



THE OTHER GREAT COMMISSION **RESOURCE PACK**

THIS PACK COMPRISES:

- Lead Article sketching in the background and key ideas.
- Small Group Study Guide (5 parts)
- 5-Day Devotional Plan
- Leader's Scripture Guide
- Youth Group Adaptations and Object Lessons
- Family Discussion Sheet
- Youth Message Resources
- Youth Small Group Leader Guidelines
- Social Media Graphic Text Template
- Parent Follow-Up Email Template
- Youth Service Project Template
- Leader's Curated Reading List



LEAD ARTICLE: THE OTHER GREAT COMMISSION

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When Christians hear the phrase "The Great Commission," their minds almost universally fly to the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel. There, Jesus instructs His disciples to go into all the world, make disciples, and baptise the nations. This evangelical mandate is foundational to the identity of the Church. However, long before Christ uttered these words on a Galilean mountainside, God issued another foundational directive at the very dawn of creation. Recorded in Genesis 2:15, this mandate establishes humanity's primary relationship with the physical world: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." This verse outlines what can rightly be called "The Other Great Commission"—the cultural and ecological mandate given to humankind. Far from being an outdated piece of ancient poetry, this commission remains an active, binding, and urgent responsibility for all of humanity.

To fully grasp the weight of Genesis 2:15, one must first recognise its scope. This was not a localised work order meant solely for a historical figure named Adam; it was a representative commission given to all of humankind. In the Genesis narrative, Adam stands as the archetype and federal head of humanity. The tasks assigned to him reflect the inherent purpose for which the entire human race was designed. God created human beings in His own image, and immediately following that creation, He defined their function through the lens of stewardship. By placing humanity in the garden to work and care for it, God established our species as His earthly vice-regents. We were created to mediate God's good rule over the physical creation, reflecting His character through our governance of the earth.

Crucially, this original commission has never been rescinded. Throughout biblical history, despite the catastrophic entry of sin into the world in Genesis 3, God's expectations for human stewardship never changed. The Fall distorted human nature and made our work frustrating, but it did not cancel our job description. When the global flood receded in Genesis 9, God renewed His covenant with Noah and his descendants, re-establishing the human responsibility to cultivate and multiply upon the earth. The New Testament reinforces this continuity. The redemption offered through Jesus Christ does not extract believers from the physical world; rather, it restores them to their original purpose. To argue that the spiritual Great Commission of Matthew 28 replaces the cultural commission of Genesis 2:15 is to misunderstand the holistic nature of God's redemptive plan. The gospel saves human beings so that they can finally fulfil the destiny for which they were created, which includes the proper care of the cosmos.

To fully comprehend the nature of this unrevoked calling, Genesis 2:15 must be read as the essential interpretive key to Genesis 1:28. In the first chapter of Genesis, God commands humanity to "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." Historically, critics have pointed to the specific vocabulary of this text to accuse Judeo-Christian theology of promoting a tyrannical, exploitative attitude toward nature. However, a deeper linguistic and contextual examination reveals a far more benevolent architecture.

The first controversial term is *kabash*, translated as "subdue." In a raw, ancient near-eastern context, *kabash* does carry a strong, forceful connotation—implying the bringing of order out of wilderness, or taming a wild, untamed reality. It is an engineering and agricultural term, signifying the transformation of a chaotic environment into a place where life can safely inhabit and flourish.

The second term, *radah*, translated as "rule" or "have dominion," describes the exercise of royal authority. Crucially, in biblical theology, kingship is strictly evaluated by how well the monarch protects the weak and ensures the flourishing of the realm. A king who destroys his own land is a failure.

Genesis 2:15 acts as the immediate divine commentary on what this *kabash* and *radah* look like in practice. By placing the human being in the garden to "work it and take care of it," God defines biblical dominion not as rapacious exploitation, but as benevolent stewardship. The macro-commission of chapter one (to rule the earth) is given its micro-expression in chapter two (to serve the garden). Therefore, subduing the earth does not mean crushing it into submission; it means bringing order out of chaos and unlocking its potential. Dominion is redefined from a licence to exploit into a responsibility to protect. True human sovereignty over creation mimics the sovereignty of God Himself—a rule characterised by life-giving care, provision, and sustaining love.

Understanding the full meaning of this stewardship requires a close examination of the original Hebrew verbs used in Genesis 2:15: *abad* and *shamar*. Frequently translated as "to work" and "to keep" (or "take care of"), these words carry deep theological implications. The verb *abad* fundamentally means to serve, till, or cultivate. It implies active engagement, labour, and development. Humanity was not placed in a static paradise to exist as passive consumers. Instead, we were invited to be co-creators with God, unlocking the hidden potential of creation through science, art, agriculture, and technology. Cultivation means taking the raw materials of the earth and shaping them in ways that cause human and animal life to flourish.

