

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY ...



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

SUMMER 2023 VOL 30 NO 2 US \$4.99



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*“He leads me beside
the still waters.”*



He restores my soul.”

– Psalm 23:2, 3

Our Why

When we started publishing *Creation Illustrated* thirty years ago, quality remained a paramount priority. Considering we were called to represent our Creator God and His handiwork, we could not compromise. The publication had to be stunning and stand apart from the rest. We later discovered *Creation Illustrated* also had to hold up to repeated use as readers shared it.

Through the years interesting stories of discovery or rediscovery of *Creation Illustrated* reveal the many *lives* of each issue. One such testimony involved a family that had subscribed back in 2015 for a year and for some reason did not renew. While rummaging in some stacks of paper, they found some old issues, and the children asked, “Why did we stop subscribing? We love that magazine!” The children are serious nature enthusiasts, and they are excited to renew their subscription.

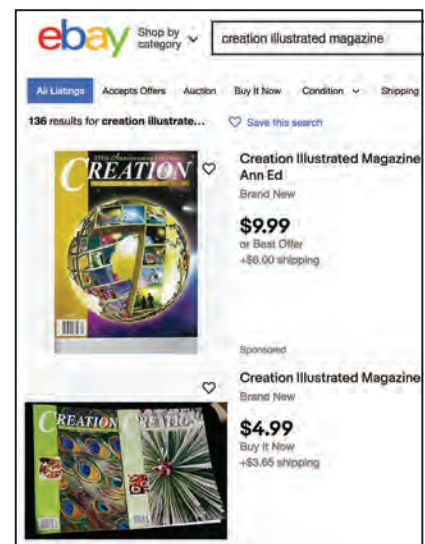
Another lady explained that she asked her chiropractor if she could have one of his copies of CI, and he graciously gave it to her. She reached out to order a subscription and said she loves it because it reminded her of the old *Country* magazines before they changed and put a lot of advertisements in it.

In one letter sent with a subscription payment, a lady wrote that she felt guilty for taking a copy of *Creation Illustrated* home from a waiting room. Another new subscriber explained how he found our publication in a hospital emergency waiting room. The man was so excited to learn about *Creation Illustrated* as he is a nature lover and wants to contribute to the magazine as a writer and photographer.

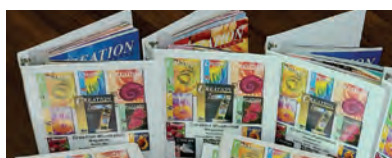
Sometimes issues pass through many homes, prison cells, hospital rooms, and classrooms. Tales even emerge of finding back issues at thrift stores. Some subscribers who don’t want to just discard their back issues try to sell them on eBay! One lady said she found some very old issues of our magazine and wanted to know if we were still in business so she could subscribe. She wasn’t sure why she hadn’t subscribed before now as she enjoyed the old issues very much. We especially liked the story of a subscriber who collected almost all of our back issues and had to move to another state. The husband wanted to toss the magazines out, but the wife said, “No way; they are coming with us!”

Other stories from subscribers list all the ways they enjoy passing it along—to relatives, assisted living homes, schools, churches, etc. Last week a lady called with a question after reading the Spring 1996 story about the creation of animals on day six. That was the first Creation day six story we printed in our ninth edition. Yet, the story still provides inspiration, beauty, and truth 27 years after being published. That’s the power of print—the life of written words never ends!

Sometimes we wonder if sharing *Creation Illustrated* with so many different people decreases the number of subscriptions? While this might be the case in some instances, we prefer to believe that the copies get passed along to encourage those who cannot afford to subscribe. Or additional gift subscriptions make up the difference as readers feel impressed to reach out to family and friends with the transformational power and grandeur of Creation which is our ultimate goal—to be a blessing to others and inspire worship toward our Creator and Redeemer. That’s why.



The Publishers



One subscriber recently bought **ALL 120 back issues** in handy binders. You can too! For more information, turn to the center of this edition. **Supplies are limited. Get 'em while they last! Call (800) 360-2732.**

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 30, No. 2

Our Purpose . . .

is to share the wonders of God's creation. By revealing fresh insights of His infinite wisdom, gentle touch, undeniable justice, redeeming love, and flawless design, pure truth shall bring renewed peace. Each part of this publication is offered as a reprieve from the daily rigors of life so that all can look to the future with unbridled gratitude and hope.

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Like us: 



The cover photo of peacock feathers was taken by Vera Kuttelvaserova Stuchelova of the Czech Republic.

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Speak

The summer air fills with joyful sounds of birds chirping, bees buzzing, sprinklers clicking, and children laughing as the world outdoors awakens to bustling activity.

Amid all of the seasonal revelry, Job invites all of us to, "Speak to the earth, and it will teach you" (Job 12:8). Okay. So what would you say to the earth? And if you did say something, would you be willing to listen and be taught the lessons it has to offer?

Such a challenge was presented to a high-powered executive who lost her job and soon found herself doing just what Job encouraged. She went into her garden to not only pour her heart out with the aches of vanished prestige at the regret of many years of sacrifice and time away from her family, she also allowed herself to be taught anew in the original classroom—the garden. She embraced lessons that no other forum could teach and found a peace that she shares in this edition's "Gardens From Eden" feature called "That Genesis Feeling."

Job also bids us in verse seven to "ask the beasts, and they will teach you." But we learn that not all creatures appear to readily answer our questions. The lofty giraffe, for example, hardly makes a sound, yet researchers recently discovered a nearly inaudible low hum that these creatures use to communicate. So, what does this teach us from the creatures story within these pages? We must listen carefully to *everything* around us (especially the still, small voice of God mentioned in 1 Kings 19), or we might miss something useful or important.

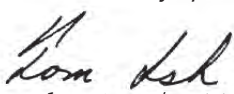
Conversely, sometimes the earth speaks back to us in explosive language like when Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980. Such a catastrophic upheaval offered a sample of the earth's original formative times, as well as its reformative times during the Flood. Aside from the impact of the dramatic geological devastation, the real educational dissertation can be studied in this issue's "Re-creation Outdoors" article on the miraculous restoration and repopulation of the mountain's remains that give us hope that *our* self-destructed lives can be restored under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Job covers most of Creation with his list of lessons in verses seven and eight. "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; . . . and the fish of the sea will explain to you." So, what universal method of communication could all of these creatures use in response to our inquires? We discover in this issue's Creation day six story that they all have eyes. But can the eyes speak to us? Indeed, they offer a powerful means of nonverbal communication. While the vast variety of eyes donned by beasts, insects, snakes, fish, and birds are designed with unique traits to fit the needs of each creature, human eyes are especially adept at showing emotions of sadness, fear, anger, joy, curiosity, confusion, faith, compassion, interest, loneliness, love, and hope to name a few.

So, when we speak to Creation as Job admonishes, the Maker of it all provides the answers that we can meditate upon through His Word, the Holy Spirit, and the object lessons found throughout His handiwork. Finally, Job concludes his soliloquy in verses nine and ten with a pointed question. "Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?" We invite you to humbly *speak* your answer through worshipful prayer.



Speak and then listen.


Tom Ish, editor/publisher

True blessing . . .

I am interested in receiving your *Creation Illustrated* magazine. I was given one from a prison ministry and really loved it. It is a true blessing to so many. Even back issues would be a blessing to me.

A. Campbell
Wetumpka, Alabama

Labors of love . . .

Thank you, dear ones, for all your labors of love. Surely our Father takes notice of it all. We thank God often for you and pray for those in need of His love and forgiveness. That would be all of us, but

especially those who don't know Him yet.

I am so grateful and overwhelmed with joyful thanks for all He has done for me in providing salvation, redemption, and forgiveness. He is truly our great and most high Creator and Father.

S. Cochran
Goldendale,
Washington

Abba Father . . .

May our Abba Father continue to bless your precious ministry. We're looking forward to making others happy and for God to shine His love in their hearts through *Creation Illustrated*. With prayers.

N. Santiago
White Salmon,
Washington

Nice frame . . .

Thank you so much for the calendar. I like the February page with the cloud that is shaped like a heart! I also enjoyed my late friend Elma Helgason's "Dear God" poem in the summer edition. I put it into a nice frame.

I have been blessed with another great granddaughter! I am very thankful that I have such good health

and will be 91 in March. I still live by myself on the farm where I raised my children with my husband who passed away seventeen years ago. I live close to all thirty-two members of my family and still drive my 20-year-old vehicle.

K. Sandboe
La Glace, Alberta

Enclosed funds . . .

Please use the enclosed funds to send as many back issues of *Creation Illustrated* as it will purchase to the address below. They will be distributed to veterans in nursing homes. Use any remaining change where needed. Thank you very much.

M. Howard
Woodbridge, Virginia

How thrilling . . .

I just want you to know how thrilling it was for me to receive my first copy of *Creation Illustrated*. It was a pretty exciting day! A big *thank you* to each of you. I really appreciate the effort you put into the presentation of my article and photos—"Window Frost Art" in the Winter 2023 edition. I've had the joy of looking through

the whole magazine, and I am so impressed with the quality and interesting factors.

As a little side note, it was a special treat for me to be included in the same edition as Terry and Jean McComb who were the pastoral team at the church my family attended in Toronto way back in the 1970s! There are special memories of those days for both my wife and myself.

