your quest to extend and expand, you will be met with opposition you will have to contend with. You will have to fight off opposition. Every exploration effort will bring you into contact with new challenges. If you read history and read who discovered the source of the great Zambezi, history books will tell you it was David Livingston, but there were people already living there. It shouldn't be a surprise that those people were not given the credit for what they had, because they never moved from where they were, nor did they contend for discovery credit and naming authority.

This is also what happened to Ghana. We were sitting around, speaking our nice Fante and our nice Ashanti or Ga in our nice country and fighting our little battles until Don Diego de Azambuja. Then everything changed. He opened the door that brought in European merchants who enslaved some, colonized some

and made us eventually to be citizens of a country we had never seen before. For us in Ghana, the colonizing nation was called Great Britain. Why could that happen? How could Europe, which is far smaller in size, colonize the two largest continents on the planet – Africa and Asia? At that point in history, Europeans were filling the earth. They took what they had to the rest of the world and their cultures and customs became a dominant influence on others. In a sense, they were fulfilling a creation mandate. You have to learn to contend. You have to fight because you are going to be faced with environmental hazards, cultural limitations, man-made obstacles, as well as natural problems.

This point is not limited to only past occurrences in World History. Right now there is someone who wants to start a youth ministry in a country where the secular lifestyle of sex, drugs and violence has become the norm. Young people are immersed in popular media, immorality, and are disconnected from God. Yet, you know you have been called to spark a revival amongst them. What will you do? You will have to contend with all the obstacles that will try to keep you from reaching them. You will have to contend with the attitudes their generation has developed against Christianity, and living righteously. You will have to contend with the stronghold of their leisure activities and pastimes that garner more of their attention than your message. You will have to contend with the internal barriers they have put up—emotional, intellectual and ideological roadblocks inhibiting you from reaching their souls.

Gone are the days of contending for conquest of land. The earth has already been filled in that manner. Now, you may have to contend with invisible terrain. You will have to contend with attitudes, ideas, and practices that serve as your biggest opponents.

### **3. Amend**

The next thing to consider is that you have to amend. You have to make changes; you have to modify your fruit to suit those who will eat it. Those of you who are into exports, you know that the way you package goods to be sold in Ghana is different from the way you package goods to be sold in other countries. Local Golden Tree Chocolate has a different mix and a different packaging from exported Golden Tree Chocolate. The local one is made for our local taste. But once you decide to go beyond where you are, you have to amend. You cannot take the solutions in Eden and try to implement them everywhere in the world because when you come into a new environment, where people have different tastes and preferences, you will not have the same success selling a product suited for someone else's tastes. In Ghana, we like moderate sweetness in things

so, for example, the sugar content in the local Golden Tree Chocolate is relatively low. If the same chocolate were exported to the U.S. without modification, it probably wouldn't sell very well, as the collective taste buds of U.S. consumers prefer sweeter things. Filling the earth will challenge the pre-programmed solutions you have developed. So there has to be change; you have to extend, you have to contend, and you have to amend.

#### **4. Transcend**

Next, you have to transcend. That means that you have to rise above the challenges that come before you. You have to surpass the existing systems that put obstacles in your path. Your aim is not to amend and then blend, but you must amend in order to transcend the circumstances that made those amendments necessary. If you expand into a territory with a polarized political or cultural climate, don't align yourself along political parties or ethnic groups. Appeal to both, but favor neither. If you have a technology-based business and you venture into an area where electricity is unreliable, amend your operations to utilize other forms of energy. Don't be deterred by obstacles, let them inspire you to innovate ways to be unaffected by them.

In Matthew 14, there is a very interesting story from verse 22 to verse 36; Jesus Christ says to his disciples, "Let's go to the other side." They were exploring, moving from where they were to another location. But between them and the other side, was a lake, which was almost as vast as the sea. As the disciples went, they faced opposition. The fierce winds were imposing an obstacle between where they started and where they were trying to go. Then they saw Jesus come to them. He had transcended the problem by walking over the water but they thought he was a ghost. Jesus came to them and said, "Fear not, it is I" and they amended; they changed their minds. But only Peter had the courage to ask Jesus, "Can I do what you are doing?" Jesus says, "You can, you can also walk on water" but only one of them decided to walk on water. The rest were content to have the security of the boat. Jesus did not want them to be comfortable in the boat, He wanted them to step out and experience power over the elements. But only one person was ready to do that.

In life most people like to stay in the boat. Only a few people want to walk on the water and transcend the opposition they face. And for those who stay in the boat, they never fill the earth. They can be fruitful, they can multiply, but nobody will ever hear of them in the world. My friends, we didn't come to the earth just to populate it, we came to make an impact. According to our foundational scripture—God's dominion mandate—every human being must leave an impact

that goes beyond just the space in which he lives. The world must hear of you, the world must know you came, you lived, and feel the impact when you are gone. It shouldn't be that you come to this world, you live, you die and nobody feels it. The world must know that somebody has left. That can only happen if you are fruitful, you multiply, and you transcend the forces that try to keep you from filling the earth with your presence and your impact.

That which God has given to you is not supposed to be imprisoned in your backyard. That little sewing business you have sewing “Kaba and Slit,”<sup>27</sup> or whatever style is in vogue at that time is not meant to remain on your mother's porch. Or that little ability you have to cook *yoo ke gari* in your backyard. That little poultry farm you have with only a few chickens you take care of. That little ability is not supposed to be confined to the small domain it starts in. Within your little ability, there is a world-class global impacting ability. If you keep it in the boat, it will stay in the boat. But if you are ready to step out and walk on water, that ability of yours will move from the boat and go to the other side of the world. May your presence fill the world, everywhere you go.

The Coca Cola Company is a good example. It is the most recognized name brand on earth. As a company, it has done well; it gives jobs to people; and it provides a beverage that many people enjoy. But in essence, Coca Cola is water, sugar, color and a secret ingredient nobody knows about. When we drink it, all we are drinking is water, sugar and a brownish color. It's simple. However, everywhere you go, Coca Cola's presence is felt. It has replenished the earth, and not only that, it has subdued it.

In the same class as Coca Cola, there is Nokia, Samsung, McDonald's and Toyota. The whole population of earth is pronouncing names that are foreign to most of our native tongues. Mitsubishi, Samsung, Nokia, what words are those?

Shouldn't somebody be pronouncing your language? For example, if you are Ghanaian, shouldn't the world know Acheampong or Togbe? Why isn't one of the world's most popular cars called Togbe? Or why isn't there a drink called Acheampong, which is recognized and consumed in every country on the globe? People must see that—wherever you are from—you also came and you didn't just stay in Eden, but you replenished the earth because God gave that command. He said don't just remain where you started. He built Eden for Adam and Eve, He planted the garden for them but He told them, “don't stay here. It is My garden, it is My place, and it is where I put you but don't die where you were born. Go out and fill the world, Adam. Eden is your home Eve, but Eden is not

your final destination. Replenish, fill the earth, touch the world”.

## 5. Defend

After you transcend, you have to protect your advantage. What God is saying is, when you expand into a territory, don't lose your footing in it. Defend your position. I like to use the British to illustrate this. England is a very small island. The British Isles<sup>28</sup> as a whole — England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland — covers an area of 229,848 km<sup>2</sup>. That's not very big. By comparison, Ghana<sup>29</sup> covers an area of 238,535 km<sup>2</sup>. A good number of the nations that were under the influence of the British Empire were several times bigger in size and far larger populations. That teaches a lesson that a larger size does not always determine a larger influence. But what I like about the British is that, the people on these small tiny islands, dreamed of global influence. As tiny as they were, they could imagine the whole world under their influence. Whatever made them think they could do so was a good thing, and prior to the Second World War they had extended their influence over a quarter of the world's population. They developed a sophisticated governance system comprising dominions, colonies, protectorates, mandates and territories. They had amassed so vast a reach that they used to say, “The sun never sets on the British empire.” At its peak it stretched from the east to the west; from Australia through to Hong Kong, right down to Pakistan, to India to many other countries in Asia and throughout Africa. Most of us were colonized by them, even way up to Canada. As part of the result of their expansion, I preach and write, not in my native Fante language, but in their language—the language of a small island.

Even the citizens of the United States of America speak the British language. The interesting thing is that wherever the English language goes, it gets amended. So we have Ghanaian English, Zimbabwean English, South African English, American English, Canadian English, and the British have the original. But in order to have that staying power, they had to defend their stake and protect the advances they made into new territory. They established various governance systems for both direct and indirect rule. They set up a civil service structure to manage the public services of their colonies and appointed governors to oversee the administrations.

