

GREEN CHOICES: HUNDREDS OF PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING

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The trouble with simple living is that, though it can be joyful, rich and creative, it isn't simple.

- Doris Janzen Longacre, 2010: *Living More With Less*, p.30.

Make small decisions consciously.

Nurture relationships.

Question technology.

De-clutter.

Go local.

Downshift (make living simply a priority).

CULTIVATING AWARENESS

- Join nature in praise. Read Psalm 98,104 or 148, taking note of how the Psalmists describe nature praising its Creator. Then go for a slow walk and witness how nature gives glory to God simply by being what it was created to be.
- Take ten. Commit yourself to spending 10 minutes each day outside, keeping an eye on the natural world and praying. This can be an unexpected source of wonder and beauty.
- Take time to study creation and learn from it, such as lessons on the interdependence of life.
- Write a haiku (17 syllables in 3 lines: 5-7-5), describing a paradox or contrast you observe in creation.
- Practise centering prayer outdoors. This needs a regular time and place. Breathe deeply, settle in and get comfortable. If words, images or symbols help you to be present with God, choose one or two and meditate on them. Look and listen for where God might be showing up in the world. Set an intentional response.

ENTERTAINMENT

- Replace half an hour of television with a stroll around the neighbourhood.
- Turn off all electronics when you leave the room, even when you think you'll just be gone for a few minutes. Unplug the TV and stereo when not in use, or turn them all the way off with a power strip.
- Avoid purchasing any food or drink in a disposable container.
- Turn off the radio when you are in the car, and instead spend time talking with your spouse and children or fellowshiping with God.
- Memorize one Bible verse about godly entertainment, such as Philippians 4:8:
And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (NLT)
- Keep track of how much time per week you spend in front of a TV or computer screen; do the same for each of your children.
- Eat at least one more meal per week at home instead of at a restaurant.
- Patronize only those restaurants that serve on washable dishes and flatware.
- Buy rechargeable batteries instead of disposables and set up a battery-charging centre in your home.
- Buy smart power strips for the TV, audio equipment, and other electronics—especially anything that uses a remote.

- Pledge to spend at least 10 percent less time in front of a computer screen.
- Take a virtual break, e.g. go on a three-day media/technology fast—no radio, television, cell phones, email, computers, social media, video games, internet, newspaper, or magazine infotainment.
- Clean out bookshelves and donate books you haven't read in the past year to a library or charity.
- Go through your sporting goods and sell or donate any items you no longer use.
- Tally up the total number of hours your family spent preparing for, driving to, watching, and participating in sports in the last month; discuss how this affects your relationships with each other and with God.
- Modify at least one fitness or spectator sport habit to reflect your growing green awareness.
- Wait one month when you think you need a new iPod, computer, or TV; if you still believe you need one, consider buying used.
- Donate your old cell phone and electronic appliances to a good cause.
- Borrow books, CDs, and DVDs from the library instead of buying new.
- Use fewer paper napkins when you go out to eat.
- Donate some of the money you've saved to a good cause.
- Try one of these fun and educational alternatives to channel surfing:
 - Collect cans and bottles. Go on a walk through town with your kids and collect bottles and cans. Your kids will get exercise and help the environment all at the same time. If you live in an area that offers return deposits, let your children pick out a good cause and donate the "found" money.
 - Go on a scavenger hunt. Create a list of natural things that can be seen outside where you live — pinecones, acorns, flowers, leaves, feathers, insects, rocks. Have your children search for each item on the list.
 - Camp out. You don't have to drive to a national or regional park to go camping. Pitch a tent in the backyard and discover the sights and sounds of the night.
 - Visit a local farm. Find a nearby strawberry patch in summer or an apple orchard in autumn.
 - Stargaze. Relax on a blanket in your yard with an astronomy guide. Look for constellations and planets and teach your children about the night sky.
 - Dine in. Set up a restaurant in your home. Let your kids create menu items using only things you have in your kitchen. Take turns filling the roles of waiters, chef, and clean-up crew.
- Make gifts for friends and family. Homemade gifts save resources and are often more meaningful than the standard ones. Make photo frames, mini scrapbooks, and craft items to give throughout the year.
- Organize a block party. Get friends and neighbours on your street together for a potluck. Every family can bring their own dishes, silverware, cups, and cloth napkins.
- Volunteer. Many retirement homes and hospitals need volunteers to serve lunch or read to patients. Pitch in and make some new friends.
- Write a note. Write letters (on recycled paper or cards) to friends, grandparents, and mentors, letting them know how much you appreciate them.
- Watch a green movie, such as Baraka, Hoot, or WALL•E.

WORK

- Contact your local utility provider, and find out if the company offers energy audits for businesses —usually the cost is nominal. Then implement the changes that help the bottom line. Or hire a performance contractor. Most charge nothing up front, earning their fees from the savings you garner.
- Use 100% recycled paper in your workplace. The typical office worker uses a quarter of a tonne of materials in a year, including ten thousand pieces of copy paper.