May God's Spirit continue to work through all of you, especially as you approach the milestone of *Creation Illustrated's* 30th anniversary!

L. Burns
Corner Brook,
Newfoundland

Mailing check . . .

You wouldn't believe how hard it is to get companies to email an invoice and receive check payments nowadays. I appreciate that *Creation Illustrated* is still accepting checks as I'm trying hard to give as little as possible to Visa and PayPal lately. I have your check all made out and in the envelope.

L. Beal
Cherryfield, Maine

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Mount St. Helens Restoration

BY CAROLE RODGERS
WITH TOM ISH

Imagine life for the early native people of the northwest under the shadow of the mighty *Lowwala-Clough*—the *Smoking Mountain*. Lush forests populated with strong elk, swift deer, and other wildlife provided ample sustenance along with the salmon-rich rivers and abundant huckleberries.

But the Smoking Mountain got renamed after a British diplomat, Lord St. Helens, who surveyed the area in the late 18th century. And as settlers moved west, the grandeur of that volcano (which is part of the Cascade Volcanic Arc and a segment of the Pacific Ring of Fire) would attract visitors from near and far. For more than a century, between 1857 and 1980, the mountain became a recreational paradise for the public and eventually crowded out the indigenous residents.



Many people sojourned there simply for the awe, wonder, and massive splendor of the environment in order to escape the busyness of urban life and to be refreshed in spirit and mind. Standing just 52 miles northeast of Portland, Oregon, and 98 miles south of Seattle, Washington, what better place than Mount St. Helens to bask in the presence of the Creator's handiwork? Nature's splendor inspires such awe that even God marveled at His efforts at the end of the Creation week. "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1: 31, NASB). Although the post-Flood naturescapes fall short of the original, fallen earth's volcanic upheavals created unique spectacles that still attract the masses into His presence.

In its glorious prime, the vast verdure of the region teemed with wildflowers, talus



USGS

When Mount St. Helens erupted, debris flows resulted in a massive amount of trees filling area lakes.

BLEW HER TOP

buckwheat, Lyall's lupine, and thick forests of old-growth Douglas fir, western and mountain hemlock, Pacific silver fir, and cottonwood. Large wildlife like elk, black-tail deer, black bears, and cougars flourished throughout the slopes along with countless gophers, mice, and squirrels.

However, in March of 1980 a drastic change began to slowly take place. The *sleeping* volcano that had been dormant for more than a hundred years suddenly began to stir with a first waking movement being a 4.1 earthquake. Minor earthquakes followed until March 27 when a loud boom was heard with a column of steam and ash rising 7,000 feet above St. Helens' summit. But the awakening didn't stop there. Nahum 1:5 warns, "Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve; indeed the earth is upheaved by His Presence" (NASB). St. Helens continued grumbling and rumbling until the morning of May 18, 1980, when she completely blew her top with a mushroom plume appearing much like an atomic bomb blast.

Exploding debris filled the air at speeds up to 730 miles per hour, growing into a lateral billowing mass of churning gas, rock, ash, and ice. An avalanche of hot debris tore down the north side of the mountain blowing over and splintering timber and covering everything in its path with volcanic rubble and dust.

By the next day it was all over. St. Helens was once again quiet, leaving a wide swath of immense destruction that erased every bit of life and property in its path. Dead and missing were 57 people; more than two hundred homes got damaged or destroyed; 27 bridges washed out; 15 miles of railway ripped away; and 185 miles of highway gone. The passageway of the great Columbia River for ocean-going vessels became impassible due to vast clogs of eruption remains in the river.



The enormous crater left a barren and eerie scene.

USGS

“My soul is in despair within me.”

Timber losses from 61,000 acres of National forest land and 89,400 acres owned by the State of Washington, private interests, and individuals imposed severe damage along with devastated mountain streams, rivers, lakes, and meadows. Every tree in sight and nearly every sprig of vegetation within fifteen miles of the erupting crater got swept away, buried, or pulverized leaving a virtually lifeless terrain.

Wildlife casualty estimates by the Washington State Department of Game included the loss of 11 million fish, 1 million birds (including 27,000 grouse), 11,000 hares, 5,000 deer, 1,500 elk, 1,400 coyotes, 300 bobcats, 200 black bear, 15 mountain goats, and 15 cougars.

One can only imagine the outpouring of frightened and wounded hearts as expressed in Psalm 42: 6. “O my God, my soul is in despair within me”(NASB). To grasp the magnitude of the amount of earth that was moved that day, before the eruption Mount St. Helens stood at an elevation of 9,677 feet; today it rests at 8,307 feet.

Ah, but God changes not. He is the same God who long ago said, “I will build you and you will be rebuilt” (Jeremiah 31: 4, NASB). And He’s still in the business of building, creating, and recreating. How long would the rebuilding of the St. Helens environment take? Over the years scientists have estimated that recovery from the Genesis Flood must have taken somewhere between hundreds of thousands and millions of years, whereas Christian scientists in studying the St. Helens eruption discovered that within only two years following the eruption underlying mud deposits from the blast exhibited solid, distinct ground layering. In fact, one of the most revealing geologic discoveries showed fast erosion from the mud and water flows created smaller-scale Grand-Canyon-like formations that point to a rapid creation of the massive



Rapid flows of water, snow, and debris quickly created canyon formations.



Notice the skeletons

W I L D L I F E R E T U R N S

Arizona attraction by floodwaters, rather than millions of years of river erosion. Furthermore, within three years, 90 percent of St. Helens' original plant species were found to be growing within the blast zone!

As for the survival of animals, the simple little pocket gopher appeared in short order. But then gophers are smart little critters. When the blast occurred, they madly dug themselves deep down in the soil for protection, later digging themselves back up and out through the soil and ash. And all of the broken-up soil enabled certain plant species to grow and reestablish the ecosystem. Colonies of ants also survived underground; salamanders burrowed into the soft wood of decomposing logs; fish survived in ice-covered lakes; and the roots of some plants were protected by a blanket of soil and snowpack.

As for wildlife returnees, Roosevelt elk and Columbia black-tailed deer were among the first. One of the first species of birds to come home was the mountain bluebird, and a 1982 survey reported 74 other avian species had returned. Standing dead trees and snags provided perches and nesting places from which their songs of praise could be heard. "The birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches" (Psalm 104:12, NRSV). Even insects and reptiles such as the Pacific frog survived under the ground or snow during the eruption.

It took only a month following the blast for bracken fern to push its way from underground root systems up through six inches of ash. By the summer of 1981 mountain lupine and fireweed appeared followed by pink bleeding hearts and white avalanche lilies inspiring the praises of Isaiah 55:12, "The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy" (NASB). Plants such as willow, vine maple, and black cottonwood were able to re-sprout from



of trees standing amid the new growth.



Restored hiking paths and stairways provide visitors with ways to climb to stunning vistas.

“And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”

roots protected in the moist soil. Those plants are called *survivors*, and they were very important to the recovery of the barren landscape. Some snow-protected Pacific silver fir and mountain hemlock trees also gratefully survived. “And all the trees of the field will clap their hands” (Isaiah 55: 12, NASB).

Other vegetation native to the slopes slowly returned including trees like willow, red alder, and hemlock seedlings, as well as plants like fireweed, thistle, and lupine. A new study shows that 83 plant species of 256 prior to the eruption have been identified in the area. Within about ten years after the destruction, almost twenty percent of the surface was covered with grasses and struggling young trees.

Within two years following the eruption, 110,000 acres of designated land surrounding Mount St. Helens was set apart and established as the Mount St. Helens Volcanic Monument for the purpose of research, recreation, and education. Now, when visitors arrive at the mountain, they stand in awe at what they see—not just the massive volcanic crater blasted from the side of the peak but the wondrous and glorious rebirth and re-Creation of the environment that recovered so quickly.

In addition to camping, fishing, snow sports, and ranger-led educational programs, there are 12 top-rated hiking trails at the mountain ranging from family-friendly to more advanced excursions for experienced trekkers. Perhaps one of the most popular hikes is the Harry’s Ridge Trail (8.5 miles round-trip) that abounds with wildflowers. It was named for Harry Truman, an older gentleman and owner of a lodge (and 16 cats!) located at Spirit Lake, who refused to leave when warned of the danger. He, his cats, and the lodge were all lost. Hikers on this trail enjoy



USGS

Conservation groups hike to gather research data.

Refreshing scenes emerge from the volcanic devastation.

A S T U N N I N G S P E C T A C L E

panoramic views of Spirit Lake, Coldwater Peak, Mount Adams, and the pumice plains. A more kid-friendly jaunt is the half-mile Eruption Trail, which also departs from the Johnston Ridge Observatory named in honor of David Johnston, the USGS volcanologist who was on duty at the USGS Coldwater II observation point during the eruption. He radioed out at the moment of the eruption: “Vancouver! Vancouver! This is it!”

The roadway leading to Mount St. Helens and the Johnston Ridge Observatory offers breathtaking views with mile after mile of ever-expanding beauty and glory. Down in the valley runs a ribbon of the Toutle River where Roosevelt elk can often be seen.

For myself, I would have to say that second to the Johnston Ridge Observatory I’d pick the Windy Ridge Interpretative Site as a stunning spectacle. When the road leading to it first opened to visitors, friends and I ventured there; it was like nothing I’d ever seen before. It looked like a moonscape with its grey-white bleached trees lying in the direction of the lateral blast with nothing but rock, pumice, and ash covering the ground. And it’s all there today along with more than forty years of new plant growth.