Conversely, the verb *shamar* means to guard, keep, watch over, or preserve. This word provides the vital counterweight to *abad*. While *abad* permits us to use, develop, and alter our environment, *shamar* commands us to protect it from degradation. It places strict boundaries on human ambition, forbidding exploitation, destruction, and reckless consumption. Taken together, *abad* and *shamar* demand a delicate balance of development and conservation. Interestingly, these identical Hebrew words are used later in the Old Testament to describe the duties of the Levitical priests who guarded and served in the Tabernacle. This linguistic connection elevates ecological stewardship to the level of a priestly duty. Caring for the earth is an act of worship.

The implications of this commission for the modern world are vast and challenging. First, it completely dismantles the secular dichotomy between environmentalism and human progress. Scripture offers a framework where human flourishing and ecological health are inextricably linked. We cannot care for people if we destroy the environment that sustains them, nor can we idolise nature at the expense of human dignity.

Second, the permanence of this mandate forces a radical reassessment of our economic and industrial systems. A biblical view of stewardship convicts the global community of its systemic greed, pollution, and short-sighted depletion of natural resources. If the earth belongs to the Lord, then humanity is merely a tenant, accountable to the Landlord for how the property is treated.

In terms of contemporary application, the synthesis of Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 provides a robust framework for confronting pressing modern crises. Consider the reality of global climate change and accelerating deforestation, particularly in critical ecological engines like the Amazon basin. When vast swaths of rainforest are clear-cut for short-term financial gains, humanity violently violates the *shamar* (guarding) boundary of the commission. Deforestation accelerates species extinction and disrupts global weather patterns, leading to extreme weather that disproportionately harms the global poor.

Similarly, the ongoing crisis of plastic pollution in the world's oceans demonstrates a failure to *abad* (cultivate) responsibly. Instead of managing materials with priestly care, human industries treat the planet as a landfill. Applying Genesis 2:15 to modern infrastructure demands a transition away from soil-depleting industrial monoculture toward sustainable agriculture. In corporate spaces, it requires replacing the single-minded pursuit of short-term profit with a "triple bottom line" that factors in economic viability, human dignity, and ecological impact. On an individual

level, it dictates a lifestyle transformation marked by conscious consumption, waste reduction, and active local conservation.

Despite the biblical clarity of this mandate, several prevalent theological objections persist within modern religious circles. The first is an **escapist eschatology**, often summarised by the idea that "the world is going to burn anyway, so why care for it?" This view misinterprets texts like 2 Peter 3 regarding the fire of judgment. Biblical scholars point out that the "fire" described is metallurgical—a fire of purification, not annihilation. Just as Noah's flood cleansed the world rather than erasing it from existence, the ultimate destiny of creation is resurrection and renewal (Romans 8:19-22), not total destruction. To abuse the earth because it will eventually be renewed is as illogical as abusing our physical bodies because we are promised a resurrected body.

A second objection claims that **environmentalism is a distraction from the gospel**. Proponents of this view argue that evangelism and saving souls are the only tasks that truly matter, making ecological concerns a secondary or even wasteful pursuit. However, this creates a false dichotomy. The gospel is the announcement that Jesus Christ is Lord over all creation, reconciling all things to Himself (Colossians 1:20). Caring for the environment is not a distraction from the gospel; it is a visible demonstration of the gospel's power to heal the broken relationships caused by sin, including humanity's relationship with the earth.

Finally, some fear that environmental stewardship leads to **pantheism or nature worship**. They worry that elevating the care of creation will compromise the uniqueness of human dignity. Yet, Genesis strikes a perfect balance. It clearly distinguishes the Creator from the creation, preventing idolatry, while simultaneously exalting humanity's role *within* creation as caregivers. We do not serve nature; we serve the Creator *by* caring for nature.

Ultimately, "The Other Great Commission" calls humankind back to its original vocation. We are called to be servant-kings, using our immense power, intellect, and creativity to foster a world where creation thrives. By embracing our role as the faithful gardeners of God's earth, we honour the Creator, serve our neighbours, and fulfil a sacred, unrevoked duty that dates back to the very first week of time.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE: THE OTHER GREAT COMMISSION

Discovering Our Unrevoked Vocation in Genesis 2:15

This study guide is designed to help small groups, Sunday school classes, or individual students dig deeper into the biblical mandate for environmental and cultural stewardship.