- Recommend that the thermostat be adjusted three or more degrees company wide. Turning the thermostat up in the summer or down in the winter can save about 3 percent in energy costs for each degree. Install programmable thermostats to adjust even further at night.
- Suggest that all light bulbs in exit signs be changed to LED bulbs—the payback is usually earned in a couple of months, and after that, the company is saving money.
- Post reminders next to all light switches to turn off the lights when leaving the room.
- Cut paper costs in half. Ask that the default on printers be set to double-sided printing. (Employees can still print single-sided when needed.)
- Suggest a simple way that all computers can be completely powered down at night—usually with a power strip or hard off switch. The last one out or the nightly clean-up crew can be asked to assure that all computers are completely turned off.
- Reset computers so that they go into sleep mode after five minutes of inactivity.
- Start a rideshare board. Ask that people who carpool be given special parking privileges.
- Monitors use up to 60 percent of the energy consumed by your computer system. Turn off the monitor when you leave your office for more than five minutes.
- Recycle electronic office equipment. When burned or dumped, cell phones, computers, and other gadgets release toxins—including lead, mercury, and cadmium—into the air and water.
- Your business can earn money by selling used equipment. Web sites purchase iPhones, cell phones, BlackBerrys, and other technology.
- If your computer is in working order, consider donating it to a local school or non-profit organization.
- Donate your old cell phone to an organization that provides refurbished phones for first-time users abroad or hospital patients for emergency 111 calls.
- Your business can earn money by selling used equipment.
- Use the draft mode when printing documents that aren't final. Your printer's draft mode uses about half the ink it would for a normal print job.
- Pack your lunch.
- Carpool, bike, or use public transportation. Employees use twice as much energy commuting to work as they do occupying their offices.
- Ask your employer about telecommuting/work from home one or more days a week.
- Turn off lights at the end of the day. Lighting an average-sized empty office overnight wastes enough electricity to make one thousand hot drinks or print eight hundred sheets of paper.

ENERGY

- Installing at least 20cm depth of loft insulation can save around 20% of heating costs.
- Houses with boilers older than 15 years are likely to benefit by changing to a more fuel-efficient model. Modern gas-condensing boilers are particularly efficient as they recycle some of the energy from exhaust emissions.
- Fitting and using timer and thermostatic controls can significantly reduce energy consumption, without loss of comfort.
- Fitting low-energy light bulbs requires an initial capital outlay, but can reduce energy consumption by up to 80% and the bulbs can last up to 10 times longer, saving both money and the need to change bulbs frequently.
- Taking a daily shower instead of a bath can save water and \$\$\$ per year on your fuel bill.
- Replace existing equipment with Energy Star-qualified products – you can cut annual energy bills by 30 percent.
- Get rid of phantom loads. In the average household, eight appliances are left on standby mode at any one time. The typical TV is left on standby seventeen hours per day. Leaving electrical equipment like TVs and VCRs on standby uses almost as much energy as when you are watching. Turning appliances off at the on/off button saves this waste.

- Insulate your water heater and pipes, and turn down the temperature on your water heater to 60-70 degrees. Look for a little metal box on the side of the water heater. If your water heater is not insulated, about three-quarters of energy used may be wasted. Not sure if your water heater needs to be insulated? If it's hot to the touch, you need a water heater jacket.
- Around 35% of heat energy is lost through walls that are not insulated, but by installing cavity wall insulation up to 60% of this heat can be saved.
- Up to 20% of heat can be lost by draughts around windows, doors and floors. Fitting draught excluders can save heat and money. It is important to ensure that adequate ventilation is maintained, particularly in rooms with gas or solid fuel fires.
- Use mains electricity rather than batteries when possible, and choose re-chargeable batteries if you need them.
- Avoid battery-powered electrical goods and toys as most use 50 times more energy to make as they give out in their lifetime.

WATER

- Fix leaking taps – one dripping at one drop per second will waste 1200l per year!
- Turn off taps fully.
- Water plants in the evening after the heat of the day (reduces evaporation).
- Have a shower rather than a bath.
- Use a plug in wash basins and sinks rather than washing under a running tap.
- Fit a water hippo in your toilet cistern to save 1 litre per flush (a brick or a one-litre plastic bottle filled with water works well too).
- Turn off the tap whilst cleaning your teeth, or use a mug of water instead.
- Install a water tank, linking it to a down pipe to collect water from a roof.
- Mulch water-loving plants in the garden to save on the need for watering.
- If you use a washing machine or dishwasher, reduce the frequency of running it by always having a full load.

