



Working for Justice,
Peace and Holiness

Discovering ways to help you see people as Jesus does, seeking justice and peace.

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

JUST LYFE

ENVIRONMENT

Right at the start of the Bible, we read of God's call on humanity to rule over creation as God's stewards. This is constantly repeated throughout Scripture. The people of God need to recover our call and mandate to be environmentalists.

READ



Genesis 1.24 – 2.3

The Sixth Day

²⁴ God said, "I command the earth to give life to all kinds of tame animals, wild animals, and reptiles." And that's what happened. ²⁵ God made every one of them. Then he looked at what he had done, and it was good.

²⁶ God said, "Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures." ²⁷ So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. ²⁸ God gave them his blessing and said:

Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.

²⁹ I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain for you to eat.

³⁰ And I have given the green plants as food for everything else that breathes. These will be food for animals, both wild and tame, and for birds. ³¹ God looked at what he had done. All of it was very good! Evening came and then morning—that was the sixth day.

2 ¹ So the heavens and the earth and everything else were created.

The Seventh Day

² By the seventh day God had finished his work, and so he rested. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it special because on that day he rested from his work.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ The story of creation is not meant to be a scientific account of origins, but a reminder that everything is dependent upon a sovereign God.
- ▶ Whilst the word 'environment' is not found in the Bible – creation care is explicit throughout. The idea of 'like us' probably includes the role of looking after the creation for the creator: the way we do this, for better or worse, reflects back onto God

whose image we represent! We are also accountable to him.

- ▶ To bless someone is not only to give them a gift but also to give them a function (cf. 1.22; 2.3; 27.27-29). Man's function is to be fruitful and multiply and also to subdue and rule the earth and its animal inhabitants (cf. Psalms 8.6-8; James 3.7). Blessing is also a privilege – not an obligation or burden.
- ▶ This is not an excuse for exploiting nature. Although subject to man, animals are also his companions (2.18–20). Noah

was the prototype conservationist when he built an ark to protect the animals from being destroyed in the flood (6.20; 7.3).

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ How committed are you personally to environmental issues? In what ways?
- ▶ In what ways might caring for the environment and worship be linked?

RESPOND

Environment challenge: As a group, create a challenge to help you get more involved with creation care, stewardship and the environment.

Challenge ideas:
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Going Greener

If your church does not often focus sermons and services on environmental issues – why not get the ball rolling? Actively engage leaders in conversations about the environment and your church's response. Plan an outdoor service, provide environmental information, do a church eco-audit, take the church out on a walk through a

local beauty spot, commit to Fair-trade products. There are loads of great fun ideas – check out the following websites for inspiration:

www.arochalivinglightly.org.uk
www.christian-ecology.org.uk
www.encams.org/ecocongregation

02 Declutter

Spend time this week going through your possessions and clearing out things you no longer require. You could give to charity shops, join your local free-cycle scheme, sell it at a car boot sale (and give the proceeds to an environmental organisation). Or bless others with a gift – if you know someone who would like something you have and no longer need, just give it to them.

03 Enjoy Creation

Plan to spend some extensive time just enjoying God's earth. You could walk through a forest with children (take a guide book to identify trees, plants and animals), go camping, surfing or cycling. You could do some gardening or local litter picking. Even visit a garden centre as an act of worship. Try looking round your own garden or local park and thanking God for everything from the soil to the trees – and don't forget the worms and the birds!

'Our relationship with the rest of creation is intimately bound up with our relationship with God. The Bible offers "an ethical perspective based on reverence for the whole of life..' [Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

More resources on 'Just Lyfe'

- [Listen to video interview with Andy Clasper - Executive Director of Micah Challenge](#)
- [Read article What On Earth Has The Environment Got To The Church by David Pickering](#)
- [Read 'lyfe story' biographies on Mother Teresa and William Wilberforce](#)
- [Recommended listening - You Have Shown Us available from Kingswayshop.com](#)

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you explore ways to become more environmentally aware and active.