And this cataclysmic event involved only one mountain. Imagine the destruction of the worldwide Flood of Noah’s day or the eradication of sin from the earth by fire as prophesied in 2 Peter 3:10, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (KJV). But that global cleansing is promised to be restored by a *new* heaven and earth as foretold by John. “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Revelation 21:1, KJV).



Seeds left in the mud flows soon sprouted into renewed life on the mountain.

USGS

“Behold, new things have come.”

A 368 step-and-sand ladder has been built for reaching the high point of the ridge, and from there one can see St. Helens’ crater, Spirit Lake, and Mt. Adams. The road leading to the ridge is narrow with steep drop-offs and definite road slumping; so, it’s wise to take your time getting there. Climbing up the steps, I felt as though I was ascending earth’s rather crude stairway to heaven and feeling all the while “Surely the Lord is in this place” (Genesis 28: 16, NASB).

I’ve been to St. Helens a number of times, and for all the grandeur and wonder, I see in it a living testimony of God’s great power and grace in creative healing. My heart is always humbled. The mountain’s devastation reminds me of the sin that so easily ravages the hearts of humankind, yet with surrender and rebirth, healing as a *new* Creation is offered through Jesus Christ—the great Redeemer and Restorer of all things—even on an individual level. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5: 17, NASB).

John Muir once wrote in a letter to his sister, Sarah: “The mountains are calling, and I must go. . . .” This is my letter to you: Mount St. Helens is calling. Will you go? The Lord is waiting to meet you there. Be watching, listening, and seeking a unique encounter with the Creator! **C**

Carole G. Rodgers writes from Olympia, Washington, where she continues to marvel at Creation’s wondrous surroundings that inspire her to want to share more of God’s glory. Tom Ish is editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.



Bob Anderson



Graceful

Giraffes

By the power of His Word, God filled Creation with the sounds of chirping birds flitting from bough to bough, the galloping of hoofs on the new ground, and the purr of lions resting in tall grass. Sheep bleated, elephants trumpeted, and whales whispered as the creatures of Creation sang out to the Lord who gave them life.

But the graceful African giraffe, though given vocal cords, seemed silent. Perhaps the tallest of all animals standing nearly nineteen feet high could not generate enough airflow up its long neck to create audible vocal vibrations. Until fairly recently no one had heard any sounds coming from giraffes other than the occasional grunt, snort, or snuffle when alarmed, annoyed, or approaching each other. Those sounds seemed to be produced by a burst of air out of the animal's nostrils.

But after reviewing nearly a thousand hours of recordings, a research team in Vienna, Austria, proved that giraffes communicate vocally using very low hums in complex combinations. The deep vibrations have a frequency of around 92 Hz, which means we *might* be able to hear them, but they're extremely low. Even the zoo managers and giraffe keepers reported

**By Christine Graef
with Tom Ish**

that they had never heard any sounds coming from these uniquely designed creatures.

Researchers at the University of Vienna reported in their study, “We detected harmonic, sustained, and frequency-modulated *humming* vocalizations during night recordings.” In ongoing research efforts, humming giraffes were recorded at three European zoos in Berlin, Germany; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Vienna, Austria. Even though the sounds are rarely heard, you can listen to a recording on the Internet from LiveScience at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aqIbCMY1k0>

If you close your eyes and imagine their deep, slow sounds, thoughts may come to mind of the peaceful beginnings of this world when such docile animals were created. “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3). And we know that since the time of Adam and Eve’s fall, the creation has been groaning to return to that perfect, harmonious environment, “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19). Fortunately, we can hold onto the hope that with our redemption also comes the earth’s redemption as promised in Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”

In the meantime, humankind has spent centuries studying nature’s ways and discovering from the animals various processes of behavior, growth, interaction, and support. The interdependence God designed in various plant and animal *communities* inspires awe and reverence. But there are also amazing physical traits among the animals that are worth exploring and even replicating for our benefit that underscores a fundamental truth based on Creation, “That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Even NASA studied how a ton of weight

supported on the four slender legs of a giraffe defies gravitational forces. This research helped develop gravity suits for astronauts. Furthermore, the giraffe’s extraordinary heart is two feet long, weighs about twenty-five pounds, and pumps sixteen gallons of blood a minute. The thickly-muscled left ventricle and an altered heartbeat allow the heart more time to fill with blood between heartbeats since pumping blood up a very long neck to the brain and the six feet below the heart to the hooves is no small task.

Beyond such astonishing physiological designs, giraffe relationships are more difficult to understand in the land of laughing hyenas, grunting hippos, and roaring lions. Giraffe interactions do not follow familiar behaviors like when we see animals groom each other, share information of food sources, or shout warning of danger. Typically bonds get strengthened through communications that can change the actions of an entire herd. In fact, effective communication is vital to any relationship including our relationship with God; we speak to Him through prayer, and we listen to Him through His Word, quiet meditation, and His still, small voice.

Peering down from long lashes, giraffes appear to be detached, living in random gatherings, and aloof from the others around them as they quietly graze (using their 17-inch long tongues) on shrubs and high tree branches while peaceably roaming the land on long, lanky legs. Some of their simple information gathering seems to use olfactory cues or the excellent vision of their big brown eyes even at great distances. But God must have also given giraffes their large ears (in relation to their head size) for a reason—apparently to capture the deep, low tones of their hums.

So, while these humble creatures seem to have plenty to say, researchers aren’t yet sure if the humming could include passive sounds like snoring or perhaps even dreaming. But they believe the sounds have the potential to tell us the motivation of the caller and bring us insight into their inner lives

“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

—John 1:3



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© Tom & Pat Leeson

The lanky creatures (left and above) lumber across the African Savannah where they stand out amid the desolate terrain. Their large, cupped ears (below) help capture any sounds of threats, as well as the deep hums with which they communicate.



David Catkins

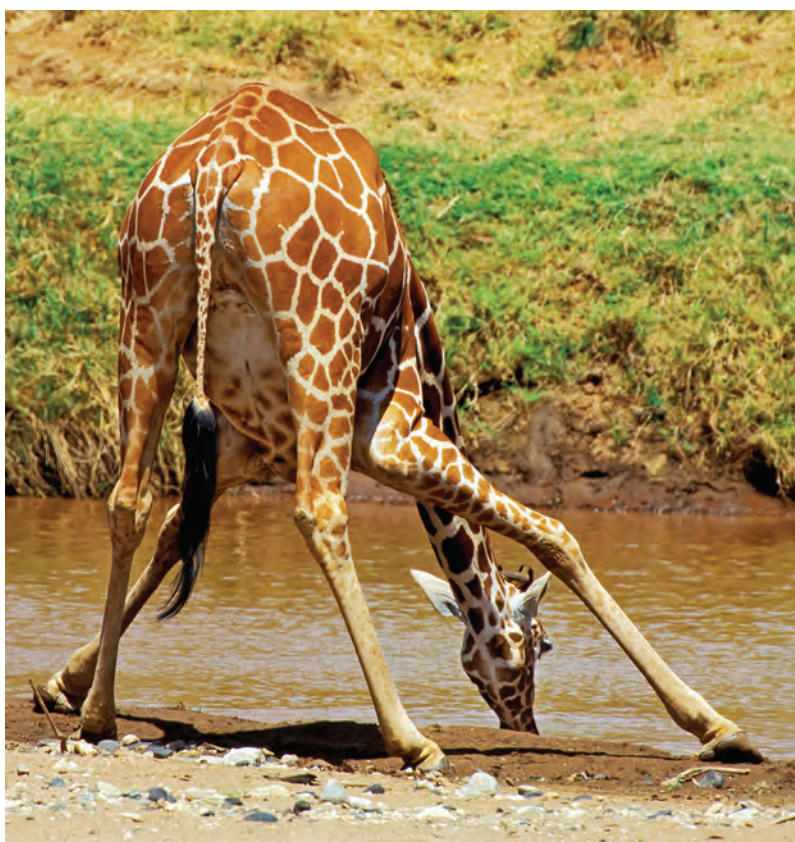
“Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this.”

—Job 12:9



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Families of giraffes travel together (above) when their young need protection. Their long legs (below) make reaching for a drink a bit challenging. Since they can't scratch their long necks, grooming each other (right) helps a bit.



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and their individuality. Each giraffe is unique, and no two have the same pattern of dark spots covering their fur, although each of their nine subspecies don similar markings and coloring.

Because the humming typically happens at night, the patterns suggest a bonding call when visibility is limited. Although individuals or the age of the giraffes could not be identified by the hums in any recordings, the giraffes hummed within two hours before sunrise at Copenhagen Zoo. Giraffes at the other two zoos in Europe hummed mostly in the middle of the night. The hums *may* serve to reestablish contact between mates, and among free-ranging giraffes, the humming might be used to locate and reassure each other during the dark of night while not sounding so loud that predators could locate the herd of giraffes.

Additional attention toward giraffes helps generate a deeper understanding of other aspects of their behavior. For example, female giraffes have been observed to share lunch with special *buddies*. They also cooperate with day care (a sort of nursery called a *crèche*) for their young by taking turns watching over each others' offspring that are amazingly born standing up and running within ten hours! The young giraffes play together in groups while remaining close to their mothers and grandmothers. And even though we typically see giraffes slowly lumbering through the grasslands, they can actually run at about thirty-five miles per hour when threatened.