Part 1: Foundations & Scope

Genesis 2:15 – "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **The Shared Mandate:** The essay states that Genesis 2:15 was given to "humankind" as a representative body, not just to a single historical figure named Adam. How does shifting your perspective from "Adam's job" to "humanity's job description" change the way you view your everyday work and activities?
 2. **The Unrevoked Calling:** Why is it significant that God never cancelled or rescinded this commission after the Fall (Genesis 3) or after the Flood (Genesis 9)? How does this continuity challenge the idea that the physical world no longer matters to God?
 3. **Redemption and Creation:** Discuss the statement: *"The gospel saves human beings so that they can finally fulfil the destiny for which they were created."* How does salvation in Christ empower us to be better stewards of the physical world?
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Part 2: The Interpretive Key (Genesis 1:28 vs. 2:15)

Genesis 1:28 – "...fill the earth and subdue (kabash) it. Rule (radah) over... every living creature."

Word Study Breakout

- **Kabash (Subdue):** Bringing order out of wild chaos; unlocking potential so life can safely flourish.

- **Radah (Rule/Dominion):** Exercising royal authority characterised by life-giving care, mimicking God's own benevolent rule.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **Reframing Dominion:** Secular critics often blame Judeo-Christian theology for environmental destruction, pointing to words like "subdue" and "dominion." How does Genesis 2:15 ("work it and take care of it") serve as a corrective commentary on Genesis 1:28?
2. **The Character of a King:** In biblical theology, a king's success is judged by how well he protects and sustains his realm. If humanity is meant to act as God's "vice-regents" on earth, what should human leadership over nature look like on a corporate or governmental level?
3. **Order from Chaos:** In what ways do modern human activities cross the line from "bringing order out of chaos" (*kabash*) into creating new forms of environmental chaos?

Part 3: The Priestly Gardeners

Hebrew Exegesis: Abad (to serve/cultivate) and Shamar (to guard/preserve).

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **The Delicate Balance:** *Abad* allows us to use and develop the earth (agriculture, technology, cities), while *shamar* commands us to protect it from degradation. Where do you see modern society succeeding at *abad* but failing at *shamar*?
2. **The Priestly Connection:** The words *abad* and *shamar* are the exact terms used later in scripture to describe the duties of the priests guarding the Tabernacle. How does viewing ecological stewardship as a "priestly duty" change it from a political issue into an act of worship?
3. **Active Co-Creators:** God did not create a static world; He left it with hidden potential for humans to unlock. What are some positive ways human creativity (science, art, sustainable engineering) fulfils the call to *abad*?

Part 4: Contemporary Applications & Crisis

Addressing Climate Change, Deforestation, and Pollution.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **The Global Neighbour:** The essay notes that deforestation and extreme weather patterns disproportionately harm the global poor. How is environmental stewardship directly tied to Jesus' command to "love your neighbour"?
2. **The Triple Bottom Line:** How can businesses transition from chasing pure short-term financial profit to a model that values economic health, human dignity, and environmental protection equally? What obstacles prevent this?
3. **Personal Landlord Audit:** If the earth belongs to the Lord (Psalm 24:1) and we are merely tenants, how would you evaluate your personal lifestyle regarding consumption, waste, and local conservation? What is one practical change you can make this week?

Part 5: Overcoming Theological Objections

Dismantling Misconceptions.

Objection Matrix for Group Discussion

Objection	Biblical Counter-Argument
"The world is going to burn anyway, so why care?"	2 Peter 3 describes a fire of metallurgical <i>purification</i> and renewal, not total annihilation. Romans 8:19-22 promises creation will be resurrected, not discarded.
"Environmentalism distracts from saving souls."	Colossians 1:20 states Jesus is reconciling <i>all things</i> to Himself. Demonstrating care for creation proves the gospel's power to heal all broken relationships.
"This leads to pantheism/nature worship."	Genesis clearly separates the Creator from creation. We do not worship the garden; we worship the Landlord <i>by</i> caring for His property.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Which of these three objections have you encountered most frequently in religious circles? Why do you think it is so persistent?
 2. Read **Romans 8:19-22**. If creation itself is "groaning" in anticipation of redemption, how should the Church behave toward nature while we wait for Christ's return?
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Moving Forward: Personal Action Plan

Close your study by choosing at least **one specific area** of engagement for the upcoming month:

- **Education:** Read a book or watch a documentary on sustainable local agriculture or conservation biology from a Christian worldview.
- **Reduction:** Commit to reducing single-use plastic or food waste in your household by a measurable percentage.
- **Cultivation:** Plant a local native garden, volunteer for a community cleanup, or support an organisation dedicated to reforestation or wildlife protection.

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL PLAN: THE OTHER GREAT COMMISSION

Designed for individual daily reflection throughout the week.