WASTE AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES

- Pre-cycle, i.e. eliminate future waste by not buying it in the first place.
- Reduce and re-use. Buy fewer new things. Avoid disposable items. Take your own cup.
- Re-cycle paper, glass, plastic, aluminium, foil. Use local can banks or kerbside collections if available. Many local charities/organisations collect cans to raise funds.
- Repair and reconsider: Can your gadget be repaired before you toss it? If not, is there a recycler or "take-back" programme in your area?
- Minimise your use of phosphate-based detergents and bleach (try eco-friendly washing-up liquid, washing powder and cleaners instead).
- Minimise your use of toxic substances such as pesticides and creosote, which might get washed into the drainage system or water system.
- Safely dispose of waste oils, paints, solvents and batteries at a collection point rather than throwing them in a rubbish bin or pouring them down a drain. Some charities can use left-over paint and some batteries can be recycled.
- Wash you vehicles on the grass so that cleaning agents do not enter the waste water system.
- Use mains electricity rather than batteries, and choose re-chargeable batteries if you need them.
- Take or arrange for unwanted appliances or other bulky metal items to be deposited at a local authority metal collection/recycling site.
- If you have a suitable space outside, consider installing a compost bin and use it for all organic matter (though avoid composting meat and fish as these can attract vermin). Composting can reduce household waste by as much as 70 percent.
- Bread can be fed to birds at a feeding station.

- Carry a trash bag on your regular walks and pick up trash that you encounter

LAUNDRY

- Use the lowest temperature recommended for the clothing being washed.
- Avoid under-filling the machine to get the maximum amount of clothing washed for the electricity and water used.
- Measure detergent according to water hardness and the degree of soiling.
- Choose products to minimise packaging.
- Pre-sort laundry according to the recommended washing cycle.
- Use an eco-friendly washing powder or liquid.
- Where possible dry the clothing outside, to take advantage of the sun and the wind rather than using a tumble drier.

PAPER

- Save waste paper and deposit it in a local paper bank.
- Reuse envelopes, paper, wrappings and egg boxes.
- Choose to buy recycled paper products, including greetings cards.
- Reduce the amount of junk mail that you receive.

CLOTHES

- Take clean clothes to charity shops and clothing banks. Jumble sales are another place to recycle material clothing and cloth which cannot be sold can be recycled into industrial wipes, blankets and stuffing for furniture. After food, clothing has the highest environmental impact of any consumer activity.
- Only buy clothes that you really need and consider buying clothes second hand.
- Dress timelessly: quality over quantity, longevity over novelty, versatility over specialisation.

SHOPPING

- Avoid the advertisements that tempt you - by getting off junk mail and telemarketing lists, turning off the television, etc.
- Think globally: investigate the “history” of the products you purchase (the raw materials used, transport costs, whether workers were paid a fair wage).
- Shop in vintage, outlet, consignment and resale shops.
- Act communally, where others covenant with you to live simply, hold up mirrors for you (accountability) and share with their neighbours.
- Spend a whole year resisting buying new products (except food, medicine and hygiene goods).
- Take re-usable bags when you shop. Avoid completely the plastic v. paper debate!
- There are seven golden ‘R’s to consider before making a purchase:
 - Refuse – Buy judiciously by asking: Do I really need this? Can I afford it? Can I borrow it? Can I buy it second-hand? Can I live without it?
 - Reduce – Ask: Do I need to consume as much, e.g. if buying a car I could buy one with a 1400cc engine rather than a 2.5l space cruiser, so saving resources used in manufacturing and running and fuel costs.
 - Recycle – Ask: Can the item I am considering buying be easily recycled? What proportion of recycled and raw materials are used in its construction?
 - Reuse – Ask: Instead of buying a brand new item, can I reuse an existing item that I already have or buy it second hand? Is it renewable?
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 - Refill – use containers which can be refilled in an eco-friendly manner.

- Repair and repurpose – Ask: Instead of buying new, can I have an existing item repaired? Can the item that I am considering buying be easily repaired and are spare parts available?



FINANCE

Utilise a bank with a clear and rigorous environmental policy. There are two positive routes that you can take to ensure this. One is to work with the bank that you currently use, and press them about their environmental policies, including their policy on Third World debt, investment in fossil fuel companies, etc. Concerted pressure from customers can bring about change.

A second option is to move your account to a bank that conducts business according to a set of ethical criteria that come close to your values. Some banks operate more positive environmental policies than others.

HOLIDAYS

- Use e-tickets.
- Bring your own luggage tag.
- If possible, only take a carry-on and skip the checked luggage.
- More and more hotels are becoming eco-friendly because it saves them money. Wherever you stay, use the same linens and towels during your visit. Washing fewer sheets and towels can save up to 40 percent of a hotel's water use.