While much has been learned, the Vienna findings caution that the voice of the graceful giraffe requires further studies. Because of the difficulty of recording free-ranging giraffes in the night, zoos and sanctuaries provide optimal conditions for the next steps in exploring the rich, harmonic patterns of the low hums.

We, too, sometimes hum a soft tune when no one's listening like the giraffes that hardly anyone can hear except God. And when someone else sings or

even hums, it brings out our own desire to join in or to sing, hum, or whistle our own tune, which offers another way for us to express ourselves or to connect with each other. Sometimes we even moan or grumble to join in with the rest of Creation that is groaning for a brighter future that is free from the fetters of sin.

As deeper thought and research grows increasingly astounded by the spectacular wonders of the universe from the minutest subatomic particles to the vast galaxies and every part of Creation in between, the awe of God whose creativity made all of this is humbling. When Job responded to his friends advising them to ask the animals and the birds, to speak to the earth or even the fish of the sea to learn eternal truths, he asked, "Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this" (Job 12:9). He is a God whose glory must be recognized by all creation. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). "All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name" (Psalm 66:4).

The myriad of sounds that currently emerge from His vast Creation offer a foretaste of the great rhapsodies to be sung for the sake of heaven's honor and point to that day when all Creation will rejoice to give God His deserved resounding anthem as told in Revelation 5:13. "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'"—even the humble, humming giraffe. **C**

Christine Graef writes from Ellsworth, Maine, where she researches the wonders of Creation in order to share many unique discoveries that inspire worship. Tom Ish is editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.

Aloes—The W

C R E A T I O N U P C L O S



Quiver trees, aloes, and other hearty plants fill the landscape of the Succulent Karoo biome.

Appearing as somewhat ominous, pointy, and jagged *sword blades* protruding from the ground or off lanky trees and shrubs, aloe plants may not seem especially inviting at first. But the vast uses of aloes elevate them as wonder plants that have been cultivated, harvested, and processed for their many beneficial properties since ancient times.

Fast forward to today's information age, and aloe vera's healing benefits can be found trending with millions of views on social media. Recently a report

revealed that the global aloe vera extract market is estimated to be worth \$2.4 billion. But aside from the commercial aspect of aloes, this remarkable succulent reveals useful insights into God's character through His perfect design in Creation as proclaimed in John 1:3. "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

Come with me to a place near Cape Town, South Africa, that provides the perfect spot for city dwellers to rest, reboot, and restore their lives in campsites, guesthouses, and lodges scattered throughout the Breede River Valley where streams

Wonder Plants

E, BY NIKKI OTTO



© Nikki Otto

Jagged aloe blades look ominous, but the flaming blossoms attract avian and insect species to their nectar.

meander through the Succulent Karoo—a biome that boasts the richest succulent flora on earth.

Aloe season in South Africa occurs during the southern hemisphere’s winter months (June through August) in the Cape when the sun seems lazy to rise and eager to set. But there’s no dimming of the aloes in full bloom. Like flames that light up the starkest landscapes, the other-worldly fronds showcase their majesty while attracting sunbirds and bees to buds of sweet-smelling nectar. But not only birds and insects get drawn to the blossoms’ delicate scent; humans also use the fragrance to spruce up linen and clothing.

In fact, this aromatic plant is so precious and prized in ancient times that it is mentioned five times in the Bible. “I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon” (Proverbs 7:17). “All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad” (Psalm 45:8). The bridegroom praises the bride in the Song of Solomon as aloes and myrrh are described with high regard. “Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh,

and aloes” (Song of Solomon 4:13, 14).

Aloes are given special status in Balaam’s prophecy, “Like valleys that stretch out, like gardens by the riverside, like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters. He shall pour water from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters” (Numbers 24:6, 7). Aloes “planted by the Lord” gives them a special place in the plant kingdom that relates to our position in the kingdom of God, ““That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified”” (Isaiah 6:13).

Most importantly, aloes and myrrh were used to embalm Jesus’ crucified body before He was wrapped in linen and placed in the tomb. “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds” (John 19:39).

Such a soothing balm applied thousands of years ago still remains among the most effective salves to ease the pain and heal cuts and burns. With more that six hundred species within the aloe family, the production of aloe vera plants and gel stands

out as one of the most valuable botanical extraction industries in the world. Among the largest aloe plantations in the world is a farm in the Dominican Republic that covers 5,000 acres and produces 10,000 gallons of liquid aloe gel per day! In southwest China’s Yunnan Province, the largest aloe vera farm in Asia is located in the most suitable environment to thrive. Such abundance demonstrates God’s generosity in His creation. But none of this massive production compares to the “Balm in Gilead” as the familiar hymn refrains of Christ’s soothing, redemptive touch that “heals the sin-sick soul.” (See Jeremiah 8:22.)

God gave aloe built-in characteristics that grant the miracle plant a strong fighting chance against all odds that offers a useful object lesson that points to our reliance on His Word. Firmly rooted and protected with full battle armor, the hearty succulent appears determined to endure harsh conditions and fulfill its purpose in Creation. Its bright yellow blooms irresistibly attract hummingbirds and other pollinators; yet, it takes three years before the first



Aloe vera gel soothes sunburns.



Huge aloe vera plantations generate bountiful

seeds fall to the ground and wait for the perfect conditions to sprout in an erratic environment. Just like the Word of God written on our hearts when the storms of life come crashing in, we remain steadfast, firmly established in His will, and prepared to endure tremendous trials. As promised in Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

In the most inhospitable environments, the aloe’s roots are designed for maximum absorption to draw a lot of water into its pointy, fleshy, and succulent fronds that are filled with gel ensuring that it has reserves when water is scarce. Faith in Christ’s faithfulness generates similar reserves in our once barren and parched souls. Streams of living water (the Holy Spirit) will flow from the heart of those who believe as promised by Christ in John 7:37–39. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

With natural healing traits, this gifted plant contains vitamins and minerals, antioxidants, anti-

inflammatories, antibacterials, and even antivirals. According to some counts, aloe vera has more than fifteen benefits for health and wellness including anti-aging, digestive, immunity, oral, and cosmetic applications.

To ensure their longevity, aloes were created with spiky edges to protect them from predators, as well as a sun-protective outer layer of skin that guards against the damaging effects of ultra violet sunrays. So, when the heat is on, the plants demonstrate hearty determination rather than faintheartedness that offers a good illustration for us to fight the good fight as told in 2 Timothy 4:7–9. To accomplish God’s best, we must persevere, build character, hold onto hope, and never give up. (See Galatians 6:9.)

The aloe plant’s ability to survive extended periods of drought also contributes to research on developing drought-resilient crops for more stable food supplies. One unique characteristic enabling aloes to survive water shortages includes folding their cell walls together. But researchers who tinker with genetic manipulation to transfer such characteristics to



Hannah Jones

harvests for the health products industry.

Aloe fronds ooze with their beneficial gel.




The foreboding and harsh conditions of desert environments get compounded by climate change.

other crops such as maize can lead to heated debates. It's been thirty-five years since the first genetically modified organism (GMO) field test later resulted in some biotechnology-related health issues. According to the National Library of Medicine, we are still waiting for definitive results saying, "Some see the development and use of genetically modified crops as key to reducing hunger, while others consider this technology as a further risk to food security. Solid empirical evidence to support either of these views is thin."

Furthermore, deeply debated causes and impacts of climate change compound the issues of food supply. In many cases even the most resilient plant species and crops need our help. Nevertheless, the aloe vera plant stands out as a beacon of hope as it continues to offer its benevolent and beneficial qualities.

In Genesis God appointed us as custodians of His creation that contains the most awe-inspiring designs and complexities that hold mysteries,

wonders, blessings, and opportunities to gain insight into His character. As Paul humbly confessed in Ephesians 3:8, 9, "Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things" (NRSV). What a high calling we all have! 

Nikki Otto writes from South Africa where she focuses on sharing the wonders of Creation through her photography and fifteen years of experiences among cultures and wildlife while traveling with television production crews throughout the continent.



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A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



Bobby Harrison

The Orlando Wetlands Park

is hope; for when we work with nature instead of against it, we simply build a much better world. That is what the Creator originally intended.

The Orlando Wetlands Park near Christmas, Florida, provides an outstanding example of how people can work with nature. The park contains a water management and restoration facility that uses natural processes to reclaim water from the city of Orlando and other local municipalities. The process uses natural vegetation to filter and clean the water before it gets released into Floridian waterways. As a result, an abundance of flora and fauna thrive in the park's wetland habitat.

The property encompasses 1,650 inviting acres that host a myriad of avian and plant species. Native vegetation such as cattails, bulrush, purple pickerel, cabbage palm, and cypress trees thrive in the lakes and marshes. In turn, this lush growth provides a natural ecosystem for native insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Sixty-three species of butterflies and 220 species of birds have been found flourishing in the wetlands! The vast park can be explored via 20 miles of hiking trails that follow dikes separating the various water impoundments. It is not uncommon to see otter, raccoon, bobcat, and the ever-present American alligator while hiking the wetlands. But the birds remain the most abundant



Bobby Harrison

Roseate spoonbill

“But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7–10 KJV). How wondrous a concept to know that the soul of every living thing is in the hand of God; and we, humankind, have been given dominion over every living creature as designed in Genesis 1:26—granted an authority and an obligation to care and protect what God has entrusted to each of us.

