



Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet

Jonathan Merritt

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In GREEN LIKE GOD, Jonathan Merritt gently and insightfully observes that the bible has a lot to say about environmental problems like unclean water, material waste, over consumption, air pollution, and global warming. In fact, Jonathan writes that in the book of Genesis, God went green and never looked back. Relying heavily on scripture, Jonathan gives the case for green living, but not because it's trendy and hip. Rather, it's part of living rightly as a believer. It's an act of obedience to our Creator-God.

GREEN LIKE GOD is at once practical, prescriptive, and conversational in tone. The author looks at a number of trends with tips to help the reader wade into the world of creation care living. An appendix includes suggestions of things we can do. In addition, the book includes interviews with everyday Christians to tell the story of the journey to environmental stewardship among people of faith.

This is the book that Christians are longing for and need today. Written for a new generation of Christians who are struggling with how to deal with the important issue of creation-care and green living, GREEN LIKE GOD is both highly relevant and theologically sound. It will have a profound impact on how Christians live and interact with the world today.

Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet Details

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From Reader Review Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet for online ebook

Jeff says

Jonathan is a great writer that God is going to use in tangible ways. Jonathan begins by posing this interesting dilemma: When one's commitment to conservative Christianity increases, coolness toward the environment often increases. Why is that?

His interest in creation care started when a seminary professor said this: There are two forms of divine revelation: the special revelation in Scripture that is able to lead us to salvation and the general revelation we receive through nature. Both are from God so when we destroy creation, which is God's revelation, it's similar to tearing a page out of the Bible."

That's powerful. That statement creates the platform from which Jonathan builds his case for creation care. I definitely recommend this book to all believers.

Deanna says

At first, I was disappointed with this book, but toward the end, I began to appreciate it more. My favorite quote is in the 11th chapter: "Sometimes Christianity is messy. Much of Christianity is lived in the realm of conscience. It isn't always clear-cut or easy. Christian ethics is filled with moral dilemmas; Christian theology is filled with mystery; Christian living has its share of chaos. But a healthy helping of messiness is powerfully positive because in mess and uncertainty, faith becomes strong. Messiness makes us feel weak, it forces us to relinquish control to God." How true that is! The fact that Jonathan Merritt has a biology degree makes his call to creation care more convincing. I was hoping for a little more science in this book. Overall, a solid first book by Jonathan Merritt.

Josh says

I am coming from a very different perspective writing this review in that I would classify myself as agnostic. However I was raised in faith, went to a Catholic school, all that good stuff. So I approached this book like I would any book, religious in nature or not.

Jonathan Merritt carries one truth throughout the book - we need to care for our planet. Whether you are Catholic, Christian, Buddhist, agnostic, or none of the above, most people can agree on that fact. It's a fresh perspective, one that isn't caught up in the global warming debate.

Merritt uses a variety of non-religious sources, including actual statistics to make his point that the planet needs saving. He then uses theological works to give us the reason for saving it.

After I finished this book I passed it along to a Baptist minister I am friends with and it has already started to creep into his sermons. The idea that Love Thy Neighbor can go much further than most think.

Disclaimer:

The copy of this book was provided free of charge through Goodreads First Reads.

Michaiah says

I won this book from a First Reads giveaway, and I'm so glad I did, because I probably never would have read it otherwise. It far exceeded my expectations.

For years, I have been bothered by the indifference to environmental concerns that so many Christians (including myself) display. In this book, Jonathan Merritt first addresses why care for the environment should matter to everyone, but especially to Christians. In short, God's creation is His, He declared it to be good, and made mankind stewards over it, therefore, we should be the best stewards we can be. And Merritt demonstrates how these conclusions are soundly based on scripture. Merritt then responds to common ideas raised by skeptics, and provides practical guidelines/suggestions for making your life a little greener one step at a time. He also provides a list of useful websites, organizations, and books/articles for further reading. Merritt has written a very convicting book, and convincingly argues for the importance of creation care among the people of God.

Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

"4.5 stars" *Green Like God* is another of our church book club picks that highlight the reasons why Christians should be more involved in creation care. I felt that author Jonathan Merritt had an excellent persuasive argument for this that was biblically rooted. In fact, many of his points are things that I'd already thought of a long time ago, but that doesn't mean that I don't think this book is good. After all, I didn't choose to write a book about it, so someone had to.:-)

