

LWML *Texas* District

April 2023

Bible Study

Multiplication and Division

Do you enjoy doing math? My friends often accuse me of finding every opportunity to do math. I want the facts. I want to know how it all adds up or divides out. I consistently ask, “How does this all work out?” God seems to like math too. He makes things multiply. What exactly does God say and do in Genesis 1:22 and 28?

His first action in both of those verses is He blesses. He blesses His creation and then tells them to be fruitful and multiply. He tells His creation to fill the air of the sky and the waters of the sea. He tells humanity to be fruitful and multiply. He tells us we have dominion over the land and animals. We are to be stewards of it. Stewards or managers have a big role to play in whatever their area of responsibility. What are some things stewards of a property or managers of a business must contend with?

How does this same God-appointed role impact humanity’s actions on the earth with natural creation?

The command to steward the earth in Genesis takes place before the fall. It takes place before everything was broken by sin. What came into existence at the fall? Read Genesis 3:8–20.

If you spend any time in a garden you know how quickly weeds multiply. Those pesky misplaced plants seem to take over during the night. One brief rain storm, and boom, weeds everywhere. When sin enters the world, it quickly creates many issues for humanity. There are consequences for the serpent, Adam, Eve, and all the world. Previously, there had been no death, no thorns, no hard ground, no pain in childbearing, and snakes apparently didn’t even crawl with their bellies. Worse yet though, after the fall into sin there is a rift between man and God. Adam hides himself from God. He tries to run away so to speak. It would be fair to say, we still do this today. We do something against God’s will, and we try to hide it. Like the kid in the movie who spills milk on the floor and attempts to cover it with a rug. The act of covering it up only makes things worse for later.

God’s desire for His creation is one of multiplication and purpose. In Genesis 1, God first gave a blessing, and then told His creation to be fruitful and multiply, and then act. When we look at what humans tend to do instead is we end up looking something like the early church, and not in a good way.

The book of Romans is the longest epistle, or letter, Paul writes. It is an incredibly beneficial book for all believers, laying down the basics of the Christian faith and clarifying doctrinal issues. The church in Rome was populated by both Jews and Gentiles. For a period of time, they lived in peace with one another, then Claudius kicked out all the Jews of Rome. The absence of the Jewish population for five years seems to have had a major impact on the Roman church. Immediately, their time apart impacted how they were worshipping God. Think for a moment about a time in your life, where the absence of a person or group of people caused some stark changes within how life was done, or the rules you were expected to follow. It can happen pretty quickly, and especially when you are raised in one way, you have a tendency to fall back into those patterns during times of upheaval.

Paul spends a considerable amount of time talking about the divisions within the church. Because of the long-standing covenant, the Jews have with God, they believe the Gentiles are less holy. Read Romans 3:1–4, 9–11. What does Paul point out here about the human condition?

Have you ever found yourself guilty of thinking you are better or better off than others because you do the right things? “Oh well those people, they never come to church.” “Oh, those people never help with anything.” “I should get my way because I do [blank], others don’t so I’m more valuable to the church [to God].” Those words sting a little, don’t they? We are all guilty of putting ourselves above others. Our wants first, then we can accommodate someone else, if it’s not too big of an inconvenience to our wants.

Read Romans 3:22–24. What stands out to you in this passage? Is there anything you have not noticed before or were reminded of?

“No one is righteous” apart from God. We are naturally divided from God because of our sins. We are made holy through Christ. We are redeemed and made acceptable by the blood of Jesus. He is the Author of our faith. He is the only way.

Jesus also talks about division in the last days. Read Matthew 13:36–43, 47–50, and 25:31–46. What are some similarities in these passages?

What are some differences in the passages?

What do they say about Jesus and about the end of time?

Considering the Romans passage, what do we know about who will be on each side?

The Matthew 25 passage points beyond faith. Those who have faith will live by it. They will show mercy, love, and generosity to those who are in need. It is faith in Jesus that saves, but that faith is not dead. That faith is very much alive and is acting in the community, which brings us back to how God likes to multiply.

God wants to see His creation multiply in ways that honor Him and fulfill his purpose. Read Acts 2:38–41, 42–47. The context for the beginning of Acts 2 is the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples at Pentecost. The later passage from Acts 2 is after Pentecost. It doesn't give us a time frame for it, but it could have been immediately afterwards or several months out. Regardless of the time, God was still working in big ways. If we are following the multiplying example of the early church (Acts 2:42–47), what are some things God is calling us to do? How are we doing this on a regular basis?

We have a God who desires growth for His people. He desires all to come to know Him. He desires us to be repentant and live lives of faith. Our faith in Jesus as Savior should be an encouragement to us, and we should use that encouragement as a spring board to share God's unending love with others. When we divide, we are doing the opposite of what God wants for us. He wants us to be unified in our faith in Jesus. We are to focus on the blessings from God, and then use those blessings to bless others.

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Multiplication and Division
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Published by Lutheran Women's Missionary League Texas District
Christian Life Committee, 2023