- Use online maps instead of paper ones. They're free, and you can print on the blank side of used paper, and then recycle after you're finished.
- If you have a GPS navigation system in your car, you can eliminate paper waste altogether. If you have an old map, use it as gift wrap instead of throwing it away.
- Take public transportation once you reach your destination.
- Use and refill a non-plastic water bottle, canteen, or thermos during your trip.
- Skip the souvenirs. Most trinkets end up on a shelf—or in the trash. Use a travel journal and digital photographs to capture memories, then only print the photos you like. If you must buy souvenirs, purchase from local manufacturers to help support the local economy.
- Before you leave for vacation:
 - Unplug appliances (except refrigerator) to avoid using standby energy.
 - Turn off the lights. Use timers on outside lights instead of letting the porch light burn constantly. Or leave the lights off and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your house.
 - Stop the newspaper to avoid waste and save money. Ask your newspaper to credit your account for the days you are going to be away.
 - Close the shades. Depending on the season, drawn shades will help heat or cool your home while you're on vacation.
 - Set your thermostat. Depending on the length of your trip, you could save as much as \$100 in heating and cooling-related energy costs for your home while you're on vacation.

CLEANING

- Today's modern home is loaded with toxic and polluting substances designed to make domestic life easier. The cost of these commercial, chemical-based products can be high -- long term health concerns for the family, and environmental pollution caused by their manufacture and disposal. There are many inexpensive, easy-to-use natural alternatives which can safely be used in place of commercial household products. Here is a list of common, environmentally safe products which can be used alone or in combination for a wealth of household applications:
 - Baking Soda - cleans, deodorizes, softens water, scours.
 - Soap - unscented soap in liquid form, flakes, powders or bars is biodegradable and will clean just about anything. Avoid using soaps which contain petroleum distillates.
 - Lemon - one of the strongest food-acids, effective against most household bacteria.
 - Borax - (sodium borate) cleans, deodorizes, disinfects, softens water, cleans wallpaper, painted walls and floors.
 - White Vinegar - cuts grease, removes mildew, odours, some stains and wax build-up.
 - Washing Soda - cuts grease, removes stains, softens water, cleans wall, tiles, sinks and tubs. Use care, as washing soda can irritate mucous membranes. Do not use on aluminium.
 - Isopropyl Alcohol - is an excellent disinfectant. (It has been suggested to replace this with ethanol or 100 proof alcohol in solution with water. Note, however, here is some indication that isopropyl alcohol build up contributes to illness in the body.
 - Corn starch - can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs.
 - Citrus Solvent - cleans paint brushes, oil and grease, some stains. (Citrus solvent may cause skin, lung or eye irritations for people with multiple chemical sensitivities.)
 - Trisodium phosphate (TSP) - a mixture of soda ash and phosphoric acid. TSP is toxic if swallowed, but it can be used on many jobs, such as cleaning drains or removing old paint, that would normally require much more caustic and poisonous chemicals, and it does not create any fumes.

HEALTHY HOME CLEANING HABITS

- Exchange Indoor Air:

Many modern homes are so tight there's little new air coming in. Open the windows from time to time or run any installed exhaust fans. In cold weather, the most efficient way to exchange room air is to open the room wide - windows and doors, and let fresh air in quickly for about 5 minutes. The furnishings in the room, and the walls, act as 'heat sinks', and by exchanging air quickly, this heat is retained.

- **Minimize Dust:**

Remove clutter which collects dust, such as old newspapers and magazines. Try to initiate a 'no-shoes-indoors' policy. If you're building or remodelling a home, consider a central vacuum system; this eliminates the fine dust which portable vacuum cleaners re-circulate.

- **Use Gentle Cleaning Products:**

Of the various commercial home cleaning products, drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners and oven cleaners are the most toxic. Avoid products containing ammonia or chlorine, or petroleum-based chemicals; these contribute to respiratory irritation, headaches and other complaints.

- **Clean from the Top Down:**

When house cleaning, save the floor or carpet for last. Allow time for the dust to settle before vacuuming.

COMMUNITY

- Get involved in your community. Serve local and national non-profit groups through a network of partnerships. Whether you clean up a park, tend a community garden, or give a child a second chance, you'll find opportunities to serve your neighbours.
- Initiate a creation care group in your community or church ("the green team") so that you can encourage one another, and work toward community-wide changes.
- Start a share board at the town hall or at church— people can list what they need, and you can list what you have to lend.
- Ask the recycling centre if they can set aside space for a permanent swap area. If you don't have access to clean energy options, petition the local utility.
- If you need better public transportation or bike lanes, ask the town council. Start a bike share programme by soliciting and repairing unused bikes, painting them a bright colour, and making them available for public use.
- Host neighbourhood gatherings in your backyard on a regular basis. Don't wait for someone else to initiate; if you plan it, they will come.
- Start a community garden or share your own garden: by coordinating neighbourhood gardens we can build community and ensure that everyone has just enough zucchini!
- Ask the post office if you can put out a sign-up sheet for local families to bring in a tray of holiday treats each day of December.
- Find a central gathering place and start your own community tradition: a shared produce table in late summer, a canned goods drive, handmade Valentine cards to give out in nursing homes, or a year-round board for posting free items.
- If your city or town doesn't have an official recycling programme, take action to get one started. Talk to your local officials.
- Take advantage of free events. Libraries often sponsor free performances for children.
- Band concerts in the park and parades are a big deal to a young kid, as is the annual open house at the fire station. Sometimes the best things in life really are free.
- Plant trees. Trees can increase a home's value as much as 10 percent.
- Organize neighbourhood-wide improvements to streetscapes (street tree plantings, container plantings, small parks, parking lot screens, and median plantings). They can add more than 25 percent to the value of a nearby home.
- Support area greenways and trash clean-ups. Neighbourhoods within 250m of a green corridor increase in value 20 percent.