In today's world it is easy to see that the human race has not been diligent in following that divine directive. Yet, there

tlands Park

BY BOBBY HARRISON

in the refuge and one of the main attractions for visitors.

The best time to visit is November through May when feathered residents and migrants appear most abundant. In early spring sandhill cranes, great egrets, green herons, roseate spoonbills, wood storks, glossy ibis, anhinga, and black-crowned night herons begin nesting. The local rookery boasts a hive of activity with birds building nests and feeding their young. Passerines such as yellow-rumped, palm, and common yellowthroat warblers also abundantly thrive. Common residents such as the northern cardinal, boat-tailed grackle, northern mockingbird, and Carolina wren appear ever present.


Among my favorite birds of the wetlands are the black-bellied whistling duck and the purple gallinule. Both species can be found throughout the year. In the early morning hours just before dawn the skies above the wetlands can be filled with flocks of whistling ducks circling in the sky. But long before you see the birds you will hear their high-pitched whistle call that gives them their name.

The purple gallinule on the other hand skulks in the reedy marsh, but its hen-like cackle always gives away its location. If the watcher is patient, the purple gallinule will eventually walk out of its reedy hiding place and reveal itself in all its stunning glory. There



Purple gallinule

are few birds in North America that boast such a vivid coloration.

What great lessons we learn when we work with and not against nature. At the Orlando Wetlands Park the fowls of the air tell us and the beasts of the earth teach us how to live in harmony with the Creator's world. As Christians we should all strive to preserve the natural world and be faithful to the admonition given by our Creator. The apostle Paul said it best in 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2. "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (ESV). 

Bobby Harrison writes from Huntsville, Alabama, and Oakwood University as a retired associate professor of photography. See his work at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Great egret



God created eyes in many sizes and colors.

*“Then God said,
‘Let the earth bring
forth the living
creature according to
its kind:
cattle and creeping
thing and beast of the
earth, each according
to its kind’; . . .*

CREATION DAY 6

■ BY SANDY MAYLE

The Creation of animals,
creeping things,
and humans

Editor’s Note: This article is the sixth in our twelfth series of features that focus on the Creation week. Some days are divided into segments, and next time we will explore the entire Creation week in our thirtieth anniversary special edition. Each series of stories varies with new writers and fresh images. We hope you enjoy this closer look at God’s handiwork aimed at inspiring you to study His Word in depth.



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Owls have powerful, sharp eyesight.

As my husband and I went walking through our nearby woods, I noticed movement overhead among the tree branches that appeared to be several creatures with very wide wingspans. Soon one lighted on a nearby branch, and there, looking my way, sat a baby owl—a fluffy gray ball with large eyes. One by one the bird and its siblings eventually abandoned their leafy perches to stretch their broad wings into a quiet, shadowy flight.

Their noticeably oversized eyes that looked down on me sparked my interest in day five of Creation when God “created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems . . . and every winged bird according to its kind” (Genesis 1:21, NIV). This was the first time He fashioned ocular

orbs by which these creatures of sky and sea could relate to the world around them. As proclaimed in Proverbs 20:12, “Ears that hear and eyes that see—the Lord has made them both” (NIV).

Suddenly a vast array of sea and avian creatures that inhabited Creation could observe their environment through a fascinating variety of eyes. For example, colossal squid have the largest eyes in the world (the size of a basketball) that enables them to distinguish shapes and shadows in their deep, dark world.

And the tube-shaped eyes of the great horned owl are so large they can be seen through the creature’s ear openings! Like all birds, great horned owls have a protective and moisturizing third eyelid (a translucent nictating membrane) that closes sideways like a windshield wiper.



Diminutive tarsiers don disproportionately large eyes for nocturnal hunting.

Some aquatic birds use this amazing design like swim goggles to protect their eyes while diving for food. The owl's forward-facing eyes, similar to humans, focus ahead and relate to the apostle Paul's commitment in Philippians 3:13, 14, "Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us" (NLT).

But the unique eyes developed on Creation day five expanded my curiosity further into day six when God made "the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals" (Genesis 1:24, NIV). Once again, in His almighty benevolence, the Creator fashioned the eyes of each creature to uniquely serve their specific needs.

For example, tarsiers, the tennis-ball-sized primates of the Southeast Asian islands, are nocturnal hunters with the largest eyes compared to body size of any mammal. Each eye is as big and as heavy as the creature's brain. Conversely, Southern Africa's golden mole, the only mammal with iridescent fur, is completely blind because it lives almost entirely underground and uses hearing or touch to navigate and hunt. The eyes of horses have unique corpora nigra, which are irregular extensions of the iris from the top and sometimes bottom into the pupil. These act as natural visors for sun protection while the animals graze.

After all the wild and domestic animals were created, God made the creeping things. Snakes have eyes with diverse sets of rods and cones that are

and it was so. . . .
And God saw that it
was good.

Then God said,
'Let Us make man in
Our image, according
to Our likeness; let
them have
dominion . . .



Dragonflies see in all directions with their complex eyes.

the cells in the retina used to detect light. Various pigments inside the cones allows them to see in color because these pigments are sensitive to different wavelengths of light. These slithery creatures also have no eyelids but instead have a thin, clear membrane covering their cornea, which functions like a self-repairing contact lens. Insects like dragonflies don complex eyes containing up to thirty thousand *ommatidia* (or mini-eyes) that each point at a slightly different angle enabling the dragonfly to see in all directions.

But perhaps the most amazing eyes were created in the latter part of Creation day six. "God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness' . . . So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he

created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26–27, NIV). While God equipped humans—His crowning act of Creation—with five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste), around eighty percent of the information humans receive comes through the eyes. In fact, the eyes are the second most complex organ in the human body surpassed only by the brain. Even lead evolutionist Charles Darwin recognized the complexity of the human eye and confessed that it was *absurd* to propose that the human eye evolved through spontaneous mutation and natural selection.

Behind protective eyelids and eyelashes, the human eyeball is about the size of a ping-pong ball covered in a tough white coating called the *sclera* that is filled with the jelly-like *vitreous humor*



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Humans reveal emotions in their eyes.

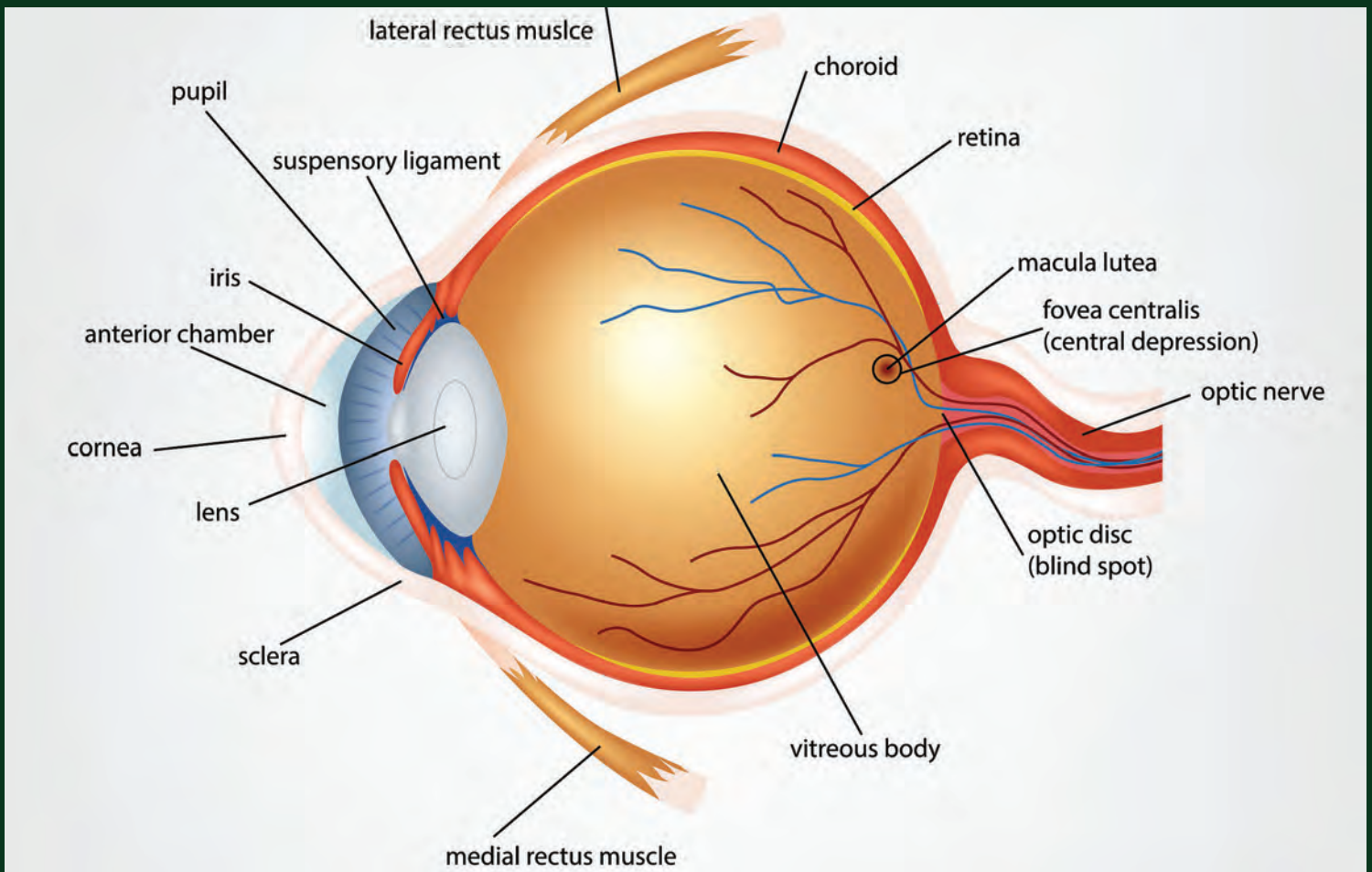
*over the fish of the
sea, over the birds of
the air,
and over the cattle,
over all the earth
and over every
creeping thing that
creeps on
the earth.' . . .*

to provide nutrients to the eye and keep the orb's shape. In front of the eye a protective clear dome, or cornea, covers the colored iris (most commonly brown or blue). Muscles attached to the iris contract or expand to control the amount of light that enters its black center, or pupil. The pupil is actually an opening that lets light in, and you can actually watch someone's pupils dilate and contract by changing the lighting in a room.