Day 1: The Original Job Description

- **Scripture Focus:** Genesis 2:15; Psalm 8:3-8
- **Devotional:** Long before career paths, corporate ladders, or digital economies existed, humanity was given its first job description. God placed us in a functioning, breathing garden and told us to work. We often separate our spiritual lives from our physical work, viewing our jobs as a mere means to an end. But Genesis 2:15 proves that engaging with, cultivating, and tending to the physical world is a holy vocation. You are not an accidental tourist on planet Earth; you are a designated caretaker.
- **Reflective Action:** Look around your immediate environment today (your home, desk, or neighbourhood). How can you intentionally bring order, beauty, or care to that physical space as an act of obedience to God?

Day 2: The Meaning of True Dominion

- **Scripture Focus:** Genesis 1:28; Matthew 20:25-28
- **Devotional:** The secular world often views the biblical command to "subdue" the earth as a license for environmental destruction. However, Jesus completely flipped the script on what leadership looks like. He reminded us that in God's kingdom, rulers are servants. If Genesis 2:15 is the lens through which we read Genesis 1:28, then our "dominion" over the earth must look

exactly like Jesus' dominion over us—self-sacrificing, life-giving, and protective.

- **Reflective Action:** Think about something you "control" or own (money, property, a vehicle). How can you pivot from simply using it for your own comfort to stewarding it for the flourishing of others and creation?

Day 3: Priests of the Soil

- **Scripture Focus:** Numbers 3:7-8; Psalm 24:1
- **Devotional:** The Hebrew words *abad* (serve/work) and *shamar* (guard/keep) are later used exclusively to describe the duties of the Levites in the Tabernacle. This means your care for the physical world is not just a secular chore; it is a priestly duty. When we recycle, conserve water, or plant trees, we are maintaining God's cosmic sanctuary. The earth belongs to the Lord, and we are serving in His temple.
- **Reflective Action:** Before you throw away plastic, buy groceries, or consume energy today, pause and pray: *"Lord, help me treat Your property with the respect due to its true Owner."*

Day 4: Loving Neighbours by Loving the Land

- **Scripture Focus:** Leviticus 19:9-10; Romans 8:19-22
- **Devotional:** Environmental degradation is rarely victimless. When rivers are polluted, air quality drops, or forests are stripped, it is almost always the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised populations who suffer the immediate consequences. Environmental care is not a luxury hobby for the wealthy; it is a baseline requirement for fulfilling the second greatest commandment: to love our neighbours as ourselves.
- **Reflective Action:** Research a local or global environmental issue that impacts human health. Pray for those affected and look for one organisation working to bring healing to both the people and the land.

Day 5: Designed for Resurrection

- **Scripture Focus:** Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 21:1-5
- **Devotional:** Our ultimate hope as Christians is not an escape from a physical reality into a disembodied cloud-heaven. God's grand plan is the resurrection of our bodies and the renewal of the heavens and the earth. Because Jesus shed His blood to reconcile "all things" to Himself, the material world has eternal value. We care for creation today because we know it has a glorious future tomorrow.

- **Reflective Action:** Plant something today—a flower, a vegetable, or a small tree. Let the act of burying a seed in the dirt remind you of the hope of resurrection and renewal.
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LEADER'S DEEP-DIVE SCRIPTURAL GUIDE:

For small group leaders, teachers, and pastors looking to ground discussions in historical and textual context.

1. Macro-Dominion vs. Micro-Stewardship

- **Core Texts:** Genesis 1:26-28 vs. Genesis 2:15
- **Deep-Dive Context:** Ensure your group understands that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are complementary accounts of creation. Genesis 1 gives the "macro" view of the cosmos, using royal language (*kabash / radah*). Genesis 2 zooms in to the "micro" view of the garden, using familial and agricultural language (*abad / shamar*).
- **Cross-References for Teaching:**
 - **Psalms 72:12-14:** This Messianic psalm defines what perfect biblical "rule" looks like. The King rules by delivering the needy, pitying the weak, and saving the lives of the poor. Tyranny violates biblical kingship.
 - **Ezekiel 34:2-4:** God severely judges the leaders of Israel because they ruled harshly and brutally, feeding themselves while letting the flock perish. This shows God's hatred for abusive dominion.

2. The Priestly Connection (*Abad & Shamar*)

- **Core Texts:** Genesis 2:15 vs. Numbers 3:5-10
- **Deep-Dive Context:** The Holy Spirit intentionally chose specific vocabulary in Genesis 2. *Abad* means to slave for, work, or serve. *Shamar* means to put a hedge of thorns around, guard, or protect. When God sets up the Tabernacle system in the wilderness, He commands the Levites to *abad* (perform the service) and *shamar* (keep guard over) the tent of meeting. The garden was the first temple; the earth is its continuation.
- **Cross-References for Teaching:**
 - **Exodus 39:43:** Moses inspects the finished Tabernacle, sees that they did the work just as the Lord commanded, and blesses them. This directly echoes God evaluating His creation as "very good" in Genesis 1:31.