Some people may have a hard time swallowing the model of British Imperialism as one to follow in their own lives. In the next chapter, we will look to an example that we will all agree is acceptable and just. Jesus Himself demonstrated for us exactly how we should replenish the earth.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# PROFILE OF JESUS' EXPANSION PROGRAM

**L**et me take you through the profile of Jesus' expansion program. In Acts 1:6-8, Jesus gave the blueprint for how replenishing should be done. It says:

*<sup>6</sup>Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup>And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The growth process of the early Christian Church was not left to chance; Jesus set out for His disciples the precise expansion stages for His church. It is a program that all of us can learn from, as He gave them four successive parameters they should

- Local
- National
- Regional
- Global

### **Jerusalem—Local Beginning**

In the scripture, Jesus told his disciples to start ministering in Jerusalem. He was very particular about where the church's mission should start. Jerusalem was a familiar place. The last weeks of Jesus' life had been spent in Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives, the upper room, Gethsemane, Calvary, Jerusalem are the places Jesus ended His ministry. It is where He died and resurrected, and Jerusalem is where the victory of the cross was dramatized before the disciples.

Certainly, Jerusalem would be fertile ground to begin because it was the

capital of the Jewish nation. It was the place of the great Temple. It was the center of worship for those who looked forward to God's redemption. The majority of the people there were Jews and spoke the same language as Jesus and His disciples. In Jerusalem, they could relate to both the language and culture of their listeners. The people in Jerusalem were familiar with the Old Testament prophecies relating to the Messiah and lived in expectation of the Messiah's arrival.

Since Christianity had a direct linkage to the prophecies of the Old Testament, it was relatively easier to relate its message to a Jewish audience.

In this example, Jesus teaches us to start local, in a place that is easy for us to tell our story. It is not wise to start a business and make it international right from the beginning. Starting local is an important first phase. Most often, your local environment will be the place where you are most accepted, and where you will have strength. Your immediate environment will probably provide lots of evidence to reinforce what you stand for, and where there is demand for what you are trying to offer. In Jerusalem, the people were already expecting a messiah, so the disciples would be able to start from that common ground and preach that Jesus was Him. This is the significance of starting local.

### **Judea—National Expansion**

Next, Jesus says that from Jerusalem the disciples should go to Judea. Judea is the second level, and it represents national coverage. Judea is national because Judea was the name that was used to refer to the state of Israel. Although the Jews were dispersed and under colonial rule by the Romans, Judea was generally the name used to describe the place where the Jews lived. So Jesus says, first go local and then go national. He knew that in Judea, there might have been people who did not know about Him. In those days, there was no TV, and there was no radio. Plus, Jesus was in His ministry, and had only been there for three and a half years. News did not travel as fast as it does now. Therefore, there would probably be people in Judea who had never heard about Jesus. So He told the disciples that once they had finished with Jerusalem, they should spread out in a larger radius, although still within the Jewish community. The idea here is to work with friendly allies; people beyond your immediate area, but who can still understand and relate to you.

### **Samaria—Regional Reach**

The third parameter Jesus instructed the disciples to minister to was Samaria.

Samaria was what we would today consider regional. It is like what ECOWAS<sup>30</sup> is to Ghana. If your local starting point is Accra, you then go on to the national level of the whole of Ghana, and then set your sights on the entire region of West Africa. At this stage, you will have difficult rivals.

In the days of the kings, Samaria was the capital of the northern divided state of Israel. The kingdom was torn in two and Samaria was the capital of the north. Eventually, after the exile and the return of the people, Samaria became populated with a mixed multitude of Jews and other people who had also resettled there. The people of Samaria were much like the Jews, but not exclusively Jewish. They had a Jewish foundation but they were also mixed with other cultures.

So Jesus essentially taught the disciples to work from strength to strength. He said, start in Jerusalem where I resurrected, and go to Judea where there will still be people familiar with me. People there may not have encountered me directly, but they know what I represent, and they speak your language, so you can communicate my message easily to them. Then he said to go to Samaria, where there are Jews who, though they are a little different and may not fully see eye-to-eye with you, are still people you can work with because you share a commonality that can bridge your differences. These are the terms that we also have to chart our expansion with.

### **The Ends Of The World—Global Impact**

Finally, Jesus instructs us to go to the ends of the world. If you follow the progression of the Church in the book of Acts, it started from Jerusalem, it spread to Judea, expanded further into Samaria and then it went to the unchartered territories, to other people who did not share Jewish values. They did not believe in the Jewish law—the Torah. They had no value for Abraham and did not expect much of the Jews because in those days the Jews were slaves. Nonetheless, they received the ministry of Christ Jesus.

As we go to the ends of the world, we will encounter resistance from people as well as foreign superpowers. Before going to meet those giants, it is important to conquer the smaller parameters so that we can build our strength. We should progress from local Jerusalem to national Judea, on to regional Samaria. In the process, we will have to broaden our approach and our appeal as we move away from the more familiar zones.

If you study the New Testament and discover the kinds of messages that were

preached in all of these places, you will discover that the message preached in Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost was very different from the message that Peter preached to Cornelius, or to the Samaritans. It was also different from the message that Paul preached to the Greeks and to the Romans. As a matter of fact, by the time Paul preached to the Romans in Acts 17, his message had changed dramatically. In Acts chapter 2, Peter appealed to those with a familiarity with the Old Testament. He spoke of Jesus of Nazareth, the man accredited by God in the Old Testament. When he spoke, he always referred to the prophets. Peter would quote the prophets because the people believed in them.

When he went to the Greeks, the Greeks did not believe in any Jewish prophets so quoting them was irrelevant to that audience. Paul, on the other hand, preached a classic, broader-based message about the Aropagus, and he referenced nature and local poetry. When he came to their city, he saw an inscription that said, “to an unknown God,” so he recognized that they were religious to some degree, and he used that as a point of reference and told them that the one they call unknown is the One he came to reveal to them. He started from their belief that God is big and is above all things, and then he went on to correct one of their false beliefs and explained that God does not live in the things that they had created, as the Greek poets had said. “In him we move and live and have our being.” Then he went on with the message, and ended up with Jesus Christ.

In his mind, he was strategizing an effective means of spanning their point of reference with a bridge that could deliver them to an acceptance of Christ. He created a common foundation between himself and them, showing that he understood them. After establishing that connection, he ended his message in Christ. In Jerusalem, they started with the prophets and ended with Christ. The same message ending in Christ but they engaged the initial conversation based on their respective audiences.

We have to utilize this method as we also replenish the earth because when you go outside of your Eden, you will meet people who do not believe in some of the things you believe in or understand. They will not necessarily share some of the practices and beliefs you might take for granted. Therefore, you have to adapt the way you initiate your relationship with them, but end with the same purpose everywhere.

That's the method Jesus laid out, and that is how the message spread throughout the globe. From Jerusalem to Judea; from Judea to Samaria; and

from Samaria to the ends of the earth. That is why within the space of about three hundred years, Christianity—which started as a subculture of a minority religion called Judaism—had become the predominant religion in the world. Almost everybody was converted. Wherever they went, something changed because they had a message; they knew how to take it from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the world. The problem with many of us is that what we say in Jerusalem, we say the same thing in Judea, Samaria, and we say the same thing in the ends of the world.

For example, if you go to a Ghanaian church in New York, you will find some assemblies that look and feel like a Bubuashie<sup>31</sup> church. The structure of the services are the same, their thinking is still a Ghanaian cultural mindset, yet their declared purpose is to reach people in America. That model cannot make progress because it is a Jerusalem-specific approach being applied to an ends-of-the-world audience. The essence is still fundamentally to bring people to Christ, but in order to be effective the approach has to be modified. You must talk like the people at the ends of the world, use their language, use their culture, use their framework and familiar points of reference so that you can engage them enough to be able to carry the message of Christ to them.

In the business world, it is the same. You cannot make a product, export it to the rest of the world, and package it as if you are selling it at your local market. If you export a product and it looks like it just came from the Agbogbloshie Market,<sup>32</sup> you will have a very difficult time competing with Macy's and Marks and Spencer, Nordstrom and the other large retail chains in the US and in Europe. To compete and get the attention of consumers in those places you must study their standards for what makes a product desirable and package your product accordingly, just as you packaged it to suit the preferences of the people in your hometown.