LAWN AND GARDEN

Lawns and Landscaping

- Landscaping doesn't have to cost a fortune. In spring and autumn, start a plant exchange board at your church. Ask if your town offers free mulch and compost, and check out demolition sites that may want to get rid of bricks and stones.
- Reduce the size of your yard. Petrol-powered lawn mowers lack catalytic converters, which are used in automobiles to treat exhaust before it escapes. As a result, a petrol-powered mower emits as much pollution in one hour as a car does travelling 150km. Combined with emissions from other petrol-powered garden equipment, petrol mowers account for 5 percent of air pollution during the summer months.

Watering

- Consider using drought-resistant and drought-tolerant plants in dry soil with sunny aspects to reduce the need for watering. Growing indigenous plants with low water requirements could save you up to 2000 litres of water per year.
- Install rain barrels or tanks to capture water from downspouts—more than enough to meet the average family's water needs, or simply a great supply for watering the garden.
- In many regions, only 2.5 cm of water per week is necessary to maintain a healthy lawn. Keep a cat-food-size can outside to monitor rainfall. If rain fills it to the brim each week, you don't need to water at all.
- Use water sparingly. Instead of using regular sprinklers, water your flower bed and garden using drip irrigation or a soaker hose. This method saves water by minimizing evaporation and watering only the base of your plants. Water savings: up to 70 percent of the water typically used.
- Use a shut-off nozzle. To prevent waste when the water is turned on and your hose is not being used, fit your garden hose with a shut-off nozzle. Water savings: up to 25 litres per minute.
- Reclaim your water. Collect water that has been used for bathing, washing dishes, and other household duties, and use it to water your plants. Water savings: up to 1100 litres per month.
- Cover your pool. When you're not going for a swim, cover your pool to reduce water lost to evaporation. Water savings: 90 percent of water typically lost through evaporation.

Garden

- Urbanisation and apartment living is no excuse not to get dirty! Explore planter boxes, container gardens, sky-rise farming, community gardens, city co-ops.
- Go organic. Avoid or minimise pesticides and fertilizers. Where possible use biodegradable sprays.
- Grow what you will eat – especially those crops that are more expensive to buy.
- Composting, rotating crops, mulching, cover crops, and giving land a sabbath rest (every seventh year – Leviticus 25:3-4) can keep soil happily productive.
- Plant a native garden. Conserve water by replacing little-used grass areas like your front yard with a native garden. A native garden can reduce street noise and offer more privacy for you and your family. Water savings: up to 75 percent of the water typically used.
- Use mulch. Mulching your plants reduces the amount of water lost through evaporation, limits weed growth, and improves soil conditions. Water savings: 70 percent of water typically lost through evaporation.
- Avoid using peat and choose plants from garden centres grown in coir or other non-peat mediums.
- Check out community-supported agriculture programmes in your community. Gather some like-minded friends and buy shares.
- Save seeds. Seed banks and seed exchanges help to preserve heirloom varieties.
- Know people with green thumbs who would like to expand their gardens? Ask if they would be interested in starting a cooperative venture next Spring. Or turn over some sod this autumn in a sunny spot for your very own vegetable patch. Start small, and expand as your knowledge and skills grow.
- Install a compost bin to compost organic kitchen waste (avoid composting meat as it can attract vermin). Use it to fertilise your garden.

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Helping Local Wildlife and Fostering Biodiversity

- Install wildlife feeding stations, for example a bird table. Birds benefit from food provided throughout the year. Provide whole nuts in a mesh feeder and avoid putting out coconut in the breeding season, to prevent fledglings choking. It is also important to clean out the feeding station at least once a week to reduce the risk of disease
- To encourage wildflowers manage a section of grass as a meadow, allowing it to grow until early summer before cutting.
- Create habitats for insects and small mammals by leaving a section of grass uncut.
- Consider creating a bog area or small wetland.
- Leave a pile of wood to rot, to act as a home to ‘bugs’ and a grocery store for many small creatures.
- Maintain a supply of water such as a pond or bird bath to allow wildlife to drink and bathe, but ensure that it is not a hazard to young children.
- Provide wildlife nesting sites – consider bird, bat and hedgehog boxes.
- Provide a variety of habitats for wildlife including thick foliage, and habitats at various heights by planting shrubs, hedges and trees, mindful of the size of the plot.
- Plant species to provide a variety of food sources including nectar, berries and seeds: these can be planted even in relatively small pots.
- Use native plants i.e. ones that grow naturally in your country and region, as these are of most **benefit to local wildlife.**