3. Cosmic Reconciliation and Eschatological Hope

- **Core Texts:** Romans 8:19-22; Colossians 1:20
 - **Deep-Dive Context:** Address the escapist theology directly. The Greek word used in **2 Peter 3:10** for elements "melting" or being "burned up" (*heurisko*) is translated in the earliest and best manuscripts as "will be found" or "disclosed." The fire of the final day is an unmasking of sin and a purification of reality, not an atomic vaporising of matter.
 - **Cross-References for Teaching:**
 - **Isaiah 65:17-25:** The promise of a new heaven and new earth explicitly includes physical elements: building houses, planting vineyards, and wolves feeding with lambs.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:35-44:** Paul uses the analogy of a seed to explain the physical resurrection. The seed dies and changes, but its fundamental identity remains. The new creation is the glorious "grown tree" of this current universe.
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YOUTH GROUP ADAPTATIONS & OBJECT LESSONS:

Engaging activities, object lessons, and discussion tracks scaled for middle and high school students.



Object Lesson 1: "The Borrowed Sports Car"

- **The Setup:** Bring in a pristine, highly detailed toy model of an expensive sports car, or show a video of one.
- **The Script:** *"Imagine a billionaire friend hands you the keys to their brand-new, multi-million dollar supercar. They tell you: 'Drive it, enjoy it, use it to get to school, but take immaculate care of it.' What happens if you return it with the windows smashed, trash in the back seat, and the engine ruined? You'd be in massive trouble. Why? Because privilege demands accountability."*
- **The Connection:** God is the billionaire. The earth is the supercar. We don't own it; we are just renting the seats. Genesis 2:15 means we have to hand the keys back to the Landlord one day. How are we treating His ride?



Object Lesson 2: "The Closed-System Aquarium"

- **The Setup:** Bring in a small, self-contained ecosystem jar or a completely sealed water bottle filled with murky water and trash next to a clean one.

- **The Script:** *"When God built the earth, He didn't include an exhaust pipe into outer space. Every piece of plastic we make, every chemical we dump, stays right here inside the greenhouse with us. We are literally drinking, eating, and breathing our own trash because we forgot our job to guard (shamar) the container."*

Youth Discussion Starters

1. **Insta vs. Reality:** We love taking aesthetic photos of sunsets, beaches, and mountains for social media. Why do you think we love the *look* of God's creation but often ignore the *care* of it in our daily habits (like dropping trash or wasting food)?
2. **The Trend Factor:** A lot of eco-friendly trends (like reusable bottles or thrifting clothes) are popular right now. Is caring for the earth just a temporary trend, or is it a permanent part of following Jesus? How can you tell the difference?
3. **School/Campus Audit:** Look around your school campus. Where do you see people breaking the Genesis 2:15 rule? How could you or your youth group step up to fix a specific local issue?



FAMILY DISCUSSION SHEET: THE GARDENERS IN THE LIVING ROOM

Bring the message of Genesis 2:15 home. Use this one-page guide around the dinner table or during family devotions.

The Big Idea

God didn't create humans to be passive tourists on Earth or destructive consumers. He created us to be **priestly caretakers**. Genesis 2:15 tells us we were put here to **cultivate** (*abad*—to work, serve, and unlock potential) and **protect** (*shamar*—to guard and keep safe) God's property. Because this mandate has never been canceled, every family is called to be a miniature team of gardeners for God's world.

Family Scripture Reading

Read **Genesis 2:15** and **Psalms 24:1-2** together out loud.

Conversation Starters

1. **The Landlord's House:** If someone rented our house and completely trashed it, how would we feel? Since Psalm 24 says "The earth is the Lord's," how do you think God feels when we don't take care of His property?

2. **Cultivate vs. Protect:** God wants us to make things out of the earth (like building houses, writing music, or cooking food), but He also wants us to protect it. Where is our family doing a good job of balancing *using* things with *protecting* things?
3. **The Trash Trail:** Think about what we throw away or waste every week (food, plastic, electricity). What is one small, practical change we can make *as a family* this week to better guard (*shamar*) our part of the neighbourhood?

The Family Challenge: "The 10-Minute Audit"

Sometime this week, set a timer for 10 minutes and walk through your home or yard together. Look for:

- Items that could be recycled or repurposed instead of thrown out.
- Ways to reduce energy or water waste.
- A space in your yard or neighbourhood that needs a little extra care, cleaning, or planting.

