



Changing the

A resource for
families and churches

Climate

Applying the Bible
in a climate emergency

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The Bible Reading Fellowship

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in a climate emergency*

Debbie, David and Jamie Hawker



Dedicated to Chris and Susanna Naylor,
who pioneered A Rocha Lebanon; and Miranda Harris,
co-founder of the conservation charity A Rocha.
These three, who tragically died in an accident in October 2019,
set a beautiful example of following Christ faithfully
in caring for his world.

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3 Reasons to care for creation: faith in action

Should we care about the environment? Why, or why not?

If you are already convinced that we need to care for creation, feel free to skip quickly through this chapter. But maybe you've heard that if you're a Christian, it'll work out fine in the end. God has promised not to repeat the destruction of the great flood, so how could we destroy the world or human life on it? We have heard that this life is just a rehearsal, and our home is not on earth but in heaven. Why should we care about fallen creation?

If you're unsure, or want ideas to help persuade others, see what you think of the following eight reasons to express our faith by caring for creation.

Bible passages

GENESIS 1:24–28

And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their

kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’

GENESIS 2:15, 19

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it...

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

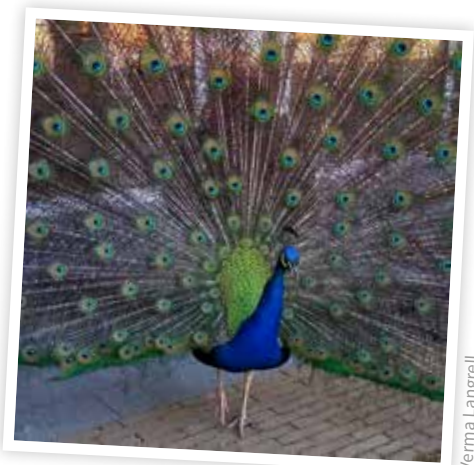
Eight reasons to care for creation

1 Respect for the creator

Genesis 1 says that God created the earth, plants, animals and humans, and saw that they were good. God created a good creation. It is right to respect it.¹

It is said that Leonardo da Vinci was once close to finishing a painting he had been working on for months, when he offered his paintbrush to a student and said, ‘You finish it... Will not what I have done inspire you to do your best?’² How would da Vinci have felt if the student had deliberately ruined the masterpiece, pouring oil and food over it and throwing it away? The artist would rightly have felt saddened and aggrieved.

Now consider God the artist. God created an amazing world, with glorious sunsets, exquisite snowflakes, delicate flowers, awesome waterfalls and a huge variety of beautiful butterflies, birds and other animals. As the psalmist says, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it' (Psalm 24:1).



Verma Langrell

Creation displays the nature and power of God (Psalm 19:1-2; Romans 1:20). Creation was made through and for Jesus (Colossians 1:16). God handed us the task of taking care of this amazing creation and adding our brushstrokes to the picture. We respect God by caring for creation.

What are some of your favourite parts of God's creation?

Did you know?

A third of all plant and animal species present in 2020 are likely to be extinct by 2070, owing to man-made climate change. Scientists say that we are in the sixth mass extinction, with vertebrate species disappearing at 100 times the natural rate.³

Young people around the world: From abandonment to helping those in need in Burundi

In Burundi, Grace Nduwimana was abandoned at birth, probably because her mother was unable to provide for her. She was found inside a toilet (not a bathroom, an actual toilet). A local nurse rescued her and cleaned her. When she was five days old, a woman called Chrissie took her in and brought her up. Grace was deaf until she was six months old (possibly due to strong antibiotics she had been given after being found in the toilet). After being prayed for and anointed with oil, her hearing returned.



GLO

As a teenager, Grace babysat for the Guillebaud family, who set up GLO. After completing her education, Grace started to work for GLO, helping others who are in need as she once was. Grace is aware of the impact of climate change, and says, 'Unpredictable weather patterns make it difficult to plan for the planting season in Burundi. Many people here are afraid of starving to death.'



