

# Faith and Climate: Quotes and Resources

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## Quotes:

### Having Less Material Goods

“Do not ask yourself how simply you can live, for that is unrealistic. Instead, begin by considering how you can downsize some of your material desires. Remember that these desires, when fulfilled, rarely bring the anticipated joy anyway. In short, be happier with what you already have. Your family and your planet will be grateful.” Rabbi Edwin Goldberg, *Saying No and Letting Go*, 80.

### Our Lives and Climate Change

“Our lives and actions are not meaningless--in fact, the opposite is true. Our rapidly changing climate proves that we are all connected, that every action we take can alleviate suffering not only tangibly, locally, and immediately but across the vast network of life and throughout all time. Our lives and actions may be temporary and imperfect, but by accepting our tiny place in the world, we unlock a deeper way of being. And we help to bring about a future that will be unimaginably better for everyone.” Eric Holthuas, *The Future Earth*, 49.

### Practicing Ecological Love

“The virtue of *ecological love*, as it’s etymology suggests, names the settled disposition to care about our house (*oikos*) and its inhabitants--to promote the flourishing of all creatures. It is the care we have not only for people but also for animals and plants and special places.” Steven Bouma-Prediger, *Earthkeeping and Character*, 95.

### Caring for the River

“It is an important ancient story, reminding us that rivers serve as a powerful spiritual metaphor for our lives in God and that they are the actual source of sustenance and economic vitality. God’s presence is like a river: God’s justice flows like the waters. To tend to the waters reminds us of the source of life and gives practical expression to addressing our environment and the needs of the poor.” Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded*, 88.

### Caring for Mother Earth:

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why

the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (*Rom 8:22*). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

*Nothing in this world is indifferent to us”*

*Laudato Si’* of The Holy Father Francis: On Care For Our Common Home, 2.

### **Walking on the Earth:**

“I like to walk alone on country paths, rice plants and wild grasses on both sides, putting each foot down on the earth in mindfulness, knowing that I walk on the wondrous earth. In such moments, existence is a miraculous and mysterious reality. People usually consider walking on water or thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don’t even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child – our own two eyes.” (Thich Nhat Hanh)

### **Verses from Text:**

**Psalm 104: 10-15** (The entire Psalm reflects this focus on the Earth)

- <sup>10</sup> You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
they flow between the hills,
- <sup>11</sup> giving drink to every wild animal;  
the wild asses quench their thirst.
- <sup>12</sup> By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;  
they sing among the branches.
- <sup>13</sup> From your lofty abode you water the mountains;  
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
- <sup>14</sup> You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to use,  
to bring forth food from the earth,
- <sup>15</sup> and wine to gladden the human heart,  
oil to make the face shine,  
and bread to strengthen the human heart.

### **Guidance from Tradition:**

“*Anavah* means that we are not entitled to a hugely disproportionate share of the planet’s resources, even if we have the wealth to pay for it.” Rabbi Edwin Goldberg, 31.

***Tikkum Olam*** means to repair the world. This has a variety of applications but is often the phrase used when talking about climate change and healing our earthly home.

## Actions:

### **Acknowledging the Loss: A Discussion and Reflection Around Climate Change**

Being able to speak the truth without the pressure to sugarcoat our experience of loss is an important aspect of acknowledging the loss. We cannot begin to create a coherent story for navigating the climate crisis without first being able to name what we are experiencing.”

One way we can do this is through one on one discussion. Things you can ask include: “What do you feel you’ve already lost to climate change? What are you afraid of losing? Can you name the sensations and/or emotions that arise as you identify what feels different? What are some values you feel are being lost that you might like to embody--in the short terms within this work, and in the longer term in your daily life?” Eric Holthuas, *The Future Earth*, 214.

## Climate History:

“The key juncture when world momentum was building toward a tough, science-based global agreement was 1988. That was when James Hansen, then director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies, testified before Congress that he had “99 percent confidence” in “a real warming trend” linked to human activity. Later that same month, hundreds of scientists and policy makers held the historic World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in Toronto, where the first emission-reduction targets were discussed. By the end of that same year, in November 1988, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the premier scientific body advising governments on the climate threat, held its first session.” Naomi Kline, *On Fire*, 246.

## Weblinks:

- **Climate 101** - <https://climarealityproject.org/climate-101>
- **Defining Decarbonization:** <https://etia-group.com/decarbonization/#>
- **10 steamy signs in 2020 that climate change is speeding up** - <https://www.livescience.com/climate-change-worsening-2020.html>
- **Ghastly Future of Mass Extinction** <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/13/top-scientists-warn-of-ghastly-future-of-mass-extinction-and-climate-disruption-aoe>

## Climate Knowledge Key:

**Beginner** - Basic concepts, Intro level

**Some Knowledge** - Knows about climate change, some disturbing info

**Moderate Knowledge** - Well read, understands the ideas and concepts, can handle difficult information

**Very Familiar** - Involved in climate work, exposed to the negative data, aware of the coming disaster