

DOMINION OVER SELF

By David Norris

“We have met
the enemy, and
he is us.”
Walt Kelly

BEGINNING WITH ME

What would we think of a skilled umpire who felt too self-conscious to actually call balls and strikes? Or what about a gifted builder who just couldn't seem to finish a project? Or how about a man who had significant dreams and goals but wouldn't pursue them because he just couldn't get any traction to begin? If the truth were told, there are times when we are just like each one of these people. Sometimes we are intimidated, we procrastinate, and we don't pursue our dreams because they are too big. It was Walt Kelly who first said, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.”

When Kelly first suggested that we might be our own enemy, what he had in mind was that we as humans haven't done a very good job in caring for the earth.

For Kelly, it is important that humans take dominion over the planet so that the world will be safe and clean. Whatever one's opinion of environmentalism, it is certain that Kelly's focus on the principle of dominion is biblical. The word “dominion” means “to take charge, or to be in control.” Gen. 1:26 (NKJV) declares that man should, “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.”

When God commanded the human race to take dominion, however, he had more in mind than just taking control over the environment. Further, the divine command was not merely given to humankind in order to charge them with some sort of collective obligation. Actually, God's proclamation was to each one of us individually. **He insists that we should first take charge over our own specific “world,” and this begins when each of us starts by taking dominion over our own selves.** We have been empowered to do so,

for Gen. 1:26-27 explains that we have been created in the image of God.¹ That is, **we have been endowed by our Maker with God-given abilities to create, to take charge, and to plan our future, "hard-wired" with the ability to succeed.** Intuitively, we understand this; that is why we readily celebrate and follow those who have successfully taken control of their lives and are accomplishing important tasks.

Each one of us has goals we would like to accomplish. Perhaps we want to eat better, get in shape, save money, or become more spiritual. Unfortunately, while we know that we are capable of doing better, **we all have things that hinder us from making significant changes.** It may be that our family circumstances make success difficult ... There may be too many

READ

Gen. 1:26, Ps. 8:4-6

RESPOND

In the verses above, what do you think dominion means?

What's the first step toward taking dominion?

demands on our time ... The workplace may be requiring too much of us ... The emotional needs of those closest to us may be so great that we can hardly find time to think about change. Yet, if we were really honest with ourselves, we would realize that none of these external hindrances are actually keeping us from accomplishing the things that we really want to do. At the end of the day, the enemy is not someplace "out there," but actually, the greatest "enemy" is ourselves.

TAKING DOMINION

While all goals require effort, not all goals are created equal. John Lamedica reportedly achieved a world record by lying in a coffin with more than twenty-thousand live hissing cockroaches. Such an achievement is notable but not insurmountable. There is every

Name three goals you have in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What's hindering you from achieving each one?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

REFLECT

Sow a thought, reap an action;
Sow an action, reap at habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny.
-Samuel Smiles