

“We All Have The Same Job”

Genesis 2:15-17

Do you remember your first job? I do. I worked maintenance for a local church, and I was miserable. This job might sound just fine to you, but I have never been much for manual labor, and I am not good with my hands. I would rather curl up with a good book than a circular saw any day. I don't remember much about that job except for the day I quit. I had been sent out to dig post holes all day in the blistering Georgia sun. My cheeks were burning so bad it felt like it was raining needles. About three in the afternoon, I walked in and calmly said, “I'm sorry, but I've had enough.”

Maybe you had a similarly bad experience with your first job. Maybe you had to stock shelves at a local grocery store or work a drive-thru lane at a fast-food restaurant. It was terrible, and you didn't last very long, and you soon found yourself wishing you knew what your career in life would be.

Did you know that God has given each of us the same job in life? It's true. It all started when the very first human, Adam, got his very first job in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 2:15-17 we read: “The Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.’”

God gave Adam, and consequently you and me, the sacred job of taking care of His good creation. Here we see both where God placed man—in a garden on Earth—and why He placed us there—to “work it and watch over it.” In a sense, we all have the same job. We are the caretakers, the managers, the protectors, and the responsible overseers of the Earth and its resources.

The Bible tells us “the earth and everything in it...belong to the Lord” (Psalm 24:1). God never gave us the Earth. He never signed the deed to the planet over to us. It is still His good creation. But in His physical absence, He has made us caretakers of the Earth. So we must carry out this duty as an act of obedience and worship to Him.

Creation care may not seem like an act of worship, but all of life is worship for followers of Christ. In fact, some scholars actually translate “work it and watch over” in verse 15 as “worship and obey.”¹ When we consume less and produce less meaningless waste that simply gets tossed in the campus trash bins, we are worshipping God. When we advocate for people who are suffering due to human-induced environmental degradation, we are worshipping God. When we live in a more thoughtful, more simplistic way even while in college, we are performing an act of worship before an Almighty God.

And don't think that no one will notice. The world around us cares deeply about these things. They see the environmental crises smeared across network news channels. They realize that there are environmental problems disproportionately affecting the poorest people on Earth. When we worship God by honoring the stewardship job He has given us, we are actively and creatively on mission for Him.

Talk It Up:

1. An all-powerful God could have made the Earth completely self-sufficient. Why did you think God gave humans the job of protecting and preserving the Earth?
2. There are two ways we can carry out our assignment as caretakers of creation: responsibly or irresponsibly. How does God's command regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil illustrate this point?
3. Read Psalm 24 and discuss the various truths about God's creation. How do these truths apply to the problems we are currently facing?
4. People are watching to see how Christians will respond to environmental crises. How can you use creation care to be on mission for God?
5. How have your actions, words, or thoughts this week affirmed the “whole purpose of God” in your life? (Acts 20:27)
6. How has your mindset and/or actions reflected God's missional purpose for you this week? (Acts 20:29)
7. How has God's Word built you up this week? (Acts 20:32)

Prayer Requests:

- Ask God to show you if there are any areas where you are not being a good steward of the Earth. Confess those failures as sin, and ask God for forgiveness as you commit to change these areas of your life.
- Ask God to open the hearts of specific people in your life who need a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for God to start a spiritual awakening on your campus and on college campuses across the country and around the world.
- Take time to pray for any personal requests that group members may have.

¹ Richard Hess, Walter Kaiser Jr., and John H. Sailhammer with David Garland and Tremper Longman III, eds. *The Bible Expositors Commentary: Genesis-Leviticus Revised Edition* (Zondervan, 2008).