In the first half of the book, Mr. Merritt outlines the hidden truths in the Bible that support creation care. First and foremost, he points out that if we believe that God created the Earth and everything in it, then we must believe that it is holy and good. It's like God handiwork as a master artist. We wouldn't go and destroy the Mona Lisa or any other famous artwork, so why should we destroy God's. We should respect his artistry above all others. The author also discussed how in God's giving mankind dominion over his creation, he was really setting up more of a benevolent monarchy where we are expected to care for and tend it rather than subdue it and strip it of all its natural resources for our own selfish gain. If we engage in the latter, then we are abusing our dominion. The author further demonstrates that God values all life, and therefore we must as well by protecting and preserving it. He further explores the idea that the whole of God's creation is our sanctuary and that through his creation God can reveal himself to us, so we should strive to preserve nature for future generations so that they too can connect with God through natural revelation. Finally he wraps up this section by showing that green living and conservation isn't just a liberal or "far left" issue, while trying to dispel some of the common arguments and misperceptions that often keep more conservative Christians from engaging in this important work.

In the second half of the book, the author discusses how we should respond to the information he imparted in the first half. First he talks about the facts regarding exactly what is occurring in the natural world today, including many statistics that should alarm people, and how we can't just stick our heads in the sand and

pretend that they don't exist or try to twist the facts to absolve ourselves of any responsibility. He also points out that we can be our own worst enemy and how our wasteful lifestyles, particularly here in the U. S., the most extravagant and profligate country in the world, are affecting not just our own country but everyone else on our planet. He posits that because of this we need to reinvent the "American way." Finally he shows us how and why we should adopt a J-O-Y lifestyle: Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. If we do this, then care for God and everything he has made should come first, while caring about how our actions affect others comes second, with our own selfish agenda last. Unfortunately most corporate and political policies are the exact opposite, but things are slowly changing and the church should be leading the way on these issues. There are also a couple of appendices at the end, one of which gives a few practical ideas for living a greener life, while the other addresses the big elephant in the room known as climate change.

I've tried to live a greener life for many years now, and have spent all this time wondering why many Christians are so resistant to the idea. The author himself ran into many of these people after first publishing a treatise on the topic. I suppose it has a lot to do with conservation, ecology, and "going green" being equated with liberal ideology, but nothing could be further from the truth, IMHO. This shouldn't be a conservative or a liberal issue. We should all care about our planet, because it's the only one we have. If we ruin it beyond repair, there's nowhere else to go. That's why I appreciate that there is a book like *Green Like God*. Although it may not be apparent from what I've described of this book, the author is a self-described conservative who has even gotten the attention of the Southern Baptist Conference, and IMHO, we need more voices from that side of the aisle speaking up about creation care in order to fully affect change in this area.

While I agreed with all of the arguments for why Christians should be more involved in greener living and creation care, the one thing that I didn't really agree with the author about and why I chose to knock off a half-star is that in Chapter 2, I felt like he was setting up a false dichotomy between those who are "going green" as an act of obedience to God and those who are doing it for other reasons. He talks a lot in this chapter about how trendy it's become to buy organic foods, hybrid cars, etc. and seems to imply that this is the only reason non-believers are "going green." While I agree that many companies are probably taking advantage of increased sales of "green" items, and there have been many celebrity endorsements of such products and lifestyles, I hardly think that every person who doesn't believe in God is doing it merely because of a trend. It makes non-believers or believers in other faiths look shallow when they might be doing it for perfectly legitimate reasons, such as wanting to eat healthier, reduce carbon emissions, or simply because they appreciate our planet and want to look after it. I also think that scientists, many of whom are atheists and agnostics, are doing it because they fully understand the implications of not engaging in caring for our world, so they would probably take umbrage to this as well. Otherwise, though, I thought this was a great book, particularly for encouraging Christians to take a closer look at how they're living, as well as how and why they can and should be more engaged in caring for God's masterpiece.

Heather says

I've always known creation stewardship was given to us by God, but always frustrated by the lack of that passion in church. I always feel distant from my local Christians at church because creation care is the least on their mind and the "Christian" politicians seem to throw such an idea out the window. It was pleasing to find this book and see that others have heeded the calling to care for God's creation. Most of the information I did already know, but it was still a great read and at times some of the facts were just mind-boggling. I think this should be a book the church should read. Obviously the Bible is standard for the church but since it seems that they either don't read the Bible at all or they somehow skip the parts about creation care, this is a

good book to help shed light of the full message people tend to forget, for God so loved the WORLD...the world is not just us. The world includes us but is not us. We need to love the world, not just the homo sapiens in the world.

Recommend for:

Ages 13+

Small groups

People who are interested in this "green" movement

Carol Evans says

I have to say that I was a little skeptical when I first started this book. Environmentalism and “Go Green” is so politically correct and cool, I guess, that I didn’t want a re-hash of what we’ve already been told over and over again. But this was so much better than my expectations. I usually use post-its in books, both fiction and non-fiction, to mark passages I find interesting, beautiful, thought -provoking, that strike me in some way. Usually, there’s maybe 5 marked pages when I’m finished with a book. This time I think I’ve got like 20 pages marked, which is pretty impressive for such a short book. It just grabbed my attention.