Jamie's tips

- 1** The people who suffer most from the effects of climate change generally live in poor countries, such as Burundi. Pray for these people.
- 2** Research some of the island nations that are under threat of going under water.
- 3** Read more Bible passages about creation. Job 39 is a good place to start.
- 4** God is the creator, and we are made in God's image, so we can be creative too. Create something to celebrate the wonder

of creation, such as a picture, photograph, collage, poem or descriptive paragraph. Or write out and decorate this verse:

You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all.

NEHEMIAH 9:6 (NLT)

- 5** One person in a rich country like the UK emits as much **carbon dioxide** as hundreds of people in Burundi, which is unfair. Read Part 3 to learn how to reduce your **carbon footprint**, so that there is less inequality between you and the people of Burundi.
- 6** Jesus said, 'Consider how the wild flowers grow' (Luke 12:27). Think about the flowers, plants and animals and ways of looking after them.
- 7** Pick up litter. This can be as simple as picking rubbish up in parks in your local community. If you visit a beach, pick up rubbish to stop it polluting the sea. It is best to wear gloves (or use a litter picker) to avoid harming yourself. Recycle what you can.

What young people are doing



Alice Lonsdale, 4, picks up litter with her mother Emily

Glenda Howcroft

- 8 Find out from people who go to climate strikes or protests, or who take other action against climate change, what their reasons are. This might help you become clearer about your own reasons for taking action.
- 9 Be creative and make something, such as cakes, biscuits, cards or crafts, to raise money to provide food, education and other assistance in Burundi. To donate, go to greatlakesoutreach.org.
- 10 Stop polluting the sea. Avoid products containing microbeads, tiny plastic particles that are a growing source of ocean pollution, killing animals. Avoid products with polyethylene or polypropylene on the ingredients list. Choose eco-friendly cleaning products or make your own cleaning products.²² You can use natural soap nuts in the washing machine instead of washing powder with chemicals in.²³ Vinegar can be used as a water softener and to remove stains.
- 11 Offer to give a talk to a youth group, church or another group on why we should care about climate change and what we can do. You could use the information from this book to help.
- 12 Join (or form) a group of people fighting for **climate justice**. Encourage each other, share ideas of actions you can take and work together so that you can achieve more.

Which of these do you already do?

Which will you attempt to do this month?



Enabling all ages to grow in faith



Anna Chaplaincy
Living Faith
Messy Church
Parenting for Faith

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is a Christian charity that resources individuals and churches. Our vision is to enable people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible and to see more people equipped to exercise their gifts in leadership and ministry.

To find out more about our work, visit
brf.org.uk

Take a sprinkling from every book in the Bible.
Evenly apply climate science. Mix in young people and
watch them rise. Add flavours from around the world.
Check the temperature. Taste and see.

The climate crisis is one of the most important issues of our time, threatening lives and livelihoods. The Bible teaches us that God the creator put humans on the earth to take care of it, to show love to all and to care for the poor and vulnerable.

Changing the Climate unpacks a series of Bible passages to show the Bible's relevance to environmentalism and how we can all play our part in limiting the negative effects of climate change. This workbook can be used by families, youth groups, church study groups and individuals. Each of the twelve chapters looks at a particular Bible passage, connects it with climate action, poses questions, suggests practical steps that can be taken and provides stories from around the world.



The Hawkers are a Christian family who are taking action for climate justice. Psychologists Debbie and David Hawker work with Tearfund and mission organisations. Their teenage son Jamie also campaigns on climate issues and is part of the 'Green Agents of Change' initiative within the Methodist Church.

'I wish this book had been available when my children were younger! It's wise and informative yet wonderfully easy to read. It moves from the biblical to the practical, the local to the global, making the complex simple and succeeding in being both deeply challenging yet also life-affirming and hope-giving.'

Rev'd Dr Dave Bookless, A Rocha International



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