

THE ENVIRONMENT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE TALKING POINTS SERIES

This series does not aim to say everything there is to say about a subject, but to give an overview and a solid grounding to how Christians should start to think about the issue from the Bible. We hope that as you discuss this book, and the Bible passages that it is based on, you will gain in confidence to speak faithfully, compassionately and wisely to others.

Below is an extensive list of questions. Please pick and choose the ones that suit your group and the time you have available. If you are leading a group, try to keep constantly in people's minds that this is not simply a discussion about a political or ethical "issue"—but that these are fears experienced by real people who are, perhaps, suffering deeply, and need our love and compassion, and, above all, the gospel message of hope.

TO START

- Where have you encountered conversations about the environment? What are some of the things you have heard or read recently?
- Before you started reading this book, what were some of the questions you had about the environment and green issues?
- Before you started reading this book, what were your thoughts about what the Christian view of the environment was or should be?

CHAPTER 1: GREETING GRETA

- How do you react to the list of bullet points on pages 15-17?
- Where on the "climate pendulum" do you find yourself most often?
- Have you experienced a situation where environmental issues have provided an opportunity for gospel witness?
- "The only thing that matters is evangelism." Have you encountered, or expressed, an objection similar to that? Having read this chapter, how would you now respond?
- How, practically, should we navigate the need to keep evangelism central without neglecting other important issues, such as creation care? Where have you seen this done well?

CHAPTER 2: MY FATHER'S WORLD

- What are some of your favourite things in the natural world that our Father has created?
- How would you sum up "the doctrine of creation"? How does that doctrine help us to avoid the extremes of panic and passivity on the "climate pendulum"?
- How would you sum up "the doctrine of sin"? How does that doctrine help us to avoid the extremes of panic and passivity on the "climate pendulum"?
- Which of the reasons from this chapter for Christians to care about the environment did you find most compelling? Can you think of any more?

CHAPTER 3: KINGS AND QUEENS OF NARNIA

- This chapter quoted David Attenborough as saying, "The future of humanity, and indeed of all life on Earth, now depends on us". Have you heard similar sentiments expressed in the past—and if so, how did they make you feel?
- What did you find most sobering, and most reassuring, in this chapter?

- Was there anything from the Bible in this chapter that was new to you or struck you afresh?
- What might it look like for us to “roll up our sleeves” as stewards of this world?

CHAPTER 4: TOMORROW NEVER DIES

- Is this world your home? Sum up the answer from this chapter.
- Was there anything in this chapter about the future of our planet that was new to you or which you have questions about?
- How does the idea that Jesus will renew our planet in the future motivate us to look after it today?
- Look at the four principles from pages 67-71 (regarding accountability, witness, timescales and continuity). Which of those do you think you are most likely to neglect or forget? How can you make sure that you keep it in view?
- What other principles from the book as a whole, or your own understanding of the Bible, could you add?

POSTSCRIPT

- What struck you from reading about a day in the life of Sara?
- What are some practical changes that you want to make in your own life to better care for creation?
- What areas do you still have questions about?
- What might it look like to engage with environmental issues as a church community?

TO FINISH

- What’s the big thing that has impacted you from reading *The Environment*?
- How will you think about and pray for your friends, your neighbours and your government as they contemplate environmental issues?
- What extra help and information do you think you need to be more confident about what you believe on this subject?

PRAY

- Thank God for his bountiful creation. Ask him to help you understand environmental issues and the people they affect better.
- Pray that you and your church fellowship would take appropriate action in order to steward creation and love your neighbours well, for the glory of God.
- Pray for opportunities to share the hope of the gospel with non-Christian friends as you chat about this issue.
- Pray that the governments of the world would make wise policy decisions that work for the common good.



This discussion guide prepared by and © The Good Book Company