If you are going to replenish the earth, there must be a radical change as you move to further distances from your base. Some of the books I write are packaged differently outside Ghana. The cover design may vary; it may be re-edited for different vernaculars of the English language, or the titles may even be modified. I know what Ghanaians like, so I give it to them. Ghana is my Jerusalem. But when I want to reach Samaritans, and I extend to the outermost parts of the world, I do not package my books as if everybody is from my Jerusalem. If I did, the people I am trying to touch wouldn't be able to relate to me. I know I have to learn to meet them where they are. One major reason why Africans have yet to penetrate the world is that we tend to take our world with us

everywhere we go. That is one of the downsides to being so deeply rooted in our traditions. It is good for us to represent where we come from, but unless we want to isolate ourselves as we move throughout the world, we have to put some of our ways on the shelf for occasions when they are useful, and also embrace and understand the culture around us. Otherwise, we may be fruitful, multiply and travel to the ends of the world, yet fall short of influencing the new territories we have ventured into.

Jesus has shown us what to do through His method of expanding the Church. Now let us look at Israel to see what we should avoid, as it serves as an example of how to multiply and still remain powerless.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# ISRAEL AND THE DANGERS OF RAPID GROWTH

**T**he story of Israel is a biblical example that illustrates how it is possible to multiply and still be powerless. In Exodus 1:7-10, it talks about the Israelites in Egypt. What it says is quite fascinating, so I want us to take particular note. It says,

*<sup>7</sup> But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. <sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; <sup>10</sup> come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.”*

There are a few things you should notice in this passage. First, the Pharaoh said the people were more. Now remember that the children of Israel had been in bondage for about 430 years. There were 70 people when they were initially enslaved in Egypt. While enslaved, they were given their land in Goshen, and they were held there for 430 years. In that time, for whatever reason, they multiplied in the fruit of the womb, and had plenty of children. As a result, Israel filled the land and the Egyptians became the minority. The Pharaoh verifies this when he says, “they are more than us.” Can you imagine? The Israelites became more numerous than the Egyptians.

Immediately, we can see this is an example of the kind of growth and expansion we should avoid. The growth of Israel attracted attention they were not ready for. It shows us that if you do not have power and you grow too fast, you are going to get into trouble. When they grew in number, and it caught the attention of the Pharaoh, that was when their persecution started. But why? It is true that they were fruitful in one of the ways that God has decreed. They multiplied the fruit of their womb; however, there are four problems inherent in

Israel's population growth:

- A majority without authority
- A crowd without clout
- Strength without strategy
- An army without ammunition

First, **they were a majority without authority.** They had a large population but no political power. They had not learned to convert their numbers into power, illustrating again that procreation in itself is not an appropriate fulfillment of God's first dominion command.

Let me use another example from my own country to illustrate why numbers alone do not guarantee victory. According to Ghana's 2000 census, Christians comprise about 68-69% of the national population. Of that total population, close to 25% of them are Pentecostals or Charismatics.<sup>33</sup> However, although they form the largest part of any identifiable group in Ghana, the Pentecostals and Charismatics have no politician from their ranks ever seeking to appeal to them. The reason is that they have large numbers, yet they have no direction. With direction, we could very well determine the kind of leaders we want to govern our country. Instead of praying for it, we could actually make it happen if we converted our numbers into influence.

If you have the majority, you must build power into it in order for that majority to have any relevance. Israel had the majority but they were a powerless majority. Rather than being strategic or proactive, they remained in survival mode. They were in Goshen meeting their basic needs, and they were content with that. They were impressed with their increase, celebrating that they had procreated beyond their oppressors' population. They recognized their growth as evidence that God had blessed them according to the promise made to Abraham, but they did not recognize it as anything more. The result of their complacency was that when the inhabitants of Egypt went to parliament to legislate against the Jews, there was no representative of Israel to counter their proposals. They were impressed with their numbers, but did not rally to turn it into authority. The takeaway message is, woe unto you if your business is pervasive throughout your local, national or international environment and you don't have power blocks to wield influence.

Secondly, **Israel was in essence merely a crowd with no clout.** Joseph was the last man who had influence. When Joseph died no other Israelite sought to

fill the power vacuum that he had left behind. None among their numbers decided to fill Joseph's shoes so that he could continue to force the Pharaoh to value the Israelites' presence. Instead, they didn't have any replacement; they were just getting by. The result was that after Joseph died, and a new king arose, he had no respect or regard for the Israelites. The lesson here is that if you do not build consistent influence generation after generation, your power will diminish over time.

Thirdly, **Israel had strength without strategy.** The Pharaoh acknowledged that they were stronger than Egypt. It does not tell us why he concluded that they were strong. Perhaps with the blessing of Abraham, the Jews had become a bunch of stout people with muscles because they were regularly eating meat. Remember, the curse that came upon Egypt did not touch Israel.<sup>34</sup> So perhaps they were doing well, and every person was working well so their land was prosperous. When there was famine, they had food to eat, thanks to Joseph. They were given lands to farm, and since they were shepherds, they probably had a lot of protein, making them big in stature. However, even if my hypothesis is correct, the fact remains that they had no strategy.

We can liken this to most Africans. Everybody concedes we are strong physically and in number, but if our strength was measured based on our strategy, the consensus would be very different. In the case of Israel, the Egyptians decided to capitalize on Israel's lack of strategy. Egypt created and imposed their own strategy on Israel and harnessed the Jews' strength to build up Egypt.

This helps us understand Africa's condition. We always talk about how Africa is strong because we have oil, minerals, and numbers, but how much do these natural and human resources benefit us? Ours is strength without strategy, and we can see from Israel's case that if you are strong physically, but not mentally or strategically, the strength you have will not protect you.

Fourthly, **Israel was an army without ammunition.** They did not even understand the military implications of their numbers. Nevertheless, the Egyptians took notice and saw them as a serious security threat, and Egypt began to strategize how to prevent that threat from manifesting into a real problem. They acknowledged that if Egypt went to war with another nation, the Jews amongst them could turn against them and sabotage their national security from within. However, it is clear that Israel themselves did not recognize their potency, making them a latent army, an army without ammunition. They were

the majority, but it was their lack of military-like assertiveness that kept them enslaved by the minority.

The same story happened in South Africa, where roughly 10% of the people ruled the rest. It was only a small minority of whites who controlled the rest of the population. The black South Africans were in essence, an army without ammunition. They were strong in number, but had no strategy. They were a crowd that had no influence; and they were a majority that had no authority. That kind of equation usually amounts to somebody enslaving you. Therefore, when we talk about multiplying and filling the earth, it must come with a commensurate power system, so that as you go out in the world you do not become prey to those who are more strategically powerful.

### **Dangers Of Rapid Growth**

Exodus 23:27-30 shows us how God said growth was going to take place in Israel after they left Egypt. He says:

*<sup>27</sup> I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. <sup>28</sup> And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. <sup>29</sup> I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. <sup>30</sup> Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.*

God explained that there would not be a windfall or overnight expansion for Israel. He explained in this passage that there are two dangers of that kind of fast growth.

### **The Danger Of Desolate Land**

First, He mentions the danger of desolate land. This refers to occupying space you have not developed the resources or capacity to control. It is a caution against attempting something too big at one time. Jesus already showed us that we must start from Jerusalem. The cycle of fruitfulness has already taught us that you must begin small, with a seed. Nowhere in God's processes has He imparted to us that we should start at the final stage. In every lesson, He has reiterated through illustration that we must grow systematically, letting our pace match our expanding capacity.

Be careful that you do not try to occupy or do something that is bigger than what you can handle. It is not wise to start a business and have branches all over the world without developing a system of supervision. You will be in big trouble. You also should not start a church and plant branches in places you have never been, because you won't be able to control them. You have to grow systematically. Have you ever wondered why we don't have a church in Iceland? Because we don't have anyone to pastor it. How can I monitor what's happening in Iceland? That is the same reason why we don't have a church in Tokyo, because we do not have the system to oversee a church there. We have to grow from a center where we are familiar and can manage and monitor our growth. If you cannot monitor your growth, that growth will turn against you. It is not wise to start a business and open branches all over the world. That is not the growth God is talking about. It will give you a desolate land. Land you cannot control. And many of us spread ourselves too thin in this way. You must be fruitful; you must multiply but when you are growing, the model to follow is Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then to the ends of the world. You will be disappointed if you follow any other sequence. You must go systematically from one logical spot to the next, and always build on your strength, leveraging it at every new phase. That is God's system.