10-MINUTE YOUTH MESSAGE OUTLINE

Title: The Billionaire, the Supercar, and You

Text: Genesis 2:15 & Genesis 1:28

Target: Intermediate and High School Students (Years 7-13)

1. The Hook: The Keys to the Supercar (2 Minutes)

- **Visual Aid:** Hold up a pristine, highly detailed toy model of an expensive sports car, or display a picture of a multimillion-dollar vehicle on the screen.
- **The Story:** "Imagine a billionaire friend walks up to you today, drops a set of keys into your hand, and points to a brand-new, custom supercar. They tell you: *'It's yours to drive. Take it to school. Enjoy the speed. Blast the music. Use it. But... take immaculate care of it.'*
- **The Problem:** Now imagine you take that car, drive it into a ditch, smash the windows, throw fast-food trash all over the back seat, and completely destroy the engine. When the billionaire asks for the keys back, what's your excuse going to be? You'd be terrified. Why? Because massive privilege demands massive accountability."

2. The Text: The Landlord's Job Description (3 Minutes)

- **The Setup:** "A lot of people think the Bible gives humans a free pass to treat the planet like a giant garbage can. They look at Genesis 1:28, where God

says to 'subdue' the earth and 'have dominion,' and they think 'Dominion' means 'I can do whatever I want.' They think it's a license to exploit, destroy, and consume.

- **The Correction:** But God doesn't leave us to guess what 'dominion' means. In Genesis 2:15, He gives us the exact commentary. He takes human beings, puts them in the Garden, and tells them to do two things: *work it* and *take care of it*.
- **The Hebrew Drop:** In the original language, those words are *abad* and *shamar*.
 - *Abad* means to serve and cultivate. It means unlocking the earth's potential through science, art, technology, and creativity.
 - *Shamar* means to put a hedge of thorns around something. To guard it. To keep it safe from getting ruined.
- **The Point:** True biblical dominion isn't acting like a tyrant; it's acting like a servant-king. It means making the world a better, more beautiful place while fiercely protecting it from destruction. And guess what? This job description was given to all of human history, and God *never* cancelled it."

3. The Tension: The Greenhouse Has No Exhaust Pipe (3 Minutes)

- **The Reality Check:** "Here is the issue: we love the *look* of God's creation for our Instagram feeds, but we often ignore the *care* of it in our daily lives. We live in a culture of throwaway convenience. Fast fashion, endless plastic, massive food waste.
- **The Trap:** But God didn't build the earth with an exhaust pipe into outer space. Every single piece of trash we create, every river we pollute, stays right here in the container with us. And who gets hurt first? It's always the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised who suffer when the environment breaks down. When we trash the planet, we aren't just breaking God's rules; we are failing to love our global neighbours."
- **The Theological Fix:** "Some people say, '*Who cares? The world is going to burn anyway when Jesus returns!*' But that's bad theology. Romans 8 says creation is groaning, waiting for Jesus to *rescue* and *renew* it, not vaporise it. If God plans to resurrect and renew this physical world, then what we do to it right now matters immensely to Him."

4. The Call to Action: Grab the Gardening Tools (2 Minutes)

- **The Challenge:** "Following Jesus isn't just about saving your soul so you can escape to a cloud one day. It's about being restored to your original human

vocation: being a faithful gardener of God's earth. Caring for creation is an act of worship to the Creator.

- **How to Start:** So how do we hand the keys back to the Billionaire without being embarrassed?
 - **Kill the Waste:** Stop treating resources like they are infinite and cheap. Be conscious of what you consume and throw away.
 - **Change the Trend:** Move environmental care out of the 'secular political hobby' category and into your 'following Jesus' category.
 - **Fix Your Space:** Clean up your campus, plant something that brings life, and treat God's property with priestly respect.
 - **Final Thought:** Let's stop acting like bad tenants in our Father's house. Let's pick up the tools, guard the garden, and show the world what godly dominion actually looks like."
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YOUTH SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDELINES

Equip your small group leaders to transition students from the "Supercar" message into a vulnerable, honest, and actionable conversation.

Leader Objectives

- **De-politicise the Topic:** Help students see that environmental stewardship is a primary biblical directive (Genesis 2:15), not an ideology tethered to modern political parties.
- **Expose Convenience Culture:** Move students past surface-level agreement into analysing how their personal daily habits impact the planet and their global neighbours.
- **Drive to Action:** Ensure every student leaves with one tangible, microscopic lifestyle change they can execute immediately.

Discussion Flow & Questions

Phase 1: Icebreaker & Perspective Shift (The Supercar Context)

- **The Goal:** Ground the conversation in accountability and ownership.
- **Questions:**
 1. If a friend let you borrow something incredibly valuable to them (like a rare jersey, an expensive camera, or a car), how differently do you treat it compared to things you bought with your own money?