When light enters the pupil, it passes through a lens that focuses the light rays onto the retina at the back of the eyeball. Each retina contains about a hundred twenty million rods that perceive shades of black and white while seven million cones sense color. The retina changes the light into nerve signals and transmits them through the optic nerve

to the brain. Of the twelve pairs of main cranial nerves that connect the brain to our senses, four pairs are devoted specifically to the eye. So for sighted people, vision is certainly the most dominate sense!

Beyond adjusting to light, the pupils also respond to emotions like fear, anxiety, and excitement. Even thinking hard dilates the pupils. Scripture reveals that the eyes really are "the lamp of the body" (Matthew 6:22, NIV) and windows to the soul! Furthermore, humans are the only creatures whose eyes cry emotional tears, and those tears are precious to the Lord. It seems He even keeps track of them. "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?" wrote David in Psalm 56:8 (ESV). The eyes often play a vital roll in presenting truth as many



The design of the human eye amazed even Charles Darwin.

eyewitnesses to Jesus' time on earth saw Him die for our sins and appear as our risen Savior so that all who believe in Him will live eternally. "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty," wrote Peter in 2 Peter 1:16 (NIV). Even upholding justice requires that, "One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses" (Deuteronomy 19:15, NIV).

But God also created another kind of sight—that of inner spiritual perception. The psalmist prayed, "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" (Psalm 119:18, NIV), and the apostle Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus, "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may

know the hope to which he has called you" (Ephesians 1:18, NIV). No other creature was created with such *insight*.

What we *choose* to observe gets our attention, affects us spiritually, and influences our thoughts and actions. This means we must avoid looking at the wrong things. Job declared, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman" (31:1, NIV), and David wrote, "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes" (Psalm 101:3). Focusing on the good also means not looking back. Jesus said, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62, NIV). Instead, we're called to fix our eyes not on what is seen and temporary but what is unseen and eternal. (See 2 Corinthians 4:18.) "My eyes are



Examining Scripture helps us to see the Creator's viewpoint.

fixed on you, Sovereign Lord," declared David (Psalm 141:8, NIV). The writer of Hebrews likewise urged us to be "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2, NIV).

One way to do this is by reading and meditating on the Word of God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16, ESV). We can ask the Lord each morning for a brief segment of Scripture from our daily reading to carry throughout the day while prayerfully *focusing* our mind's eye on it frequently and putting its principles into practice. A continual conversation with Jesus going in our heart allows us to see and discern His will with sharper perception.

But even mature believers suffer from blind spots that keep us from seeing ourselves as we really are, which hinders our spiritual growth and makes us quick

to judge others. Jesus said, "First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5, NIV). We can also develop tunnel vision fixating on self instead of developing peripheral or broad, benevolent vision to be aware of those around us who may be in need. Paul advised, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, ESV).

We may even experience loss of spiritual vision. Peter listed various godly virtues and added, "Whoever does not have [these qualities] is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins" (2 Peter 1:9, NIV). He urges believers to cultivate these virtues adding, "If you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

— Genesis 1:24–31



Sometimes closing our eyes improves spiritual perception.

receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10, 11, NIV).

So, we watch and wait for that rich welcome, knowing that one day He will come “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52, NIV), and we will be caught up with Him as promised. (See Matthew 24:42.) And when the new Jerusalem comes down to the new earth, we will have new bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42–44) with eyes that will never cry, for God “will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4, NIV).

We will then clearly view all that has been seen as “in a mirror, dimly” (1 Corinthians 13:12). We’ll see God

“as He is” (1 John 3:2, NIV), see His face distinctly, clearly, and close-up (Revelation 22:4). So, we can say with ancient Job, “After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another” (Job 19:26, 27, NIV). Even if we sharply focus on Scripture, pray earnestly, and surrender all, we cannot fully fathom God’s love for us because, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” **C**

Sandy Mayle writes from Erie, Pennsylvania, where she digs deep into the Word of God and His handiwork to discover fresh insights into His awesome design and plan for our lives.

CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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Powerful Human Neurons

Researchers recently discovered a stunning new dimension of processing power within the human brain and said, “Excitingly, the discovery hints that our brains might be even more powerful units of computation than we realized.”

Who deserves credit for crafting our well-engineered neurons with protein channels that precisely manipulate individual ions in immense systems of logic gates? The answer may depend on one’s starting assumptions.

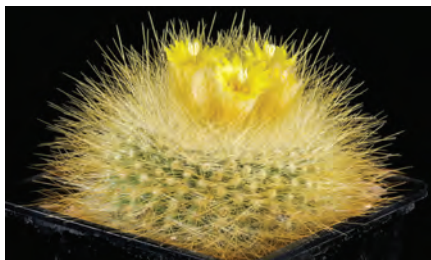
If a Creator is arbitrarily disallowed as the Originator, then nature must have figured it out. Accordingly, *Science Alert* stated, “More work needs to be done to see . . . if similar mechanisms have evolved elsewhere in the animal kingdom.” Has anybody seen natural, unintentional processes engineer voltage channels or arrange them into logic gates? How ironic that we use our neurons to imagine a source other than a divine Engineer to have invented them.

Condensed from an Institute for Creation Research article by Brian Thomas, PhD, at icr.org

Hairy Cacti Help Bats

Amazingly, a South American cactus gets pollinated by bats. But how do they find flowers in the dark?

Researchers found that some bat-pollinated flowers can reflect a bats’ echolocating sounds. The stems of the cacti reflected sound well, the flowers reflected sound moderately well, but the area around the flowers covered with fine hairs absorbed the sound of the bat’s sonar calls to help them locate the flowers, as written in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*.



To test this, researchers removed flowers from their usual position on the cactus stems and placed them in another part of the stem that

did not have the hairy patch. They found the flowers’ echoes were lost amongst the echoes from the rest of

the cactus, which made it difficult to locate the flowers.

The research team concluded: “Our results indicate that, instead of making flowers more reflective, plants can also evolve structures to attenuate the background echo, thereby enhancing the acoustic contrast with the target.”

Here at Creation Research we find that evolutionary phrases such as “plants can evolve structures” need to be challenged with the question: “How?” Natural selection is a non-answer since it can only select what is already there. So, how would a plant know the frequency of the bats’ sonar signals; how would it know what structures would absorb this sound; how would it know how to change its growth genes to make the hairy surface; and how did it get all this right in one generation so that the plant did not die out from lack of pollination?

It is far more logical to believe that the Creator who made all living things made the bats and the plants to work together in this complementary way in order to provide the bats with nectar and enable the plants to be pollinated.

Condensed from *Creation Research News*, April 2023, creationresearch.net

The Potential of Created Kinds

One assumption of evolutionary theory is that natural selection working over millions of years formed all the diversity of life we see in the world. Genesis, however, says God created animals fully formed “according to their kinds.” As stated by Todd Wood, biologist at Memphis Zoo, “All we see are variations that happen within a created kind.”

When one studies the genetic and family relationships of actual creatures, a better explanation is that each created kind possesses enormous potential for genetic variations. These changes within kinds have often been pointed to as arguments for evolution, but changes between kinds have not been observed.

Instead of a single tree of life, each created kind has its own unique *tree*.

Condensed from an *Is Genesis History?* blog post, isgenesishistory.com

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

Providing helpful suggestions on how to better care for God's Creation.

Sharing Facts and Figures

Less than one percent seems small for the amount of water available on earth for all human use. Demands on freshwater supplies increase, but the supply continues to be the same. The hydrologic water cycle continues to return water to us, but we cannot control the location, quality, or quantity of this cycle.

Recent torrents result in too much precipitation in some areas while other regions receive less. One community in Florida received 25.6 inches of rain in just 12 hours! Other regions do not receive the typical rainfall and snowpack due to changes in the jet stream storm patterns resulting in record-setting heat and massive wildfires.

Tips for Simple Living

Being prepared for extreme weather events is important. It seems like "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). Here are a few tips to review with family members to help prepare.



Plan ahead for an escape route to higher ground. Have "grab and go" bags with basic necessities such as food, medicines, warm clothing, sleeping bags, and

a portable radio to help locate shelters.