God said to Israel, I will not do it all at once. Why? Because if He did, they would not be able to manage such rapid growth. Instead, He said He would bless them at a pace that would allow them to develop the capacity to manage and maintain. He said He would gradually give them more land as they could handle it.

Many people have killed themselves in business by expanding beyond their staff strength. You cannot employ droves of people with low skill levels, who do not have the knowledge or experience of middle management or executive leadership and expect to succeed. They will collapse your business in a flash because they do not have the capacity to uphold it. Be careful of the desolate land syndrome. Don't bite off more than you can chew.

### **The Danger Of Numerous Beasts**

The second danger of rapid growth illustrated in this scripture is numerous beasts. This refers to provoking enemies you do not have the resources to fight. Not every enemy should be provoked. There are certain people whom, even if they are annoying you, you should conceal your annoyance and continue to smile at them because you can't fight them. You will need to wait until your odds of winning a battle with them improves; don't face them when you are weak.

Tolerating them is your wisest option, and while you are doing that, build your strength. After you have built and consolidated your strength and they start pestering you, you will have the ability to speak your mind to them with some authority behind your voice.

What God was telling Israel is that not every fight should be fought. Sometimes it is good to lay low. Do not expose your strength, don't expose your abilities, don't brag about what you can do, and don't throw your weight around, making enemies that you cannot fight. However, don't be naïve to the fact that while you are peacefully going about your business, somebody is strategically thinking of eliminating you. Don't provoke those beasts.

When you are making enemies, it is a good idea not to make too many. If you are a businessperson and you have an enemy at the Ministry of Finance, another enemy at the Ministry of Trade, and additional enemies at one of the local government agencies, you are in big trouble. If you must make enemies in local government, be sure to make friends in Finance. You have to balance your enemies because if your enemies become too numerous in one place, they can conspire against you and wipe you out. That is what happened to Israel. The Egyptians were conspiring to deal shrewdly with them and nobody had a clue to what was happening until they were all enslaved. It took them another forty years before they were delivered. So don't just make wholesale enemies. That is not smart, or strategic. If you are strategic, you will know how to control your temper, and that some people are not worth having as enemies today. You can make them enemies next year. But this year, you can't, because if they decide to fight you, you will lose. So don't make too many enemies.

God illustrates this story of Israel as a cautionary tale for us. We have it as an example of what not to do, so that we can avoid failing our mandate due to our own inability to harness the power we possess. If we can avoid the pitfalls that Israel fell into, we can replenish the earth in the way that God intends, and advance to subduing it. In the final chapters of the book, we will turn to the fourth command of our dominion mandate. And as we complete our exploration of God's first commands to Adam, we will conclude our understanding of how to have dominion over the earth.

## Declare the Word

**Genesis 1:26-28** —Continue to pray the word of our foundational text over your life and your purpose.

**Numbers 14:20-21** —Pray, “Lord, though it is not for me to know the times or the season which you will restore me, let me receive the power of the Holy Spirit and be a witness to the end of the earth. Anoint me to replenish the earth with the seed you have given me, and help me to expand my capacity to reach beyond my immediate place to the national, regional and global level, in your name.”

**Exodus 1:7-10** —Pray that God will help you to avoid the mistakes of Israel's growth, and that you be blessed to grow exceedingly mighty and fill the land.

**Exodus 23:27-30** —Ask God to send His fear before you and make your enemies turn their backs. Ask Him to drive them out, little by little so you can manage the field and inherit the land.

# **Affirmation**

Speak this affirmation over your life:

I will fill the earth with God's glory and replenish it.

I will overwhelm with my presence in my own unique way.

I will extend beyond my limitations and those set before me, transcending all challenges.

My expansion will be progressive, systematic and steady, until I reach the ends of the earth.

And when I arrive, I will defend the inheritance God has designated for me.

PART FOUR  
SUBDUE THE EARTH

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# SUBDUE THE EARTH

After being fruitful, after multiplying, and after filling the earth, the command to subdue the earth aims to ensure that we can exercise control over what we have achieved and maintain our success. It is very easy to become great, and then lose it all. It is very easy to expand, and then lose ground. In our lifetime, we have seen great movements, sometimes even church movements, which have grown very big, but are nowhere to be found today. We have seen great companies, which were once very big brand names recognized all over the world, but have lost their footing and are defunct today. We have also seen individuals who had achieved greatness but could not maintain their place at the top. In each of these cases, they were fruitful, they multiplied, they filled the earth but they couldn't subdue it. They could not sustain what they had succeeded in achieving.

### **What Does It Mean To Subdue <sup>35</sup> The Earth?**

There are three broad actions that we will explore here that characterize subduing the earth:

- Conquering exceptional barriers
- Controlling untamed elements
- Cultivating for useful purposes

### **Conquer Exceptional Barriers**

In our effort to fill the earth with our fruit and God's glory, we will come against formidable obstacles and limitations, which can come in many forms. They can be cultural barriers, racial or ethnic barriers, gender barriers, religious barriers, geographical barriers, and environmental hazards. As you try to spread yourself to really make your presence felt, you will have to deal with some of these obstacles.

Learn to change your perspective on obstacles and challenges of this sort. Rather than seeing them as barriers to keep us out, see them as obstacles

intended for us to exercise our ability to overcome. God made us in His image, not to be defeated by the challenges we face, but so that we could utilize the divine part of our makeup in order to surmount them. Therefore, when God brings a test our way, He knows that we have the ability to have victory over it. It is we who forget that fact and allow our supernatural abilities to lay dormant. You should expect barriers as you seek to expand in the areas that God has called you to. When such obstacles come and you utilize the faculties we have been endowed with, you will conquer them. That is how we subdue the earth.

### **Control Untamed Elements**

The world that Adam and Eve were created in was a wild world. There was no civilization and no cultivation. Everything was growing wild. There was no order or containment of the abundance of the earth. Nothing had yet been created to control the earth's fruitfulness, nor to keep the plants and animals from growing out of control. God made this our job. There were also no cars to transport Adam, no bridges or boats to help Eve cross rivers. There was nothing. If man was going to make this earth useful, he had to exercise his dominion and tame the elements. In order to make the wild earth convenient for his life, he had to tame it. So to subdue the earth is to control untamed elements that obstruct our path.

### **Cultivate For Useful Purposes**

To cultivate the earth for useful purposes means to harness the earth's natural resources for the benefit of mankind. Rather than letting the earth grow wild, cultivation means to contain the growth of various things proportionate to their necessity and usage. Additionally, subduing the earth in this manner places responsibility on man to ensure that the resources of the earth and the function of the earth are held in proper balance for future generations. As guardians of the earth, God has given mankind the responsibility of harnessing the earth's resources wisely. That is why environmental protection is so important. We cannot just continue cutting timber and hope that the rain will fall in May.

In the last 60 years, for example, Ghana has degraded 95% of its equatorial forest.<sup>36</sup> We have cut them for charcoal, cut them to clear farmland, to export timber and only 5% of our forest remains. That simply means that we have disturbed the balance and the seasonal cycle. That is why there is no rain and there is such oppressive heat. We are responsible. To subdue the earth does not mean to destroy the earth. Rather, it means to manage the earth in such a way that the earth can perpetually produce for us. If we fail to understand this, we are

headed for big trouble. This is not only the case in Ghana; it is true all over the world.

If God told man to subdue the earth, it also meant that he had to be responsible for the resources of the earth. We have to make sure that when we spread and grow and increase, we manage the earth in proper balance. We must make sure that we don't take so much out of the earth that it is not able to sustain itself. The earth is not a spirit, it is physical. It is not infinite; it is finite, so its capacity is limited to its nature. Everything of the earth has its limits, and when we don't balance our exploitation of it properly, we may permanently damage our planet. So God said to man, be fruitful, multiply, and spread out, but as you do, make sure that things are in proper balance. Subdue the earth.

### **Subduing The Earth Within Us**

We established in chapter nine that when God said replenish the earth and subdue it, the reference to the earth had a two-part meaning—the earth around us, and the earth within us. Applying the above definition of what it means to subdue the earth of our inner selves, it means that we must:

**Conquer barriers *within ourselves*.** The mental limitations we carry, the emotional insecurities, dysfunctional behaviors we have witnessed and internalized, and the poor character traits we have developed are all part of the earthly side of our makeup. God is saying that we must use the part of us that is made in His image to subdue the barriers that impact our earthly nature.