Merritt’s basic point is that God created the earth, loves it, and it is our duty as Christians to be stewards of creation. He doesn’t care about your political leanings, about society’s green fad. He uses scripture after scripture, Old and New Testament, statistics, and his own stories to prove his point, that it is a Christians responsibility to treat the environment, all the plants and animals, with respect. I think for me it was eye opening. I recycle, use canvas shopping bags, grow a garden, because I’m supposed to, it’s good for the environment, but I never really thought of it as a duty.

Merritt doesn’t expect us to be vegan, he wants us to realize that we can use creation to meet our needs, God gave us that right, but what we don’t have the right to do is abuse nature to satisfy our greed.

I think this is a good book for Christians to read, both those interested in creation care and those who have never thought of it. Merritt shows what God has said time and again and shows us what devastation our current environmental practices are causing.

This book is not a list of things you should do to be greener, although it does give some suggestions and resources. It showed me a different way of thinking, a Biblical-based way of looking at nature that hadn’t struck me before. Honestly, pick this one up. I think it’ll be worth your time.

Brent says

You won’t find fancy or emotional language here, just patient teaching, sound theology, and the gentle encouragement to step outside political camps and view the earth from God’s perspective.

Merritt takes not just environmentalism, but consumerism and social justice as well, strips them of their divisive political trappings, and presents them as the spiritual questions that they are.

Green Like God invites evangelicals, in their own language, into a conversation for which they are long overdue.

Taken from my full review at brentdiggs.com. Book provided free for review.

Becky says

I grew up in a staunchly Republican/anti-Democrat household. The attitudes portrayed by my parents led me to summarily dismiss any platforms held by Democrats during my teen and young adult life, including anything having to do with environmentalism and climate change. It wasn't until after I had children and my way of thinking began shifting somewhat, thanks in part to having more and more contact, conversations, and friendships with "liberals", and thanks in part to being responsible for the lives I brought into this world, that it dawned on me: You take care of the things that you love.

I LOVE the world that God created for us. Why did it take me so many years for me to translate that love into wanting to preserve this beautiful world?

Green Like God delves deeper into this very epiphany that I had years ago. It is NOT a how-to book on being "Green". It is a WHY book. Why should we care about the earth? Why does it even matter? Jonathan Merritt discusses various teachings in the bible, from the beginning of the world on through the New Testament, which all testify to the goodness of the Earth and our responsibility towards it. As such, this book re-affirms that which I was already thinking. I can't say how it might affect someone who has no environmentalist leanings, but I would hope it presents a pretty solid case. The earth is wonderful. Our treatment of it is surely NOT wonderful. We can do better, we should do better, and you can even go so far as to say we have been charged by God Himself to do better.

I've personally gone in and out of "Green" phases. Sometimes I do much better than others. But remembering the big, spiritual WHY behind going Green is better motivation than any other I can think of. One step at a time. If you need to shift your attitude first, then you should start there.

After reading through a frightening list of environmental-related statistics, many of which I was already vaguely aware of, I took great pause when the author wrote:

"Stop for a minute and meditate on these facts - a snapshot of the devastation occurring around the globe. People dying with parched lips and empty stomachs. Children breathing in grey air and coughing up blood. Animals vanishing from the face of the earth. Dense forests, which have been here for centuries, wiped from existence. Is this the "glory" that the psalmist sang about? Is this what the Scripture's authors call "the works of the Lord"? Are our actions lining up with all the things we've learned about God's heart?"

When I stop to really think, I'm floored. It doesn't matter that this author comes from an Evangelical Christian background, and that his scriptural quotes come from Bible versions I'm unfamiliar with. His interpretations seem sound and reasonable enough to me. I'm sure God weeps at the destruction of this planet a million more times than I ever do. And that is reason for me to do everything I can to change my world. One step at a time. I hope this book is enough to make the vast majority of Christianity wake up to their responsibility towards the earth. Creation-care, he calls it. Caring for the sacred creation our Heavenly Father entrusted us with. If you love it, take care of it!