If you are stranded in a flooded area, be cautious of downed power lines, human and livestock waste, and other contaminants that can lead to illness. Be sure to have ways to purify water for consumption. To boil water have a camp stove and fuel on hand. Use household bleach to purify water with five drops of liquid bleach for each gallon of water. If the water is cloudy, add sixteen drops per gallon. Some bleach solutions are stronger than others; so, read the label and adjust if necessary. Water purification tablets can also be useful. Wash with soap and purified water

if you encounter floodwater on your body. This will help to decrease wound infections, tetanus, GI illness, E. coli, salmonella, etc. If you must enter floodwater that is not too deep, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and eye protection such as goggles for protection.

Biblical Stewardship of Creation

In the Creation story, the earth's environment was perfect and supplied humans and animals with all the food and water they needed to flourish. But the sins of the first family, Adam and Eve in the Garden, and then Cain's rebellion, resulted in consequences for everyone. "Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field" (Genesis 3:17, 18, ESV). "When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:12, ESV).

Ever since the Fall of our first parents in the beautiful Garden of Eden, humans have sought ways to make this sinful world work a little better. Noah was given the duty to rescue those willing to be saved, but only his family joined him on the Ark. The rest of Creation faced destruction in the worldwide Flood that impacted the earth's ability to supply food and water as life returned in its compromised state.

Not until the earth is newly recreated as promised in Revelation will the many damages of sin be erased. Pristine nature will once again thrive, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17, ESV).

Not only will there be no more floods, wildfires, and extreme weather events, "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Now is the time to prepare for this global event. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more" (Revelation 21:1, ESV).

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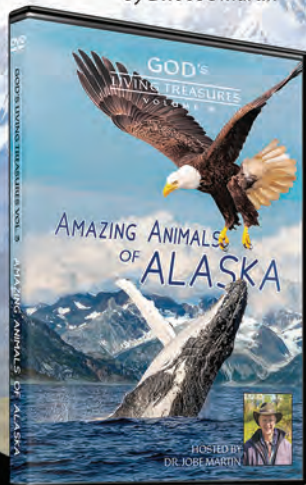
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More than a Wildflower



I distinctly remember sitting among a group of several other awkward and easily distracted seventh graders during a youth group meeting one evening and completely missing the point of our lesson. Our leader read Luke 12: 27, 28 to us for about the seventh time desperately hoping that we would finally see what she saw. Perhaps if she emphasized and repeated different words or phrases, we would finally understand.

The awkward silence following her prompts to discuss the importance of these verses was followed by her exasperated exclamation that “we are more than wildflowers!” Since that night I would repeat that phrase over and over, trying to experience the wonder and joy of those verses that seemed to fill her soul. Not until several years later would I recognize and appreciate the importance of Luke 12:27, 28, which reads, “Consider how the

lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!” (NIV).

Most of my life was lived in the comfortable *box* of a small town in the Bible-belt south. Actually most aspects of my life had taken place in neat little boxes.



I moved out of the box owned by my parents into a box of my own where I would get into another box on wheels that would transport me to a very large box where I pursued an education. Occasionally on the weekends I would attend a service in a box with a cross perched at the top. Eventually I got tired of all those boxes. So, after my sophomore year of college, I applied to work at Yellowstone National Park and embarked on

a journey to a place where God would reveal His personal identity to me.

For a while I kept hearing the recurring question in my mind, *Who is God to you?* I knew the Bible-school answers like He is my Provider, my Father, my Comforter . . . the list goes on. But I never had a distinct identifier for who God was to me that I felt accurately reflected my relationship with Him. But during that summer

of working, living, and exploring Yellowstone, I experienced God in the vast and mystifying natural landscape in a way that I hadn't before.

Amid the craggy peaks, alpine lakes, deep canyons, and vast forests, I came to know God as my Creator. In Romans 1:20 Paul explains, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly

B Y S A R A J O N E S

seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (NIV). This verse perfectly sums up my summer spent in Yellowstone; everywhere I looked there were testaments to my Creator's existence. I felt His power flowing through waterfalls, along with the sudden thunderstorms. I saw His grace manifested in the form of an injured elk calf surviving and thriving despite the surrounding predators and dangers. I heard His call for me in the howling of the coyotes at night. I wondered at His mysterious and inexplicable ways as I admired the geysers and mud pots. His presence remained so evident and overwhelming. He was all around me, and it seemed so simple that I wondered at how I had previously missed all of this, and how could people still question His existence?

Paul goes on to say

in Romans 1:25 that "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator" (NIV). After returning home that summer, I made it my mission to continue developing this newfound relationship with God, and I realized how easy and convenient it is to exchange God's truth for lies. I struggled to root my self-esteem in God instead of how many *likes* my Instagram photos received. I didn't question my professor when he stated that Christians are offensive. I became distracted from pursuing community with others and instead fulfilled my selfish desires. I forgot the beauty and magnificence of God's presence in the world and replaced it with the temporary shimmer of the things of this world.

Psalm 135:15–18 proclaims, "The idols of the nations are silver

and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" (NIV). I often find myself tempted by the lure of popularity, money, and knowledge, but none of these can offer eternal life, everlasting peace, or unconditional love.

When I encounter those times of weakness, I turn to Psalm 121:1, 2, "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" (NIV). There are no physical mountains to turn to where I live, but I still escape to nature in any way that I can. I can see His vastness in the twinkling of the stars at night; I can feel His design in the dust beneath my feet from which humans were made



and to which we will return; and I can hear His Spirit in the rushing of the wind as a reminder of how He breathed life into human lungs. His Creation continues to reveal His characteristics, and I thank Him for creating me with the eyes, ears, and sense of touch to experience all that He wants me to embrace.

Drawing close to God in nature while pondering my own existence, I returned to Luke 12:27, 28 and examined the wildflowers. "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. . . . If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you" (NIV). To better understand Luke's invitation, I did exactly what he suggested; I considered how the wild flowers grow.

Everyone remembers learning about photosynthesis in school, but in case you forgot, plants don't need to rely on people or animals to provide their food; plants make their own food through the process of photosynthesis using carbon dioxide, water, and sunlight augmented by the nutrients and water in the soil. I also considered how wildflowers were, and sometimes still are, used as a source of food and medicine for animals and humans. I also thought about the stunning splendor of wildflowers, and I admire Van Gogh, Monet, and O'Keeffe for featuring flowers in their paintings. I regarded these factors about wildflowers, and then



I considered how we were made.

After re-reading the story of Creation in the book of Genesis, I came away with three main discoveries: (1) God created humankind last and in His own image, (2) God commanded humans to be fruitful and increase in number, as well as to rule over every fish in the sea, bird in the sky, and living creature on the ground, and (3) God saw it all as very good.

I then took that knowledge of Creation and compared myself to wildflowers. I noted that like the flowers, God provided everything that I would ever physically need before creating me. He created humankind after the plants and animals, and humans have been using these resources for food, clothing, and shelter. Like the flowers, God made me with purpose, and though "the heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps" (Proverbs

16:9, ESV). But unlike the flowers, I am fearfully and wonderfully made in His image. I am capable of loving, feeling, and having a connection with my Creator through the Holy Spirit.

For centuries the seeds sprout, leaves adorn, and flowers bloom as Creation's cycle of life repeats for our benefit. The familiar holiday hymn invites us to "repeat the sounding joy" as heaven and nature sing to prepare room for Him in our hearts. So, repeat the sounding joy in praising our Creator, who cares for each one of us infinitely more than wildflowers! **C**

Sara Jones writes from Little Rock, Arkansas, where she is furthering her post-graduate education while remaining passionate about the outdoors and seeks to understand how everything relates to Christ at the center.



Planting amid a loamy aroma

that genesis

I planted beans and corn among pumpkins and sunflowers in a plot at the side of our house. The 8 by 4-foot bed hosted long rows for the corn, beans, and stubby patches for pumpkins and sunflowers. In one short afternoon, I dug up the dark earth, dropped the tiny seeds in their rows, and covered them with a mixture of the dark earth and fresh potting soil.

I decided to plant the garden because I had lost my job as an executive in a high-powered law firm. I wasn't meeting expectations; so, I was let go. Suddenly I had plenty of time. When I am near dirt, I inhale its aroma of life. Worms and bugs crawl around and are welcome in my patch. My uneven rows and clumpy topsoil wouldn't land my garden in the *Birds & Blooms* magazine, but it's distinctly mine—to tend and care for, to love and nourish.

gardens from eden



From urban grind to freeing the mind

feeling

While nurturing my garden “by the sweat of my brow” as admonished in Genesis 3:19, I assess my life’s journey. For six years I worked in downtown Denver, Colorado, surrounded by soaring buildings and congested traffic. I commuted on a crowded bus, followed by a quick jaunt through narrow streets to my office building. I was good at climbing a corporate ladder, fulfilling company objectives, and leading a team of professionals. The desire to make more money, get an office of my own, and a summer home in the mountains propelled me ever upwards. I worked late nights and early mornings. I skipped family dinners and Saturday morning breakfasts. I didn’t nurture flowers. There was no vegetable garden or fresh herbs. I focused all my attention on performing as an executive. And . . . I lost it all, which is why, on a brilliant sunny afternoon, I chose to relinquish the past and drop seeds into the soil.

by kathleen dunlap



Childhood memories in Grandpa's corn fields planted that Genesis feeling.