**Control the untamed elements *within ourselves*.** God is saying, tame the wildness within you. Tame your temper, your fears, your self-criticism, your judgment of others, your gossiping tendencies, your sexual drive, and your addictions. All the things which have grown wild within you that you have lost control of, and are not useful, must be tamed before you can claim to have subdued the earth. These elements are there to create opportunities for us. They are opportunities for victory, to be able to subdue the unfruitful parts of yourself in order to live out God's purpose for your life, and reflect more of the part of yourself that was made in His image.

**Cultivate *yourself* for useful purposes.** This means to cultivate your artistic ability, your affinity for numbers, or music, or science. Cultivate your character, habits and routines in ways that are useful.

### **Additional Aspects Of The Relationship Between Earth And Man**

When we read God's word to subdue the earth, we must think about the earth in its two meanings: the earth that we inhabit, and the earth that inhabits us. The interesting part about God creating us from the earth is that normally when you are taken out of something, it means you are a subset of that thing. Because the earth is what you came from, in terms of power and authority, the thing you came out of usually has command over you.

For example, when you come out of your mother's womb, she has authority over you throughout, at least, the formative years of your life. Likewise, if you have been imprisoned and you are released, the State dictates much of your life outside of incarceration. Taken in the natural sense, we know that except for us, all other life on the earth is controlled by the earth. The movements of animals are dictated by the seasons. Their shelter is provided or denied by the terrain. When they mate, where they eat, and how they behave are all orchestrated by primal urges, seasonal changes, and formations of the earth. Plants are likewise dictated to by the flow of the earth. They blossom, bear fruit and are purged according to the seasons. Their survival is predicated on the balance of rain, sunshine and temperature. No other life form apart from mankind has any control over the conditions of their existence. They are all controlled by the habitat they come from.

This formula is very consistent; however, it is not the formula God applied to mankind. God took man from the earth and rather than it having control over man, He gave man power over it. Can you imagine your mother giving birth to you, and you come out giving orders and setting rules for her? No, that is not usually how things work; however, when it came to us as a species, and our relationship to the earth, God set a different course.

Although we come from the earth, we are not subject to it; instead, the earth is subject to us, and the key reason is because the Spirit of God was breathed into us. We are simultaneously of God and of the earth. God is not controlled by the earth; the earth is controlled by God. Likewise, the God-part within man should not be controlled by the earthly-part within us. It is the divine part of our composition that is meant to have dominion, and if you allow yourself to really embrace the implications of this, you will experience profound liberation, and the freedom to fulfill God's purpose for your life to its full extent.

The first thing we must recognize is that **man was taken from the earth to have dominion over it**. The part of the earth that God made man out of is the fertile, productive part of the earth. That simply means that right from the beginning, God took man from fertile ground to indicate that man was equipped

with the ability to be fruitful and to be productive. Man was taken out of the earth and given dominion over the earth.

Secondly, this also means that **whatever God delivers you from, He also gives you power over** . For example, if God takes you out of a family of drunkards, no matter how powerful biological heredity or social influence, your lineage does not condemn you to also be a drunkard. Part of God's grace is that He gives us power over the very things He delivers us from. You cannot blame your background for who you are, or blame your condition on where you came from because God has already empowered you to take your life in a different direction. Once God takes you out of an unfruitful situation, you must remember that your capacity for dominion over it has already been implanted in you. Whatever your background is, you have more power to shape your life than your circumstances have to shape you.

The only criterion to ensure that you will not also fall into any of the negative conditions you have been brought up in is to know that you possess the power God has given you to overcome and utilize it. Whether or not you use that power, is your own choice. God will not impose His will on you. It is your choice to accept or refuse what He has empowered you with. However, God has given you your specific background and environment because He wants you to embrace your power and exercise dominion over your past, and over all of the negative or challenging circumstances that produced you. The environment that produced you cannot control your destiny; only you can. As long as you have the breath of life, neither the environment that produced you, nor the people who neglected or abused you can determine your destiny. You can grow up in a deprived slum area and still rise to become the most polished individual, because those conditions are of the earth, and your divine self has the power and the command to subdue that which is unfruitful to your life's purpose.

The problem with most of us is that we have become voluntary prisoners of our environment. No environment can have the power to imprison us unless we give our power over to that environment. People sometimes complain, “You don't know where I came from, you don't know what happened to me, I don't have anyone to take care of me” and they use these to explain their miserable life. If you find yourself doing this, you must ask yourself, *is that all I have?* The truth is that you have much more. Rather than explaining your misery, you could spend your energy overcoming it and changing your story.

When young men come to our church dressed haphazardly, with their shirts smelling and looking dirty, I believe they think they have a right to be filthy

because they came from the ghetto. What the Bible is telling us is that if God takes you out of the ghetto, you have the power and the responsibility to take the ghetto out of you. Your habits and hygiene must reflect your deliverance. You have no right to reflect and glorify the ghetto. Rather, you have an obligation to reflect and glorify your creator. That is the purpose of the heavenly Spirit in us. Although we came from the dirt of the earth, God does not approve of us living dirty lives. Do not be controlled by the earth the way plants and animals are. Live above it, like a person who knows God has breathed the breath of Life in him.

Subduing the earth means that you have to rise above the limitations of the earthly life and live above the limitations of your environment, of your past, of your earthly nature, and of your history. In the next chapter we will look to the example of the Apostle Paul to discover more insight into how this is done.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### LESSONS FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL

In Acts 19:11-20, we read about the life of the Apostle Paul and how he spread the gospel and subdued the earth. It reads,

*<sup>11</sup> Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. <sup>13</sup> Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” <sup>14</sup> Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. <sup>15</sup> And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” <sup>16</sup> Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. <sup>17</sup> This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. <sup>18</sup> And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. <sup>19</sup> Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. <sup>20</sup> So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.*

Paul's story shows us how the process of subduing the earth works. In this passage we can see that there are three areas of functioning in order to have dominion or to subdue the earth.

#### **1. Master Your Field**

The first lesson we learn from Paul is to master your field, as it was obvious that Paul had mastered his. In order to subdue the earth, you have to be a master over your area of operation. God not only wants you to work in that particular field, He also wants you to be a master in it. If God has helped you to be fruitful,

to multiply, to fill the earth, then by all means in the final stage towards having dominion, He wants you to be a master in the area He has called you to.

### **How Do You Master Your Field?**

**Establish a commanding presence.** Like the Apostle Paul, you must establish a commanding presence. He ministered in a world which was not open to the gospel message. It was an unreceptive environment, yet he made his presence felt. In the places he preached, there were established deities, which laid claim to the spiritual lives of the people, but in the midst of these conflicts, he established a commanding presence for Christ. It was through Paul's mastery of the environment that Christ was exalted over all the deities, magicians and pagan spiritual practices that had a long-standing presence there. In a field as fixed as that, Christ became the commanding presence.

To subdue the earth, you must establish a commanding presence in a similar way. God does not just want you to be amongst the crowd in your field. He wants your presence to be distinguished. When your product, activity, or work is compared with others, He wants your brand to stand head-and-shoulders above everybody else. That is what it means to have a commanding presence. Christianity started as a subculture among Jews in the small, occupied territory in Judea. Even among the Jews, it did not have much recognition just thirty years or so after Jesus had died. And in Ephesus, which was a totally Greek society that worshipped other deities and had never heard of Jesus, the Bible, Abraham, or of the promise of the Messiah, they recognized Christ as the supreme power within that same thirty years period. And it was all because the apostles were fruitful, they multiplied, and filled the earth with the gospel message, and they established a name for Christ that was unparalleled. If God wants you to subdue the earth with what you have, you must establish a commanding presence.

**Distinguish yourself from imitators.** As the ministry of Paul grew, imitators attempted to copy his success and take credit for his message. Yet despite their efforts, Paul's uniqueness stood out. He was so distinguished that even the demons knew the difference. They said, "We know Jesus, and we will obey Him; we know Paul, and we will obey him"; but when they came across the imitators the demons said "we don't know who you are," and ignored their commands.

Know that imitators will also arise when you start to do what God has called you to do, because success often breeds copycats. What you must do to protect yourself is establish such a unique authority in what you are doing that people can tell the difference between you and those who try to copy you. If people

confuse your service, or categorize it along with everybody else, it means you have yet to establish uniqueness. If, for example, you are a hairdresser, and people lump you together with other hairdressers when they characterize all hairdressers as lazy, it means you do not yet have a commanding presence. If people say, “all churches are false” and they don't say, except yours, from that categorization it means you don't have a commanding presence. If you have a commanding presence, people will be able to distinguish you from the lot. It is when you achieve that distinction that you can say you are beginning to subdue the earth.

