

THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR CREATION CARE: SUMMARY

© Phillip Donnell New Creation New Zealand 2024

One of the best hopes for resolving current environmental challenges is that the global church (25% of the world's population) will recover the earth-keeping vocation it pursued strongly in earlier centuries but gradually relinquished after the Industrial Revolution. That is more likely to happen if Christians become convinced that God wants them to care for what he has made, i.e. that creation care is a right response to God. Our behaviour is rooted in our deepest moral and spiritual motivations. We change our ways if we're persuaded that something is God's calling and commission to us. That is where Scripture comes in...

1. SOURCE: God made all things out of nothing and keeps them in existence. God is grieved if we damage what he has made, which should prompt us to lament and repent.

Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; Psalm 19:1,33:6-9,90:2,102:25,104:24,139:13-16; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 40:28,42:5,44:24,45:12,66:2; Jeremiah 10:12; John 1:3; Acts 17:24-25; Romans 4:17; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2-3,11:1; 2 Peter 3:5-6; Revelation 4:11,10:6.

2. STEWARDSHIP: God owns the planet, but appointed humans to be faithful managers, caretakers and custodians, with the right to use but not abuse. This is a commission for which we will be held accountable.

Genesis 1:28,2:15; Exodus 19:5; Leviticus 25:23; I Chronicles 27:31; Psalm 24:1,89:11; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 3:23-24; I Peter 4:10; Revelation 11:18.

3. SANCTITY: Because God made, sustains, reveals himself through, is present throughout, values, delights in, provides for, loves/redeems, and is worshipped by/within creation, it is sacred and therefore worthy of great respect.

Genesis 3:8; Exodus 3:4-5; Numbers 35:34; Deuteronomy 4:39; Job 38-41; Psalm 19:1, 65:9-13,104:27-31,139:7-10, 145:16; Isaiah 6:3, 66:1-2 (c.f. Matthew 5:35, Acts 7:48-50); Jeremiah 23:24; Luke 12:24; Acts 14:17,17:24-28; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:6.

4. SUSTAINABILITY: God is concerned to preserve the fruitfulness and productivity of the earth as part of extending and expressing his faithfulness to all generations – past, present and future.

Genesis 2:2-8; Exodus 20:8-11,23:10-12; Leviticus 19:23-25,22:28,25:1-22; Deuteronomy 20:19-20,22:6-7; Psalm 89:1,100:5,119:90; Isaiah 58:13-14; Philippians 4:11-12; I Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5.

5. SIMILARITY: Jesus had a deep connection with creation, shown by his participation in bringing it into being, the creation references in his teaching, the incidents involving nature in his life, and his resurrection which inaugurated the new creation. He deeply cared for the natural world. God's intention is that we should be like him in this aspect as in any other.

Job 19:25; Matthew 6:25-34,7:15-20,10:29-31; Mark 1:12-13,35; Luke 8:4-15/22-25,15:3-6; John 1:3/10, 10:1-16,13:12-17; Romans 5:12-19,8:29,13:14; I Corinthians 15:1-57; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:15,5:1; Philippians 2:5; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:2-3; I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6,4:17; Revelation 4:11.

6. SALUTATION: Caring for creation is an act of worship because it honours, blesses, delights, and glorifies God. It also preserves creation to be a context/inspiration for our worship and enables it to praise its Maker without hindrance.

I Chronicles 16:29-34; Psalm 19:1-4, 29:1-2, 69:34, 96:11-13, 98:7, 103:22, 145:10, 148:10,150:6; Isaiah 55:12, 66:1-2 (c.f. Acts 7:48-49,17:24-25); Mark 1:35; Luke 19:40; John 4:23-24; Revelation 5:13.

- 7. SALVATION: Christ came to redeem the whole of creation, human and non-human, setting it free from sin, evil, curses, corruption and death. Therefore, as the agents through whom God advances his redemptive purposes, we should be actively concerned about rescuing and renewing not only people but also nature.**

Genesis 6-9; Jonah 2:9,4:11; Psalm 36:6; Mark 16:15; John 3:16-17; Romans 3:23, 6:23, 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 5:19,6:2; Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:20; I Peter 1:9-10/18-21,3:18; 2 Peter 3:9-10; Revelation 5:11-14, 21:5.

- 8. SOCIAL JUSTICE: We have a responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of others, which includes protecting the physical contexts in which they live, and their means of livelihood, as well as ensuring they are treated fairly and justly.**

Genesis 4:9; Deuteronomy 15:7-11, 24:14-21, 27:19; Psalm 11:7, 72:1-4; Proverbs 14:21/31, 19:17; 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17, 3:14-15, 10:1-2, 58:6-7; Ezekiel 16:49; Amos 2:6-7, 5:11-13/24; Micah 6:8; Matthew 7:12, 19:21,22:39, 25:31-46, 26:11; Luke 4:14-21, 10:25-37, 11:42, 12:33, 14:12-14, 16:19-31; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37, 6:1-6; Romans 12:13/20; I Timothy 5:3; James 1:27,2:14-17,5:1-6; I John 3:16-17.

- 9. SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: Leaders endued and empowered by the Holy Spirit are crucial if we are to overcome the ecological challenges of our time, because supernatural enabling is required to address them in the best possible ways and because behind them are spiritual and moral issues that lie deep within the human heart.**

Exodus 36:1-2; Leviticus 26:3-6; Numbers 11:25; Deuteronomy 7:12-14,11:13-17,28:9-12/15-24/38-42; I Chronicles 12:27-31; I Kings 3:9-12; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 24:5-7; Jeremiah 4:22-28,9:10,12:4; Hosea 4:1-3; Luke 1:4b; John 14:15-17,16:8-11; Acts 1:8,2:4,8:29,13:1-3,15:28,16:6-8; Romans 8:9/12-14,12:6-8; I Corinthians 1:24-30,3:16,6:19,12:7-11/27-31; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:20,4:11-12,5:18; 2 Timothy 1:7; I Peter 4:10.

- 10. SHALOM: God's invites us to join with him in restoring creation to the state of full *shalom* he originally intended, and will one day fully accomplish, working together to realise the vision of a new heaven and a new earth.**

Psalm 96:10-13,104:30; Isaiah 11:1-9, 35:1-10, 40:1-11, 43:19-21, 55:12-13, 65:17-25; Micah 4:1-4; Habakkuk 2:3,14; Matthew 6:10,19:28; Acts 3:17-21; Romans 8:18-25; Ephesians 1:10-11; Philippians 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Revelation 11:15 and chapters 19-22.

**Caring for creation is a significant and repeated theme throughout the Bible!
It is a definite responsibility that God has given us. It is part of the Church's mission.**

Which one of these principles do you find most cogent? convincing? personally impactful?
What will you do to apply this truth (John 13:17; James 1:22)?

These ten principles are explored in depth in a forthcoming book (authored by Phillip Donnell), The book is entitled *The Case for Creation Care: Ten Biblical Themes That Demand a Green Faith*. The book is due for publication by the end of 2024.

For help with your mission of creation care, please contact us: newcreationnewzealand@gmail.com
or visit our Facebook website: <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationNZ/>