Heather says

I'm very much into being environmentally conscious, but I think a lot of what's being written about it is overly simplistic and repetitive. Then there is the feeling that a lot of the people who are "going green" are only doing so because it's trendy. What happens when it's not cool anymore? So I was skeptical when I picked up this book. I thought it was refreshing to see a Christian book focused on the environment, but part of me wondered if it was just trying to be different and prove that Christians are as cool as everybody else. However, I was pleasantly surprised. Merritt provides strong evidence from the Bible to support everything he writes. It's clear that he's motivated by what God says, not by what society is into at the moment. His first argument is that God made the Earth, said it was good, and gave us responsibility over it, so we should treat it with respect. I've heard this before from other Christian environmentalists, but Merritt explains it better than I've heard before. He also says that we hurt other people when we hurt the environment, which is something that I hadn't considered at all before. Climate change causes famines and food shortages, and pollution poisons lungs. In order to truly take care of our neighbors and our future descendants, we should take care of the environment. Merritt offers a few suggestions for green living, but for the most part he sticks to the theology and leaves the tips for other books, which I think was a good move because there are plenty of those books out there. I liked this book just as it is. It made me care more about the environment--for the right reasons.

Mark Gstohl says

This is fine for evangelicals, and I hope they read it. But his literal interpretation of OT scriptures was a problem for me. Also, his astonishment that an early 20th century baptist theologian's (B H Carroll) biblical interpretation could be inaccurate was unbelievable! I stopped reading at that point. Anyone who is surprised that someone's cultural context might impact his/her biblical interpretation isn't someone I can deal with.

Kayla Canada says

ALL Christians need to read this book!!! Merritt does a wonderful job at explaining the biblical purpose behind living "green." This is not a how-to guide to sustainable living. It is truly about learning God's plans for, love of, and heart behind creation. Our love for God translates itself in many ways, and this book shines a light on a disrespect towards God that most haven't ever considered—a disrespect for God's creation. Whether you're skeptical or already interested in environmentalism, this book will provoke you to thought and action! Reading this book is a necessity and an experience that will truly open your eyes to more of who God is and more of His creation!

Mary says

It took me awhile to finish this book, only because there were so many thought provoking messages that I needed to lull over before I moved on. Merritt poked into my soul and asked me to commit to living a life that is a bit different than the one I had been leading. He talks about Green trending and reminds us that this wave of environmentalism has always been right in front of us -- in the Bible. He tells us that God put Adam in the garden to keep it in order, which he has in turn handed down to us. I questioned how I could keep the

gifts that God has bestowed on me 'in order' when everything surrounding it is in chaos, but Merritt reminded me that God has created a covenant with all of the Earth and to have faith that all will survive and prosper. Understanding that the land is gifted to all people and understanding that God prohibits land abuse was a deep thought to process for me . . . we must all do our part to serve as stewards of the land and restore what others have neglected; is this doable? Can I do this? Certainly not single-handedly but with a community of caring believers we can rally together and make this happen. My book is dog-eared, highlighted and underlined. There's a lot in here and a lot to absorb within one sitting. Take it in doses and relate what Merritt is saying to what you have learned; he brings it home and makes one believe that it can be done.

Teechbiz says

We all need to do our part as good stewards of our planet. I really liked this book

Keiki Hendrix says

For God so loved the world – does not mean only human beings. God created the Earth and everything within it. Caring for our planet is as important as stewarding our homes.

In *Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet* by Jonathan Merritt, you will not find nature heralded as a god as some environmentalist believe. What you will find is God's instruction to mankind on how to care for this planet we live on.

Taking note that environmentalism is a dirty word among most conservative Christians, Merritt addresses the issue by stating "For some, environmentalism is synonymous with secularism, Gaia worship, New Ageism, and politically liberal special interest groups." and further that "I've never said I support Al Gore ... yet many assume that because I care about the health of our planet, I am 'becoming' an Al Gore."

It is clear Merritt's heart has turned to a deeper understanding of the issues facing our planet and has compiled his thoughts into this book. As I read the book, I did not find any suggestions unbiblical. Rather, I found a Christian view on taking steps toward our environment.

The difference is plain and stems not from a political source but a spiritual one. The difference is the condition of the heart. A 'tree hugger' is one who holds the environment as a god. Merritt's view is caring for the planet because it is God's creation.

I found the section subtitled 'The Power of Third Place' interesting. A quote from Francis Schaeffer is used to illustrate this point - "If I love the Lover, I love what the Lover has made." Merritt states "Everything we do and even the policies we support must reflect the love God has for the creation He called 'good.'"

Reading through this book did give me pause to think more about our planet but it did not instill in me the passion to care for our planet over and above the needs of the people who live on it. It is a rational wake up call. We cannot further the plans of God by denouncing the environmental movement. Again, it is a matter of motive.

Because it brought the issue of environmentalism into a new light for me, I would recommend this book to

anyone wishing to know more about what God says about how we care for the planet Earth.

Disclaimer:

The review copy of this book was provided free of charge by the author and was donated to the library of Westwood Baptist Church.
