

DAILY READING PLAN

Week of April 16, 2023

**Sacred Earth: We see God
in Creation**



Day One: Read Psalm 104:24-25 | *What a wildly wonderful world, GOD! You made it all, with Wisdom at your side, made earth overflow with your wonderful creations. Oh, look—the deep, wide sea, brimming with fish past counting... the sea, teeming with creatures innumerable, living things small and great!*

People agree to disagree about a wide range of spiritual matters. But nearly all agree that connecting with God often happens by being outdoors in the midst of creation. Many people indicate that walking through a forest, enjoying an open meadow, hiking along a river, up a mountain, or sitting by a lake at sunrise or sunset, is deeply moving and gives them a sense of God's presence in the beautiful creation." How would you respond to this statement? Where do you most connect with God?

Day Two: Read Psalm 95:3-7 | *For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

How does reading a passage like this help you make the connection between Creator and creation? How does understanding God as Creator inspire you to care for the earth?

Day Three: Read Genesis 1:31 | *God looked over everything God had made; it was so good, so very good!*

If you have a mobile device, there's a good chance that you have pictures of "pretty, amazing things..." plants, flowers, sunrises, sunsets, etc. Take another look. Set aside some quiet moments today to be quiet. As you scroll through those images, pause with each to give God thanks and praise.

Day Four: Read Psalm 8:3-9 | *When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place— what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority— the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!*

Connecting with the creation and being reminded of God's goodness is a powerful way to motivate ourselves and others to care for what's around us. Research shows that spending time outside is so good for us in many ways – mentally, physically, and spiritually. So, spend some time outside... tonight. If you have a clear evening, enjoy the night sky. And if the sky isn't visible. Give thanks for what you do see.

Day Five: Read Isaiah 40:25-26 | *“So—who is like me? [God says...] Who holds a candle to me?” says The Holy One. “Look at the night skies: Who do you think made all this? Who marches this army of stars out each night, counts them off, calls each by name - so magnificent! so powerful!— and never overlooks a single one?”*

The renowned early 20th-century theologian, pastor, and seminary professor Walter Rauschenbusch penned a prayer that captures the essence of knowing God through deeply knowing and experiencing creation. Let this be your prayer today:

"O God, we thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the salt sea and the running water, for the everlasting hills and the never-resting winds, for trees and the common grass underfoot. We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, see the splendor of the summer fields, and taste of the autumn fruits, and rejoice in the feel of the snow, and smell the breath of the spring. Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty and save our souls from being so blind that we pass unseeing when even the common thorn bush is aflame with your glory, O God our Creator, who lives and reigns forever and ever." - Walter Rauschenbusch, The Beauty of Nature