

## Session 7: God's Solution: Mobilize the Church! Part I – Individuals and Families

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**Session Goal:** To begin to respond to the creation care as individuals and families.

**Key Passage:** Genesis 2:15, John 10:10 Ephesians 2:8-10,

**Background Reading:** Nancy Sleeth, Go Green, Save Green (Tyndale, 2009)

### Warm Up

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This session focuses on a response that begins with each of us and our families (see Joshua 24:15). To prepare for that, spend some time sharing with each other how you think you have seen your own attitudes and perspectives change during the time of this study. Do you see things differently? are you living any differently than before?

### Content

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At the beginning of this study we established that God made the world beautiful, perfect, full of life. He made it for himself, and to reveal himself to us so we could worship him. We saw how trouble came through our sin, and how Jesus' redemption is not only for our salvation, but is also intended to restore all of creation once again.

But how do we begin the process of making that redemption real? How do we respond as Christians?

#### **We have to a vision of grounded Christian Hope.**

We don't believe that we can "bring in the kingdom" in all its fullness by our actions, but we do believe that there is a role for Christian Hope in being a missional presence on this earth. A reflection of Gods ' work of love in our lives.

Wherever sin is exposed in the Bible, the response that is always called for is repentance:

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--- <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches

of God's grace<sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment--- to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Paul goes on to say that all of this is for His glory. We should share and hope and riches and depth of knowledge of Christ to be His light unto the world for His glory.

Such a hope should be on our tongues and on our hearts that we might have the mind of Christ and be Christ to a world in need of Him.

**To live out this hope in the calling of creation care**, we need to start **thinking differently** about God's creation.

This simply means taking to heart the things we have learned in this study, especially in the first two sessions. God loves his world, and we have to learn to love the things God loves. You have already started doing that, as evidenced by what you shared together at the beginning of this session. Here are some suggestions to keep it going:

- **Slow down.** Start practicing **Sabbath** principles. God asked the ancient Israelites to stop everything once a week for an entire day – this was for a reason.
- **Renew your heart before the Lord.** God is always in the process of breaking down our hearts and turning our hearts away from ourselves and towards the Lord, the giver of life.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Try to walk instead of driving, or ride your bike. Watch and listen and wait for God to speak to you. Remember that you are walking in the middle of one of the books of revelation. Do this with family or friends.
- **Read the Bible with new eyes.** Start looking for places where God expresses his love for his created world, or commands us to care for it. As a hint, start with the Psalms and the book of Job. You will be amazed!
- **Stay Connected.** Visit <http://creationcare.org> and listen to our weekly Creation Care Podcasts which will feature leading pastors, theologians, scientists, and practitioners. Sign up to receive our "In the Beginning" monthly e-newsletter and consider a subscription to Creation Care Magazine. Watch for events that EEN will hold throughout the year such as the National Day of Prayer for Creation Care and Creation Sunday to raise awareness and help the church become better stewards of what God has made.

## 2. We need to start **living differently**.

Repentance means replacing sinful actions with godly ones. In this case, this means figuring out what we have been doing to harm God's creation and replacing those actions with others that

don't harm creation as much. Here are some ideas, keeping in mind that entire books have been written on each of these topics. One book with a lot of very practical ideas is *Go Green, Save Green* by Nancy Sleeth:

- **Energy use.** Almost every unit of energy you use harms the environment in some way. While we cannot live without consuming energy, most of us can use a lot less, and some of us can find better sources of energy:
  - **Driving: Do what you can without driving at all.** The bicycle is the most efficient means of transportation ever invented and it is good for your health, too. And before the bicycle, God had already invented walking. And then, **drive less and drive the most efficient car you can.**
  - **Be mindful of energy consumption in your house.** Refrigerators. Clothes dryers. Thermostats (turn up 2 degrees in summer, down 2 degrees in winter).
  - **Be sure to visit some of our guides and spiritual reflections on daily Christian living at <http://creationcare.org>.** Also sign up for our month updates at [support@creationcare.org](mailto:support@creationcare.org) which include monthly tips to live more faithfully in the area of creation care.
- **Toxics.** Big smelly factories are not the worst source of toxic chemicals in your town; that honor might belong to the cabinet under your kitchen sink. Most of the stuff we buy to clean with is highly toxic and not as necessary as we think it is. Look for cheap natural things to clean with like vinegar, baking soda and borax. There are lots of recipes for natural cleaning agents here: <http://www.naturalcleaningrecipes.com/>
- **Food.** One of the most important changes you can make in your life is in the kind of food that you buy and how you cook it. Organic is good, but local is better, especially if it is 'farmers market' local so you are supporting and getting to know the people who grow your food for you. *In Defense of Food* by Michael Pollan is a great place to start. [See "Digging Deeper: The Food We Eat" at the end of the last session.] **Again, be sure to visit some of our guides and spiritual reflections on daily Christian living at <http://creationcare.org>.** Also sign up for our month updates at [support@creationcare.org](mailto:support@creationcare.org) which include monthly tips to live more faithfully in the area of creation care.
- **"How do we buy things**
  - **Reduce** means don't buy it if you don't need it, buy less of it or a smaller one of it, or a version that has been manufactured in a way that is less harmful to God's creation.
  - **Reuse** means try not to buy anything new. You can almost always find something someone else is done with – you help them avoid loading up the landfill and you prevent the manufacture of yet another new item.
  - **Recycle** means a)trying to put your old things into the hands of people who can use them as they are (this is the most efficient method of recycling there is); and b)when that is not possible, getting your old stuff to people who will remanufacture it into something new, avoiding the mining of new materials.

- **Home office or work space.** When it comes to major purchases look for the energy star label. Be sure to unplug your power strip because even in the off position it drains power. Doing this can reduce up to 7% of your monthly bills.

### **Discussion and Future Prep: PICK THREE**

There is a worksheet in this material that you can use to begin to apply these principles to your own situation. Your homework today is to PICK THREE THINGS from the “Living Differently” list above to begin to do before your next session. Discuss these together, and make the goals specific enough to be measured when you come back together.

Write them down on a single group list as well as in your own notebook – you will be reporting together next time on how well you did!

### **Prayer Time**

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Use your prayer time to commit to real action before God.