Pesticides

- According to the *American Journal of Public Health*, children who live in homes that use chemical weed and insect killers are four times more likely to develop cancer than those who do not. Skip expensive and harmful chemicals, and get rid of pests the natural way. Adding French marigolds, borage, dill, nasturtium, garlic, parsley, thyme, onion, sage, and fennel to your garden will help repel insects without harming the watershed.
- Earth-friendly pesticides:
 - Basic insect spray—Repels insects; kills fungi and mites. Mix two tablespoons of dishwashing liquid soap into 3.5l of water. To target fungi, add one to two tablespoons of baking soda. Add sulphur to kill mites.
 - Peppermint tea—All-purpose insect spray; ant repellent. Brew peppermint leaf tea. Cool and place in a properly labelled spray bottle.
 - Garlic spray—Repels insects. Mix two teaspoons of garlic juice, one teaspoon of cayenne pepper, and one teaspoon of liquid soap in one quart of water.
 - Banana peel repellent—Repels aphids. Place banana peels around roses and other plants.
 - Lemon spray—Repels white flies and soft-bodied insects. Also gets rid of fleas. Boil three lemon peels in one quart of water. Let cool, remove peels, and put solution in a properly labelled spray bottle.
 - Lemongrass wasp repellent—Place lemongrass in a vase on your picnic table to keep wasps away.
 - Vinegar spray—Combats fungal disease and black spots on roses. Combine three tablespoons of apple cider vinegar with one 3.5 litres of water.

SABBATH

- Sanctify a day as set aside for a holy purpose and in which you cease the patterns of busy life.
- Talk with your family about how you all want to celebrate the Sabbath.
- Ask: What will we cease doing on the sabbath? What do we want to do on the sabbath?

- Build in preparation time: Sabbath-keeping requires thoughtfulness beforehand, e.g. planning meals, buying food, answering emails, etc.
- Clean the house as a family the day before the Sabbath.
- Get all your errands done before the Sabbath.
- Begin with Jesus, perhaps by celebrating the Eucharist.
- Read Psalm 92, the psalm for the Sabbath Day.
- Refuse consumerism by fasting from buying or making any transactions.
- Avoid eating out and buying things on the Sabbath.
- Select a devotional to share with your family.
- Take off your watch and remove all reminders of work during the Sabbath day.
- Prepare a special Sabbath meal.
- Light Sabbath candles.
- Bake challah (a special Jewish bread with twisted swirls)
- Bless your children and spouse.
- Encourage your family to take guiltless naps on the Sabbath day.
- Fill a special play box for children with quiet activities reserved for the Sabbath.
- Read Psalms 23, 24, 29, 93, 126, and 148.
- Find a church home, if I don't have one already.
- Say grace before every meal on the Sabbath.
- Share praises and concerns with family or friends on the Sabbath.
- Take a Sabbath walk.
- Spend at least ten minutes completely surrounded by nature each Sabbath.
- Take a media/technology fast on the Sabbath. Turn off your computer, and keep it off all day. Use the answering machine to screen calls on the Sabbath. Turn off the cell phone. Disconnect from news and media in order to relish loving relationships and rest in the love of God.
- Spend at least half an hour in silence on the Sabbath.
- Ask forgiveness from anyone you may have hurt or offended this week.
- Engage in a plan for reading the Bible regularly on the Sabbath.
- Prepare most Sabbath meals with local or organic foods.
- Invite someone to share a Sabbath meal.
- Read a book aloud on the Sabbath.
- Take a criticism break.
- Write a letter of appreciation.
- Engage in service outreach.
- Avoid driving on the Sabbath, except to church.
- Pick a cue throughout the week (your e-mail delivery chime, a glance at your watch) to bring in a moment of Sabbath peace to your weekday routine.

TRANSPORT and TRAVEL

- Walk or cycle more often, particularly for short distances.
- Be safe. If you have never seen a cyclist on your normal route to work, look for a bike route with bike lanes and wide shoulders.
- Use a map. Check to see if your city or local bike club offers maps of safe biking routes in your area.
- Get a second opinion. After choosing a potential route, ask other cyclists if they consider it safe.
- Take action to bring better cycling to your community.
- Use public transportation. Use the bus or train more often – the fares can be cheaper than the cost of driving per km combined with parking charges.