2. Read **Psalm 24:1**. If the earth belongs entirely to God, what are some ways we accidentally treat it like it belongs entirely to us?

Phase 2: Digging into the Word (Abad vs. Shamar)

- **The Goal:** Break down the semantic shift from "tyrannical dominion" to "priestly care."
- **Questions:**
 3. Look at the word *Shamar* (to guard, protect, build a hedge around). Where in our modern world do you think human beings are failing to guard the earth?
 4. Cultivating (*Abad*) means taking raw materials and making things better (like writing a song, baking bread, or engineering clean energy). What is a positive way you can use your hobbies, passions, or future career goals to fulfil this command?

Phase 3: The Convenience Trap & Global Neighbours

- **The Goal:** Connect personal ethics to the second greatest commandment (Love Your Neighbour).
- **Questions:**
 5. Be totally honest: What is the hardest part about making eco-friendly choices (like avoiding single-use plastics, driving less, reducing food waste, or choosing sustainable clothing)? Is it cost, laziness, or just social pressure?
 6. Extreme weather, pollution, and deforestation always hurt communities in poverty first and worst. How does realising this change environmental stewardship from a "nature hobby" into a way we physically love our global neighbours?

Phase 4: Application & Wrap-Up

- **The Goal:** Lock in a single, concrete step.
- **Questions:**
 7. What is one specific, tiny change you can make in your bedroom, your home, or your school campus this week to be a better "gardener"? (e.g., cutting shower times, refusing plastic water bottles, picking up trash at school, shutting off unused electronics).



SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHIC TEXT TEMPLATE PACK

Copy and paste these templates for Instagram, TikTok, or your youth ministry communication channels (like Discord or WhatsApp groups). Use high-quality nature imagery, clean text overlays, or clips from the message.

Post 1: The Hook (Feed Post / Carousel)

- **Slide 1 Graphic Text:** The Keys to the Supercar. 
- **Slide 2 Graphic Text:** Imagine a billionaire hands you the keys to a multimillion-dollar supercar and says: *"Enjoy it, use it, but take immaculate care of it."*
- **Slide 3 Graphic Text:** What happens when you return it destroyed, trashed, and dented?
- **Slide 4 Graphic Text:** God is the billionaire. The earth is the supercar. We are the drivers. How are we treating His ride?
- **Caption Text:**

Before Jesus ever gave us the evangelical Great Commission in Matthew 28, God issued "The Other Great Commission" all the way back in Genesis 2:15. We weren't made to be destructive consumers; we were designed to be priestly caretakers of this planet. Join us tonight at youth group as we dive into what true, biblical stewardship looks like.  

 [Insert Time] |  [Insert Location]

#YouthMinistry #Genesis215 #TheOtherGreat Commission #Stewardship #CreationCare #FaithAndEcology

Post 2: The Hebrew Word Drop (Stories / Reel Text Overlay)

- **Video/Visual Suggestion:** A quick, cinematic 5-second B-roll clip of nature cutting sharply to a pile of plastic pollution.
- **On-Screen Text Overlays:**
 - 0:01 – Did you know God gave humanity a permanent job description? 
 - 0:02 – Genesis 2:15 breaks it down into two Hebrew words:
 - 0:03 – **ABAD:** To serve and cultivate. (Unlock the earth's potential!)  
 - 0:04 – **SHAMAR:** To guard and protect. (Put a hedge around it!)  
 - 0:05 – You aren't a tourist on Earth. You are a gardener. Pick up the tools.
- **Caption Text:**

God never cancelled our original calling. True dominion isn't acting like a tyrant over nature; it's loving the Landlord by taking immaculate care of His property. See you guys tonight as we unpack the original mandate. Bring a

friend! 🙌

#CreationCare #AbadAndShamar #BibleStudy #YouthGroup #Genesis

📌 Post 3: The Challenge (Interactive Story / Thread)

- **Graphic Text / Story Poll Option:**

If the Earth is God's property, what kind of tenant are you?

☐ The Faithful Gardener | ☐ The Careless Tourist

- **Tap to Next Story Slide:**

Environmental care isn't a political trend—it's a direct way we love our global neighbours. Less waste = less harm to the vulnerable.

Your challenge this week: Cut out single-use plastics, or do a 10-minute trash cleanup in your neighbourhood. Let's practice what we preach. 🌍🌱

✉️ PARENT FOLLOW-UP EMAIL TEMPLATE

Send this to parents the morning after the youth group session to bridge the gap between church and home.