Can people tell the difference in your field? When people are categorizing your field of operation, can they set you apart, can they say you are different, and that you are not like the rest? If they cannot tell the difference, it means you may have replenished, but you have not subdued yet. It means you don't have a commanding

presence and you haven't mastered your field. Paul distinguished himself from imitators and established an unassailable brand for the gospel in Ephesus.

**Transform prevailing norms and practices.** One of the most remarkable results of Paul's ministry was how he got people to discard their established norms and practices and embrace his message. The Bible says the people made a public declaration for Christ, and then they burned their magical works and books, which were very valuable to them. By the power of Paul's ministry, they voluntarily gave up their long-standing allegiance to idolatry, and began to practice Christianity. It was an astonishing transformation of allegiance, the type that any person, idea, or product that is going to subdue the earth must be able to achieve.

I can remember not long ago when the Apple computer company was sort of on the fringe of their industry. People who used Apple computers were often a small cadre of very tech-savvy consumers. They were programmers and software engineers, and the like. The average computer user more commonly owned a PC, not a Macintosh. However, Apple has focused its efforts, made more user-friendly and consumer appealing laptops. They've also multiplied their product offerings to a point where it is more common and fashionable to see people using products with the Apple logo. Whereas before it was noteworthy to see someone who used a Mac, now it has become more popular for people to use Apple computers as well as its other products. The marketing department at Apple has effectively caused a transformation of the market. They have successfully convinced people to switch their allegiance, so much so that

when people say they are a “Mac user,” there is often a sense of pride and distinction that they carry with that label.

When Paul delivered his message, the people made an ideological and religious switch. First, he had a commanding presence, where the people could distinguish him from imitators. As a result, his impact grew, and ultimately the people were ready to permanently relocate their faith into the message of the gospel. Paul shows us that this is how to subdue the earth. He didn't conform his message to mimic the prevailing belief system. He rose above it by demonstrating that his message was superior. Despite the longstanding norms that had been embraced by the people, in a short time his message became the reference point to everyone. That is how the gospel of Jesus Christ brought people of other belief systems into a new life of faith in Christ.

**Grow at a continuous and measured pace.** The Bible says, “So mightily the word of God grew and prevailed.” The instruction that this gives us is that a product or idea that can subdue the earth must continue in an upward trajectory and grow continually. We see this with the Christian ministry of Paul. It grew increasingly and steadily. People who had hitherto never heard Jesus, began embracing Him and discarding what they previously believed in. People who never knew Christ even existed, all of a sudden, committed their lives to Him and His way. The whole world has been transformed and pagan ideas have been subdued because of a very compelling message. And from the outset it was in part because Paul was a master of his field. Had he not been a master of his field, he would have failed to subdue. Likewise, you may be fruitful, you may be multiplying, you may be filling, but unless you are a master of your field, you will not subdue.

## **2. Restrain Your Flesh**

The second way that the Apostle Paul shows us to subdue the earth is to restrain our flesh. Many successful people have been ruined because they could not subdue the earth-nature in them and restrain their flesh. One such person that comes to mind was a formidable sportsman. Everybody hailed him. He had a success story like none anyone had seen before, and was constantly breaking all the records in his sport, making an international name for himself. He became one of the most recognizable names in the world, yet just a few months ago, his flesh got in the way of his success and his whole brand is now in decline.

It is sad to see a person rise so high and fall so low simply because they could not restrain something they've been given power over. It is a vivid reminder to

all of us that no matter how high we rise in our given field, our flesh will be with us along the way. This is why it is so critical that we keep it in check, because wherever you go, it will be with you. If you become president, your flesh will have access to presidential privilege, and we have seen the result of uncontrolled flesh with such access to power many times before. If your flesh is not under control, it will interfere in your life and bring you down. It will tarnish your legacy as a president, a sportsman or as a corporate brand. As a result, it will squander and diminish any opportunity you had to be influential. The caution here is that if you intend to rise to high heights, you must start practicing right now how to subdue the earth that is in you.

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, the Apostle Paul says of this issue, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” Paul saw it as a possibility that he could make a great impact and have it all crumble if he fell to the desires of his flesh. What Paul was acknowledging was that no matter how many souls he brought to Christ, if he himself became a victim of his flesh, he would end up in hell. He was saying, I can bless people and still end up being a failure and a disappointment. I can be an encouragement to others and a disappointment myself. He realized that in order not to do that, he must prioritize subduing his flesh.

This is a lesson for all of us to heed, as it would be a very sad outcome if any of us ascended to great heights, just to fall prey to something within our power to subdue. We should remember the Apostle Paul, and Galatians 5: 16, which says,

*<sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

### **How Do You Restrain The Flesh?**

Stay connected to your spiritual source. Although your body comes from the earth, your breath, your life comes from the spirit of God. Stay connected to that spirit, that breath of life that originated from God. Our physical body requires the earth's resources for survival, but our spiritual being requires spiritual resources—the spirit of God, the word of God, prayer, fasting, and staying in His presence. It is only strength in your spiritual self that will keep your body under subjection. If you don't subject your body to the spirit, it can jeopardize all that you have worked for, and derail you from God's plan and purpose for your life.

Live and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. The more we yield and walk in

the indwelling Holy Spirit, the less control our fleshly desires will have on us. Living in the power of the Holy Spirit means that we must develop spiritual appetites that are greater than our carnal ones. Those people who have risen and fallen invariably stand to regret what has become of them. In order not to face similar difficult regrets in your own life, you must consciously discipline your mind and body to function in righteous ways.

When the Apostle Paul says, "I bring my body under subjection," it is not a passive thing; it is active. He describes it as something he does deliberately with discipline, which means moment by moment. We must discipline our minds and our appetites in order to develop a greater spiritual appetite. The more we stay in prayer and in the presence of God, the less we will be in the presence of sin. The more we stay in the word of God, the less worldly ideas will dominate our minds because our thoughts become attuned to the Spirit that is at work in us, and we are able to subdue the flesh.

We have seen heads of states, corporate leaders, and world-renowned athletes who couldn't subdue the flesh, and fell from grace. They realized too late that you have to live a consistent life, a life of moderation and self-control in order to hold such vast influence. With great influence, one must contain his flesh, and he must also contain his fame.

### **3. Contain Your Fame**

In 1 Corinthians 3: 6-10, Paul shows us how to contain our fame. He says,

*<sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. <sup>7</sup> So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. <sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.*

If you've never been famous before, you may not understand this, but if fame is part of your aspiration, it will be wise to remember these words. When you reach the pinnacle of success and you want to sustain that success, you will need to do what the apostle Paul did, and keep your ego in check.

### **How Did Paul Contain His Fame?**

**Share the credit for success.** Paul didn't say I've done it all or everything depends on me; he extended credit where it was due in two ways. First, he gave credit to his fellow man, Apollos, for the help he rendered in the human sphere. Although Paul had planted, he acknowledges that without Apollos watering, there would have been no success. But he continues to say that neither himself, the planter, nor Apollos, the waterer, can achieve anything without God increasing it. This should always be our attitude. We should develop a habit of thanking those who have given us help, and thank God for all that we are able to achieve. We should be like Paul and share the credit for our successes because although one person may be credited for the accomplishment, most success is achieved by the help of many others, and by the grace of God. So acknowledge that you are building on other people's shoulders, and reaping from other people's sweat. Always remember that you are where you are because somebody laid a good foundation for you, somebody opened a door for you, or somebody pointed you in the right direction. Learn to share the credit. Don't take all the recognition for yourself. Share the credit for your success with the people who helped make it possible.

**Consider yourself a simple laborer for Christ.** Paul says, "I am nothing, I am just a laborer for Christ." This is a man who went to Ephesus and took Ephesus by storm. Paul literally disciplined the whole of Asia minor with the gospel of Jesus Christ yet he says, "I only planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase. I am just a laborer." If you assume this kind of attitude—that you haven't done it on your own, you are not the boss, but only a faithful servant of Christ—humility will come naturally, and you can bypass some of the obstacles created by the ego.