- The manufacture and use of automobiles makes up 20 to 25 percent of carbon dioxide emissions.
- Automobile traffic contributes significantly to noise pollution.
- Increased road building negatively affects wildlife by breaking up their habitats and altering surface runoff. New roads built through sensitive habitats can damage ecosystems.
- The materials required for roads come from large-scale rock quarrying and gravel extraction, which can harm sensitive ecological areas.
- Road construction also alters the water table, increases surface runoff, and raises the risk of flooding.
- Combine trips. Plan to use one journey for a number of tasks and, if possible, share journeys.
- Check out long-distance bus routes. Buses are often the least expensive and most energy-efficient form of transportation.
- Consider a hybrid for your next car purchase. Check out the savings you can reap in fuel costs.
- Look for the silver lining! Nine great things about the high cost of gas: Less traffic, more demand for public transportation, four-day workweeks and telecommuting, more frugality, cheaper insurance, fewer traffic deaths, less air pollution–related deaths, less suburban sprawl, less obesity.
- Ask your local car-wash manager if they recycle the water; if they do, it's more efficient to use a commercial car wash—provided you don't make a special trip to get there. If you wash your car at home:
 - Park the car on your lawn instead of the driveway. It will act as a natural filter for the soap, dirt, and oil that would otherwise flow into storm drains, eventually causing damage to rivers, streams, and other wetlands.
 - Use less water. Buy a nozzle for your hose that controls the water flow or use a bucket.
 - Use a biodegradable soap or make your own eco-friendly car wash by using a few squirts of biodegradable liquid dishwashing detergent or laundry detergent mixed with a bucket of water.
- Ask if your employer would encourage the use of public transport through the provision of season ticket loans and encourage cycling to work by providing secure facilities for cycles together with showers and lockers.
- Use climate mitigation schemes such as *Climate Stewards* for air travel.
- Drive at slower speeds - driving at 100 kph uses 30% more fuel than driving at 80 kph.
- Develop a good driving technique - where safe, accelerate gently and avoid sharp braking. These methods can lead to a 25% reduction in fuel used.
- The average Kiwi could save about \$\$\$ a year by maintaining proper tyre pressure. Invest in a \$2 tyre gauge and check tyres every month. Incorrect tyre pressure can increase fuel consumption.
- Have your car serviced regularly – an incorrectly adjusted carburettor can waste up to 25% of fuel.

FOOD AND DRINK

10 Ways to Start

1. Buy local. When you support local coops, farmers' markets, and community-supported agriculture, you reduce the distance your food migrates and the amount of fuel and packaging it takes to feed your family. Buy locally grown produce where possible and support farmers markets. Get close to the food you eat; know its producers and where your food comes from. Find local sources for eggs, honey, meat, fruit and vegetables.
Make a goal to eat food produced less than 150 km away from where you live.
2. Shop seasonally. Eat food that is in season and fresh. Enjoy sweet corn in the summer, apples in autumn,

and citrus in the winter. Not only will the fruits and vegetables be fresher when you buy what's in season, you'll also support local economies and reduce harmful emissions.

3. Eat less, especially less meat (producing it is more harmful to the environment than other foods).
4. Compost. Reduce your waste by composting food scraps in the backyard.
5. Filter. Stop drinking bottled water and buy a filter instead.
6. Pre-cycle. Pay attention to food packaging. "Pre-cycle" by purchasing food with minimal packaging. Avoid individually-wrapped items, food packaged in containers that cannot be recycled or food with excessive packaging.
7. Bag It. Bring your own cloth bags to the grocery store.
8. Eat at home and eat what you cook. Cooking at home does not have to be difficult or time consuming, and the payoff is big: fresh ingredients, less processed food, healthier eating habits, and more time together as a family.
9. Share. Get in the practice of inviting others to your table to share your food.
10. Pray. Say a prayer before meals, not out of routine but out of genuine thankfulness.

More Tips

- Read Matthew 15 to be reminded that Christ cares for our physical and nutritional needs.
- Eat together (a wonderful way to build relationships, celebrate life and community).
- Eat slowly. Join the slow food movement – it adds to the pleasure!
- Don't eat. If you are able, fast for a meal and give the money saved to local food banks or international relief agencies.
- Visit www.betterworldshopper.org to educate yourself about food companies to support.
- Use less water. A diet with more plants takes less water to produce. Use a stainless steel thermos instead of bottled water. If your tap water is not agreeable, install a water filter.
- Shop from a grocery list and avoid impulse purchases.
- Choose organically grown crops and avoid buying too much produce that has been flown in from around the world. Increase your organic food purchases by at least 10 percent.
- Purchase food in bulk.
- Consider growing your own produce if possible and practical. Plant a vegetable garden and share the produce with others.
- Abstain from a less-than-ecologically-sound food.
- Avoid fast-food restaurants.
- Learn how to find meat that is raised locally and ethically.
- Cut back on sweets. Not only are they unhealthy, but processed sugar is a major cause of type-2 diabetes.
- Avoid the centre aisles in grocery stores. This is where you find most processed foods. Instead purchase more "real food," on the outer aisles—meat, eggs, fruits, vegetables, etc.
- Cut down on soft drinks. Drink more water instead.
- Buy fair-trade coffee, nuts, oil, tea, chocolate, etc. "Fair trade" means that farmers are paid a fair living wage, that the work conditions are humane, and that employers are not destroying the environment for short-term gain. For more information visit www.fairtrade.net
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food redistribution centre.
- Learn to say "no" to the expensive, unhealthy junk foods that are marketed to your children.
- Use the most energy efficient appliance for the job. Toaster ovens and microwaves use less electricity than conventional ovens.
- Don't preheat except when baking. Most dishes do not need it.
- Make sure the flame from your gas stove is not larger than the pot or pan sitting on it.
- Microwaves are 80% more efficient than traditional electric ovens. Save energy by precooking potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables in the microwave before putting them in the oven.
- Use some of the money you save to help end hunger through church or charitable organizations.

