

“One Thing We All Have in Common: Planet Earth”

Romans 1:18-20

I had the most uncomfortable and exhilarating experience recently. It is called “Dialogue in the Dark,”ⁱ and it is a social awareness activity in which visually impaired guides lead small groups through completely darkened rooms to experience everyday situations as a blind person does. Even the simple experience of going to the grocery store can be complicated, difficult, and altogether frustrating when done in complete darkness.

What if God left us spiritually blind? What if we had no way of knowing if anyone or anything were out there, up there, or down here? What if God did not reveal Himself to us? How would we know He exists? We wouldn’t. You wouldn’t have anyone to pray to when you woke up late for a class or forgot that you had a test to study for.

Luckily, God has revealed Himself in the most excellent of ways. First, He has given us specific information about Himself through His Word. The Bible is a wonderful guide filled with depictions that describe God and stories that illustrate how He thinks and what He expects.

But, did you know that we could know things about God in a different way? Did you know that we could tell a lot about God just from looking at the natural world around us? It’s true. As Romans 1:18-20 says: “For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their righteousness suppress the truth, since what can be made known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. From the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what he has made.”

Look around you and see God. The food that you eat every day says God is a provider. An after dinner sunset speaks of His beauty. A snow-tipped mountain echoes His majesty. Everything about this world speaks about God’s nature and attributes. That is why Psalm 53:1 says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘God does not exist.’” One can believe in their heart that God doesn’t exist, but in their head the knowledge of Him has been given to everyone. One must willfully disregard the existence of God to deny His presence.ⁱⁱ

This may seem like a meaningless fact to you, but it is actually some very valuable information. This tells you that you always have a starting point to share the gospel with someone even if you think you don’t. Everyone can see God around them.

I was a science major in college. I graduated with a degree in biology. (Don’t hate me because I’m a geek.) I remember one day learning about something we all have learned about at some point: the water cycle. It occurred to me that every day water condenses in clouds and falls to earth, collects in lakes, and is available for our use to ensure our survival. Year after year, this cycle occurs without prodding from you or me. It is amazing, but more importantly, it is revealing. Even through the water cycle, it is as if God is saying, “I am here, and I want to know you.”

Just as a simplistic, scientific cycle provided a wonderful example of God’s presence, so you are faced with God’s revelation everyday. Perhaps this semester as you are on mission for Him, you could find more ways to share the gospel by simply looking around you and building bridges from the thing we all have in common: planet earth.

Talk It Up:

1. In what ways can you learn something about God by looking at the natural world (apart from the examples listed above)?
2. How could you use the Bible to support the existence of God or make claims about God? In what ways is the Bible a greater or more comprehensive witness about God than creation?
3. The verse in Psalm 53 which speaks about denying God’s existence is also found in Psalm 14. Why do you think this is?
4. How could you use information learned in one of your classes about the natural world or something natural around campus to build a bridge to the gospel with someone you know?

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 help you learn more about Him through His creation and His Word.
- 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 For more information, see: www.dialogue-in-the-dark.com.

ⁱⁱ Willem A. VanGemeren, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms* (Zondervan, 1991).