**Build endurance systems .** To subdue the earth, you must build enduring systems and structures that can sustain what you've achieved for many years to come. Paul described himself as a wise master builder. He was concerned about sustainability and succession. He was aware that people would come after him and he was concerned about the work of Christ continuing with sustained momentum. When we are building, we have to have a mindset that builds for more than just our generation; we must strive to lay a good foundation for future generations, for success without succession ultimately is failure. To subdue the earth, you must build good foundations that can endure beyond your time.

If we heed the example of Paul by becoming a master of our field through establishing a commanding presence, distinguishing ourselves from imitators, transforming prevailing norms and practices, and growing at a continuous pace,

we are well on our way towards living up to God's dominion mandate. Likewise, if we can restrain our flesh and contain our fame along the way by staying connected to our spiritual source, walking with the Holy Spirit at the center of our lives, sharing credit with others and with God and building systems that can last beyond our years, we will hear God say, “well done, my good and faithful servant.”

After all, this is what it is all about; getting the approval from God that we have lived our lives the way He has commanded. He told us to be fruitful and multiply; replenish the earth and subdue it. And to sum it all up, He told us to have dominion. In the final chapter, we will look to a figure of history whose life progressed in many ways as God commanded, and who, by the end of his life, stood as an example of dominion.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# A Case Study Of Dominion: The Story Of George Washington Carver

It is rather unfortunate, but many people's destinies die before they ever begin. The conditions into which some of us have been born follows us like a cloud, blocking our vision from seeing anything greater for ourselves. If you fall into this category and you have struggled to find and fulfill your purpose, then may you be encouraged by the life of George Washington Carver.<sup>37</sup>

### **Humble Beginnings**

George Washington Carver's introduction to the world was not marked with a guarantee of success; rather, the beginning of his life story gives one reason after another why he would likely fail life. To begin with, he was born to two slaves in Missouri, USA, sometime around 1865. Those factors alone—the period, the location, and the social class he was born into—were reason enough to justify an unfulfilled life. Because his parents were slaves, the exact date and year of his birth was not recorded. All he knew and all we can deduce is an approximation of his entry into this world, because it was seen in those days for the birthdays of slaves to be of little consequence or importance. It mattered little in the end, however, because the two people to whom his birth date would have mattered most did not remain in his life for long. First of all, Carver never met his father. He died on a neighboring plantation before his son was born. Then, just a few months after his birth, Civil War bandits kidnapped and sold his mother away, and he never saw her again.

Parentless and uncelebrated, he remained under the ownership of Moses and Susan Carver, the couple that had owned his mother. Although he was born of the first post-slavery generation, he still functioned essentially as their slave. One of his chores on their farm was to tend the garden and at an early age, it became one of his favorite things to do. He had a knack for keeping the plants healthy, nurturing them to grow lush and rich. George did not realize it at the time, but what he had discovered was the passion that would come to be the key to his success in life. In the midst of his condition as both an orphan and a slave,

he had discovered his seed. Not even these circumstances could suppress God's plan for his life.

At the age of eleven, George left the Carver farm and worked his way through school by exchanging his labor for a place to sleep and nominal fees for books and tuition. He migrated from town to town, taking jobs wherever he was needed. When he settled in a particular place, he would enroll himself in any local school that would accept Negroes, as black people were called in those days. He continued this all the way through high school and then enrolled himself in Simpson College where he studied music and art—two other interests that developed for him early in life.

Though music and art were clearly among Carver's talents, he knew intuitively that they were not his true calling. After a short while, he transferred himself to the Iowa State Agricultural College to study the passion he had discovered in himself as a child. By 1894, the same boy who had been born to slaves at an undocumented date and time, orphaned and raised as a servant, had earned himself a BA degree in Agriculture, and two years later earned a graduate degree as well.

Carver's transformation was truly remarkable, and I hope his story imparts perspective and inspiration to anyone who also comes from humble beginnings. You may not have been born to slaves, but you may have been born into a legacy of poverty. Your birth date may not be a question mark, but perhaps you grew up feeling unwanted or that your life was not valued. You may not have been an orphan, but you may carry a sense of abandonment or alienation. No matter what your story is, I hope you can be healed and know that there is no condition or circumstance that can negate who you are intended to be.

Today, George Washington Carver is not known most for his humble beginnings, but rather for being a world-famous chemist and inventor. He is most famously known for inventing peanut butter, but he did much more than just that. He impacted the world in many other significant ways, including as a moving public speaker, and a person of upright character. His impact was so stellar, in fact, that despite being born on the heels of racialized slavery, he was the first African American to have a national monument commissioned in his likeness.

### **George Washington Carver's Four Steps To Dominion**

The story of George Washington Carver begs the question: how does one go from such humble beginnings to ultimately fulfilling God's desire for dominion?

In this chapter, we will follow the steps that Carver took, and we will see that he did as Genesis 1: 26- 28 instructs. He followed the four steps of the dominion mandate, which we know begins with his fruitfulness.

**1. He was fruitful.** After completing his education, George Washington Carver accepted a teaching and research position at Tuskegee Institute, where he began to develop his inventions and uses for the peanut. He invented over 325 products, including massage oils to treat the painful effects of polio, a peanut formula used to restore soil nutrients depleted from over farming, and a number of domestic recipes, such as peanut milk, cheese, soap, grease, and most famously, peanut butter. His fruitfulness began with the peanut, and he turned it in numerous ways, coming up with hundreds of useful purposes for it.

**2. He multiplied.** After being fruitful, Carver expanded his ideas on peanuts and diversified his talents. He began to research the ways in which sweet potatoes could be useful, and created another 100 products from them.

Not only did he expand the fruit of his mind and hands with his inventions, but he began to use the fruit of his words as well. In the midst of the tense racial climate of his time, Carver became an influential public lecturer on race equality, and was invited to speak all over the U.S., and in doing so contributed to improving race relations within his nation.

**3. He replenished the earth.** Although Carver began to branch out into new areas of exploration on sweet potatoes, his original seed ideas on the peanut began to render even more significant impact. As the Great Depression put pressure on farmers, his peanut soil restoration program helped improve their productivity and the quality of their crops. By restoring the soil, he helped farmers maintain their livelihood in tough economic times, and also aided the larger population by keeping high nutrient produce available at low prices. All of this combined improved the quality of life of countless people in phenomenal ways.

His peanut invention began to take on complexity, simplicity and availability. His solution was available at a time when the Great Depression was impacting economies and food supply all over the world. With this need, Carver expanded beyond his country and began to impact the world, literally teaching farmers how to replenish soil all over the earth. Soon his presence was spreading to further and further parts of the world, as he was invited to speak to farmers in country after country.

Not only did Carver fill the earth with his seed idea, but he also filled it with

God's glory. In a time when his contemporaries—W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington—evoked polarizing ideological reactions, Carver was a known Christian and remained ideologically neutral, untainted by scandal.

**4. He subdued.** George Washington Carver is a great example of someone who had dominion because he filled the earth with his talent, transcended his background, and contended with a hostile racial climate, all the while he defended his portion by not attracting scandal to himself or wavering in his conviction on racial equality. He subdued the earth by conquering the exceptional barriers of his birth, race, and social class. He controlled the untamed elements of the earth and he cultivated them for useful purposes.

Carver's initial intent was not to become world-renowned. It all started with a curiosity, and an interest in plant life. He stayed on course by seizing opportunities to become more educated. He persisted and had a love for what he did and who he was doing it for. He followed his drive for invention and upheld a commitment to excellence, and a conviction of his principles. And despite his origins, Carver remained focused on his future rather than his past. The resulting legacy he left was that he ended up being and doing so much more than his start in life suggested.

As we conclude our examination of the dominion mandate laid out for us in Genesis, I pray that you are inspired and empowered, and that you will take away new insight and understanding in order to become all that God intends you to be.

## **Declare the Word**

Incorporate the following scriptures as you pray the dominion mandate over your life:

**Genesis 2:7** —Thank God for breathing the breath of life into you and by doing so, giving you power to subdue the untamed elements around and within you.

**Acts 19:11-20** —Ask God to anoint you with the power of Paul to subdue the earth. Ask that He help you to become master of your field, and that He strengthens you to restrain your flesh.

**1 Corinthians 3:6-10** —Thank God and give Him credit for your increase, and commit yourself to Him as a laborer for Christ.

# Affirmation

Say the following affirmation and declare,

I am made in God's image.

My destiny is not determined by any circumstance or condition I come from, for what God delivers me from, He gives me power to subdue.