- Save leftovers instead of throwing them away, and eat them later.
- Make pickles, jams and preserves when produce is in season and cheap.

HOME

- Take that first step! An energy audit can help you save up to 30 percent on your energy bills. You can halve your energy costs by changing a few simple behaviours.
- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to a warmer setting.
- Activate the “sleep” mode on your home office equipment. Use laptops rather than desktops when possible.
- Turn off lights, TVs, stereos, and computers when leaving the room.
- Hang clothes on the line to dry. Even once a week helps!
- Reduce shower time by at least two minutes.
- Close curtains at night during the winter and on hot days in the summer.
- Only do full loads when using the dishwasher, clothes washer, and dryer.
- Consider down-sizing. The bigger the house, the more resources it consumes.
- Switch to energy-saving light bulbs, which use about one-quarter the energy of standard light-bulbs and last up to ten times longer.
- Purchase a programmable thermostat and use it to turn on heat or a/c just before you wake up or come home.
- Replace furnace and air-conditioning filters at least three times a year.
- Caulk between window frames, door frames, and walls.
- Add storm windows or use plastic film kits to improve single-pane windows. Replace inefficient windows.
- Install motion sensors, dimmers, and timers for indoor and outdoor lighting.
- Install ceiling or other fans to cut down on air-conditioning costs.
- Decide what you want before you open the door—refrigerator gazing can cost \$30–\$60 per year.
- Put hot food in a cold-water bath or place it outside in cold weather before refrigerating, so less energy is required to keep it cool.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer full. Doing so uses less energy because less cooling is lost each time you open the refrigerator. Defrosting food in the fridge also keeps the fridge cooler.
- Unplug extra appliances (such as those in your garage or basement) when not in use.
- You can save \$\$\$ each year by making your own homemade cleaning products. Visit www.blessedearth.org for recipes.
- About 25 percent of the water supplied to the average home is used for showers. Installing a low-flow showerhead can save a family of four 1300l of water each week.
- As much as 40 percent of our water is flushed down toilets. Flush once less per day and you will save as much water as the average person in Africa uses all day for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning.
- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth.
- Avoid disposable products. Two billion disposable razors end up in landfills annually.
- Switch to organic makeup and natural healthcare products.
- Use fans instead of your air conditioner. It costs sixteen times more to run a room air conditioner than a ceiling fan; it costs forty-three times more to run a central air conditioner than a ceiling fan.
- Close the fireplace damper when not in use. An open damper can allow 8 percent of your home’s heat to go up the chimney. In the summer, an open damper can add about \$100 to your cooling costs.
- Eliminate the source of temptation: the average household could save \$2000 per year by banning mail-order catalogues from the house.
- Wash clothes in cold water. About 80 to 85 percent of the energy used to wash clothes goes toward heating the water.

- Drink tap water instead of bottled water. About 80 percent of our plastic waste ends up in landfills.
- Think before you print.
- Adjust the thermostat three degrees up in the summer and down three degrees in the winter—saving \$200 per year! Heating and cooling (including water) account for about 56 percent of the energy used in a typical household.

CHRISTMAS

- Agree as a family what you're going to do for Christmas gifts. One family decided that each person would receive three gifts each year to symbolize the gold, frankincense, and myrrh the wise men gave Jesus. They each received one thing they need, one thing they want, and one small surprise.
- Pick names out of a hat for extended family, so each adult only gets one special Christmas gift. Or opt for giving presents to children only.
- Spend less. It takes an average of six months for a credit card user to pay off holiday debt.
- Skip paper Christmas cards. If everyone sent just one less card per year, we could save a vast amount of paper.
- Reduce the trimmings.
- Wrap in reusable material, such as cloth bags or reusable gift bags. Even old maps or brochures.
- Celebrate close to home.
- Consider purchasing a live tree from a local nursery and replanting it later. Or purchase an artificial tree and save petrol on annual trips to a tree farm; artificial trees don't require pesticides.
- Instead of adding new ornaments this year, opt for edible or compostable items like stringed popcorn or cranberries for garlands. Making Christmas decorations can also be a fun family activity.
- Switch to LED holiday lights. They cost more per strand than standard lights, but use up to 100 times less energy and will last about ten years or one hundred thousand hours when used indoors.
- Give purposeful gifts this Christmas. Everyone appreciates homemade, personalized gifts more than store-bought options. Another idea is to give an "environmental starter kit" filled with items such as high efficiency light bulbs, a battery recharger, refillable bottles, canvas shopping bags, etc.
- Combine shopping trips to use less petrol. And remember to bring your reusable shopping bags.