Subject: 🚗 The Supercar, the Planet, and Your Teen (Genesis 2:15)

Parents,

Last night at youth group, we kicked off a critically important conversation with our students based on **Genesis 2:15**, titled "**The Other Great Commission.**"

Before Jesus gave us the evangelical Great Commission in Matthew 28, God issued a permanent, cultural, and ecological commission to humankind at the dawn of creation: *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."*

We challenged the students using a simple analogy: If a billionaire handed you the keys to a multimillion-dollar supercar and told you to drive it but take immaculate care of it, you'd be incredibly careful with it. The earth belongs to God (Psalm 24:1)—it's His supercar, and we are just driving it. We unpacked two ancient Hebrew words from Genesis 2:15 that serve as our permanent instructions:

1. **Abad:** To serve and cultivate (using science, art, and technology to unlock the earth's potential for good).
2. **Shamar:** To guard and protect (putting a fierce "hedge of thorns" around nature to prevent exploitation and destruction).

How you can continue the conversation at home this week:

- **Ask them:** *"What was the supercar analogy about last night, and how does it change how we look at our trash or our consumption?"*
- **Discuss:** Environmental destruction always hurts communities in poverty first and worst. How is taking care of the earth a physical way to fulfil Jesus' command to *"love your neighbour as yourself"*?
- **Do a 10-Minute Audit:** Sometime this week, sit down or walk around the house together. Look for one specific way your family can reduce waste, recycle better, or take extra care of your local neighbourhood.

We love partnering with you as we help these students grow into the servant-leaders and faithful caretakers God created them to be!

Blessings,

[Your Name/Youth Ministry Team]



YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT CHECKLIST: "OPERATION SHAMAR"

A step-by-step blueprint for organising a local community, park, or beach cleanup with your youth group.



Phase 1: 3-4 Weeks Out (Planning & Permissions)

- **Select a Site:** Identify a local park, school campus, beach, or neighbourhood that suffers from heavy litter or neglect.
- **Secure Permission:** Contact local city council, park management, or school administrators to get formal approval and confirm trash disposal rules.
- **Coordinate Waste Disposal:** Ensure you know exactly where the collected bags will go. (Will the city pick them up? Do you need a volunteer with a truck to take them to a local dump/recycling plant?).
- **Promote the Event:** Use the social media templates, announce it at youth group, and send the details out via the parent email loop.



Phase 2: 1 Week Out (Logistics & Supplies)

- **Gather Supplies:**
 - Heavy-duty trash bags (distinct colours for landfill vs. recycling).
 - Thick work gloves or gardening gloves for every student.
 - Litter picker tools (if available/budgeted).

- First aid kit (critical for accidental cuts or scrapes).
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes.
- **Plan for Hydration:** Bring cooler jugs of water and encourage students to bring *reusable* water bottles (practicing what we preach!).
- **Check the Weather:** Have a backup rain date or an alternative indoor serving plan if weather permits.



Phase 3: Day of the Project (Execution)

- **The 5-Minute Huddle:** Before handing out bags, ground them in the theology. Read Genesis 2:15. Remind them: *"We aren't just cleaning a park; we are performing a priestly duty in our Father's cosmic temple today."*
- **Safety Briefing:** Establish strict boundaries. Tell students **never** to pick up broken glass, needles, or hazardous materials with bare hands (leaders handle these with proper tools). Implement a "buddy system."
- **Sort on the Go:** Separate recyclables (cans, plastic bottles) from general trash as you walk to maximise environmental impact.
- **Celebrate & Photograph:** Take a group photo in front of the mountain of full trash bags. Share it on social media to show your community that your youth group cares about the neighbourhood!



LEADER'S CURATED READING LIST

Expand your leadership team's theological depth on Christian creation care and environmental stewardship.

1. **"Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World"** by Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo
 - **Why read it:** Written by a premier New Testament scholar and an environmental scientist, this book bridges top-tier biblical exegesis with current scientific realities. It is the perfect foundational text for leaders.
2. **"Pollution and the Death of Man"** by Francis A. Schaeffer
 - **Why read it:** A historic, prophetic Christian classic. Writing decades ago, Schaeffer anticipated the modern ecological crisis and explained how a truly biblical worldview offers a far superior framework for ecology than secular materialist philosophies.

3. **"Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, and Citizenship"** by *Daniel L. Brunner, Jennifer L. Butler, and Albert J. Clausen*
- **Why read it:** This serves as a comprehensive textbook on the subject, walking leaders systematically through church history, systematic theology, and practical ethics regarding the care of the earth.
4. **"For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care"** by *Steven Bouma-Prediger*
- **Why read it:** This book is highly praised for uncovering the rich, underlying scriptural themes of creation's intrinsic value to God. It addresses and systematically dismantles the common theological objections often heard in evangelical circles.

5.