I will walk by faith in God's power and His purpose for my life, not by the evidence of my intellect, feelings or observation.

I will have a commanding presence in my field.

I will transform my community, my country and my world.

I will not fall to temptation, adversity or insecurity, but I will restrain my flesh and conquer all barriers.

I will grow at a continuous pace, and I will share the credit with those who contribute to my success, keeping God first in all that I do.

I will live and walk in His presence and glorify His name.

I will be fruitful.

I will multiply.

I will have faith in God's power and His purposes for my life. I will rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I will replenish and subdue the earth, and I will have dominion as God commanded, for it is written. In Jesus' name!

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# FAITH AND THE DOMINION MANDATE

George Muller<sup>38</sup> was a missionary in 19th Century England, known for his achievement in building the Ashley Down Orphanage with only two shillings and an unshakable faith in God. He had a natural passion for helping orphans and for educating young people, and for sixty years, Muller and his wife depended exclusively on God to supply their needs to carry out their purpose in life. They vowed never to speak of their lack, nor to solicit money or incur any debt. Muller wanted his life to be a living testament that God answers prayer, so he prayed and believed God for every need he had, and each year the Mullers' faith was strengthened as they witnessed God repeatedly perform miracles to provide for them and the thousands of children in their care.

One particular instance of God's grace found the Mullers amongst the orphans one morning at breakfast time. There was no food to feed any of them, yet George Muller led them in a prayer of thanks. He thanked the Lord for the food He was going to provide for the children and at the end of their prayer there was a knock on the door. At the door was the local baker, who said that he had been up all night because God had placed the desire in his heart to provide bread for the children. Soon after he had distributed the bread, there was another knock on the door. This time it was the milkman, whose cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. He had come to ask if he could donate all of his fresh milk to the children so that he could lighten his load and repair his cart. It was one of many instances where Muller looked beyond the circumstances in sight, and instead trusted in the unseen.

In another case, the heater in one of the orphan houses malfunctioned in the heart of winter. Because of a severe storm, it was difficult getting repairmen out to their location and the weather was worsening each day. Muller knew that even when the repairmen finally arrived they would be faced with a challenge that would prolong the repairs because the heater was encased behind a brick wall. Rather than leave the outcome to chance, Muller prayed, asking God for two things: first, he asked God to impress on the hearts of the repairmen a desire to

work through the night, as he knew the job would take more than one full day. Secondly, he asked God to subdue the storm. Then he proceeded with the assurance as if both prayers had already been answered.

When the men arrived, the weather had become so mild that the temperature did not require use of the heater. The winds had unpredictably shifted from an arctic gust to spring-like breezes. Furthermore, after a full day of work, the foreman asked the workers to retire for the evening and return the next day with ideas on how to complete the job. Before they could all go to rest, the team captain suggested that rather than wait until the next day and risk the return of the frigid weather they should stay and work throughout the night.

Time and time again, Muller experienced this kind of faithfulness from God, giving more and more momentum to his mission to prove that God answers prayer. It was in this same manner of trusting God, that George Muller built 117 schools in his lifetime, always starting with nearly no capital, but miraculously raising over 7 million dollars to construct them. At the end of his life, he had educated over 120,000 young people and orphans, all on faith. He knew his purpose and he wholeheartedly trusted God to make a way for him to fulfill it, once saying, "Be assured, if you walk with Him, look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you." George Muller knew the power of faith and how to tap into the spiritual power of prayer. And as a result, he had dominion.

At the beginning of this book, we said that man is endowed with both physical and spiritual capacities, which distinguish us from the rest of God's creations. We can do what is physically possible as well as what is spiritually possible because within us is not only the gifts and talents God has given us, but we also have at our disposal the ability to reflect the image of God and His power.

However, in order to have dominion, we have to join our two natures in faith, because our spiritual access to tapping into God's power far exceeds any of our natural potential. Therefore, faith is the first step in tapping into the spiritual realm, and it is the only way to truly have dominion.

### **Faith Is A Prerequisite For Having Dominion**

The story of George Muller reminds us that faith is a prerequisite for having dominion. At every stage of the dominion mandate, we must have faith in God; faith in the seeds He has planted in us, and faith in the purpose He has impressed upon our lives. We must have faith that He will open doors and avenues for our expansion. We must trust in the Holy Spirit to give us discernment on how to

maneuver through each stage of our journey. We must believe that He will guide us and protect us, that God will favor and empower us. And when we make mistakes or fall, we must trust God to correct, forgive and comfort us.

It is very possible for some of us to achieve greatness on our natural abilities alone. We can be fruitful, multiply, replenish and subdue without necessarily trusting God. But what an unfortunate case that would be, for the Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God. It is not impossible to be successful without faith, but of what value is great achievement at the expense of God's approval. As Mark 8: 36 says, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”*

### **What Is Faith?**

Faith is not probability, luck or even willpower. All of these operate under natural laws. Faith is different from these because it functions under spiritual law. When probability or will power is employed, you are tapping into nature. When faith is applied, you are tapping into God's power. Hebrews 11:1 tells us,

*<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Faith is assurance we have, when we cannot trust what stands before us. It is the confidence that what we see will soon be different. That the reality before us is bound to change. Faith is a different lens where hope is in focus, and reality is blurred. In essence, faith is using the spirit of God that is within us, in order to suspend the sight of our natural eyes so that we may see through God's vision, vaster, broader, deeper and higher possibilities than the mind or eye can imagine.

### **Can We Walk By Faith And Not By Sight?**

What does it mean to walk by faith and not by sight? <sup>39</sup> It means that we must not be discouraged if what we see in our lives is not what we hope to see. To walk by faith means that you do not dwell on the unpleasant circumstances that you see. It means that you don't rely on statistics and science, trends or the latest reports. For those things only have authority in the natural realm. Instead, when we walk by faith rather than by sight, we focus on the hope and the assurances that we have from God's word. Opposition will certainly come. But we have to trust more in God's word and His promises to us, than we believe what we see, what we feel, or what we read in the news, because as solid as those things may appear, God's authority is greater than sight, emotion, and even science.

How much could we achieve? How much further could our talents reach if we could become almost blind to our current reality and natural line of sight? How much greater would our potential become if instead, we saw vividly the possibility that is in God's view? Can we have the faith of George Muller and be able to commit to planning a seven million dollar building project while holding only two cedis in our hand? Can we sincerely and earnestly thank God for today's meal while standing in front of an empty cupboard? Can we trust so deeply that God will change the forces of nature in the midst of a storm, and soften the hearts of men in our favor? For this is the substance of faith, and the power it holds.

### **Faith Without Works Is Dead**

What I would like to leave you with is a call to action. After all, the Dominion Mandate is action-oriented. It says, "be," "discover," "plant," "sow," "multiply," "diversify," "expand," "distribute," "replenish," "fill," "occupy," "spread," "subdue," "contend," "transcend," "sustain," "defend," "protect," etc... These are all verbs. And though faith is an essential part of pleasing God, and having dominion, James 2:26 tells us that,

*<sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Some of us fall into the trap of exclusively waiting on God, while we sit on our abilities. Yes, we are certainly supposed to wait on Him and trust in Him. That is our spiritual mode of operation. But while we are earnestly trusting God and patiently waiting on Him, we must not ignore what He has already given us, like the servant in the parable with only one talent. While we wait for God to do what only He can do, we must not neglect to do what it is that we can do. Even if what we have to offer is small, go out and use it. If the idea you have is simple, go out and try it. Try it while trusting God to make it work. We cannot achieve dominion on faith and prayer alone. George Muller did not achieve it without effort on his own part. He did what was in his power, yet he always knew that God's power would cover the rest.

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<sup>3</sup> “mandate.” New Oxford American Dictionary: 2nd Edition. 2005. Oxford University Press, Inc .

<sup>4</sup> See Romans 12: 2

<sup>5</sup> “dominion.” Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, 2011. Web. 9 March 2012.

<sup>6</sup> “radah” Biblesuite.com. 2011. Web. 10 March 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Although all of the Biblical references in this book come from the new King James Version of the Bible, I have used the original King James translation in this particular instance, which uses the word “replenish” rather than “fill.”

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<sup>9</sup> Bob Deffingough. “Higher Than the Angels (Hebrews 1:4-14).” Bible.org. 2012. Web. 19 November 2012.

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<sup>20</sup> "replenish." New Oxford American Dictionary: 2nd Edition. 2005. Oxford University Press, Inc.

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