My heritage comes from the soil. For many years my grandpa farmed land in Indiana that had been in his family line for more than a hundred years. He maintained it well. Sky-high stalks of corn, flourishing rows of soybeans, waving sheaves of wheat—those images I have in my mind's eye when I think of my grandpa's acres of land. When I visited in the summer, I would sit in awe of the land around me as it produced a bounty drawn out from simple seeds. That awe is the feeling I still get when I am close to the dirt. I call it *that Genesis feeling*.

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells the story of a garden—a lush, beautiful, green place, full of trees, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. The Creator tells the first man and first woman to care for and tend the garden. That was their sole responsibility. Often we focus on the part where they disobeyed the command and were banned from the garden. Lately I'm pondering the part before the bite from the forbidden fruit, before the snake, and before death and trouble began.

The first man and first woman cared for the soil and for the animals. They lived close to the earth, which coincided in harmony with their Divine Creator. They flourished in a quiet, unashamed way until the connection with their Maker was betrayed and broken. When I work in the garden, I think of that connection. To me it is a holy experience to be near soil.

Genesis 1 begins with nothing. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). So, before the garden existed, only darkness and His Spirit surrounded the earth. This moment fascinates me—the quiet before the burst, an empty page before written words, and a blank canvas before the artistry. This is where I find myself—in the void, open and



From manicured fingernails to dirt-caked fingernails

receptive, anticipating the new things about to spring forth. I'm emptying my mind and soul of self. I'm making room for fresh creations because if "anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

For years I had endless goals on my list. I had overworked the soil entrusted to my life; I was determined to reap the best harvest I could possibly achieve. The result had only depleted my resources in body, mind, and spirit. I couldn't keep running at a brisk clip on a never-ending, upwardly-mobile treadmill. This strange cocktail of over-accomplishing work and strenuous goal setting intoxicated my soul and stripped me of the vital nutrients my heart craved—including time with God, time with my son, time with my husband, and time outdoors in nature.

With dirt now caking under my fingernails, my heart becomes still and quiet before my Maker. His gentle voice whispers to me, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). If given the proper environment, nutrients, and attention, stripped soil can be replenished to its richest, darkest, and densest vitality. Toxins get removed; nutrients are restored. Encouraging neglected soil back to health remains a toilsome, slow process; revitalizing a worn-out, almost-lost soul can be an even slower process. But I'm learning to be okay with slowness. Maybe if the first woman and the first man hadn't been in a rush to try something new, the whole earth would still be a garden.

As I go through this process of nurturing, waiting, tilling under the soil everything that broke me, I continue pulling weeds, watering plants, and coaxing buds as sweat beads upon my brow and callouses form on my hands. I occasionally peruse a tiny list tucked inside my journal



From a healthy salary to a healthful harvest

of more meaningful intentions and goals—mental, spiritual, and physical, but my focus is not on achievement. Instead, I’m paying attention to the soil.

The soil reminds me that I need only to present myself to the Master Gardener as a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1) for Him to work in me. The result is less about my work for Him and more about His work in me. He sprouts new life in me much like fledgling plants poke up from a garden bed. So, I talk with Him and ask Him to replenish the soil of my soul. As Jesus taught in the parable of the sower of the seeds in Mark 4, I’m asking for a deeply-rooted heart full of His Spirit. I’m praying for less-stony, pebble-strewn interactions with those I love. I’m mindful that no thorns of distraction choke out the life God wants to nurture in me.

As sprigs of green cover my modest plot of soil now, I smile. The green reminds me of the ever-certain promises of God no matter where life twists and turns. Isaiah the prophet wrote of God’s unfailing ability to restore life from devastation. “Do not remember the former things. . . . Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?” (Isaiah 43:18, 19). I’m certain God is doing new things for me. I’ve been humbly brought to my knees through the loss of my earthly desires. But down here, low to the ground, I’m inhaling the loamy fragrance of the dirt. I’m digging deeper into the rich soil of my garden—embracing that Genesis feeling. **C**

Kathleen Dunlap writes from Colorado where she lives with her husband and son. When she’s not writing, Kathleen can be found exploring the mountains or planting seeds.



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Genesis Cuisine

Brunch Treats



“See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.”

“And you shall eat the herb of the field.”

—Genesis 1:29, 3:18

Recipes by Jennifer Ish. Photos by Melissa Ish



Fresh Fruit Spring Rolls

1 pkg. spring roll rice wrappers
 A variety of your favorite fruit:
 strawberries
 kiwi
 raspberries
 blackberries
 pineapple
 mango

Fresh mint leaves
 Lemon delight dipping sauce:
 1/2 C. fresh lemon juice
 1/2 C. sweetener of choice
 3 Tb. thickener
 1 Tb. coconut oil
 1 Tb. coconut cream
 pinch of salt

Run warm water on a large plate and dip one sheet of wrapper in the water for 5 seconds and remove to damp tea towel. Lay a variety of fruit in rows on the rice wrapper and snugly roll the fruit inside the wrapper while folding the sides over the ends of the roll. Set on a damp paper towel and repeat. For dipping sauce, combine all ingredient in a sauce pan and heat until thickened. Chill and serve with spring rolls cut in half.



Fancy Fruit Pizza

Oatmeal Cookie Crust:
 2 Tb. flax meal + 5 Tbs. water
 1 1/2 C. flour of choice
 2 C. rolled quick oats
 2/3 C. coconut or brown sugar
 1/3 C. raisins
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla
 1/3 C. oil
 1/3 C. water
 1 C. vegan cream cheese spread
 A variety of favorite fresh fruit
 such as strawberries, kiwi, grapes,
 pineapple, peaches, mandarin
 oranges, blueberries, etc.

Combine flax meal with water and stir well, set aside. Mix crust dry ingredients together in a large bowl, add soaked flax meal, stir in wet ingredients, and mix well. Press onto a sprayed pizza pan and bake for approx. 18-20 min. at 350 degrees until golden brown. Cool the cookie crust and spread on vegan cream cheese. Arrange a variety of fresh fruit on top in an artistic design. Optional: coat fruit with diluted apricot jam for a shiny glaze.



Breakfast Banana Splits

Strawberry Millet Cereal:
 1/2 C. millet cooked in 1 C. water
 with a pinch of salt
 1/2 C. strawberries
 1/2 tsp. almond flavoring
 1 Tb. maple syrup

1 tsp. vanilla
 1 Tb. maple syrup

Vanilla Rice Cereal:
 1/2 C. rice cooked in 1 C. soy milk

Cocoa Oatmeal Cereal:
 1 C. rolled oats cooked in
 1 C. water with pinch of salt
 1 Tb. cocoa powder
 1 Tb. maple syrup

Cook cereals and refrigerate over night. Cut bananas in half lengthwise and place in a banana-split dish. Add a scoop of each cereal between the banana slices. Top with chopped nuts, non-dairy whipped topping, and a maraschino cherry.



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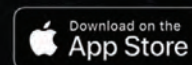


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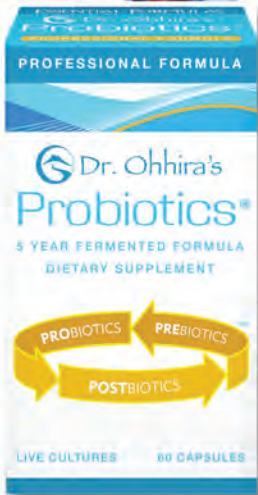
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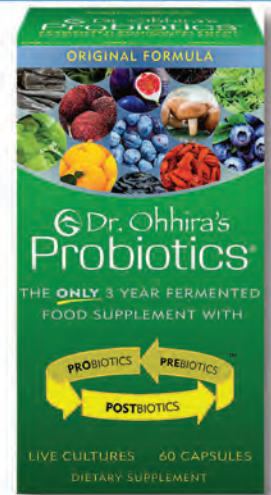
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Reagan, I have a riddle for you that will give you clues about where today's field trip 'Adventure With Gigi' is going to take us," I told my six-year-old great-granddaughter as I fastened her seatbelt. "Put on your thinking cap. Are you ready?"

"What has six legs, four wings, and two eyes, but no nose, tongue, lips, or teeth?"

She was quiet while I got in the driver's seat and pulled out of the driveway.

"Give up?" I finally asked.

"Yes. I don't know," she replied.

"Butterflies!" I responded.

"Really? How do they taste if they don't have a tongue? And how do they eat if they don't have a mouth or teeth?"

"That's all part of how God created them. It sounds strange to us, but butterflies actually taste with their feet. We have taste buds on our tongues that tell us if something is sour, sweet, bitter, or salty. Butterflies have sensors on their six tiny feet that tell them if something they have landed on is good to eat or if it is harmful or even poisonous."

"But how do they eat if they don't have lips and teeth?"

"They don't need teeth because they only drink. Butterflies live on nectar from flowers and fruit juice that they suck up through their *proboscis*—a built-in straw rolled up on the bottom of their face. Sugar from the nectar and fruit gives them energy. They also drink from mud puddles to get salt and minerals. Scientists call this *puddling*. Those are all interesting facts, but there is so much more to learn about these



A Butterfly Field Trip

beautiful creatures. That is why we are going to the 'Butterflies are Blooming' exhibit at Meijer Gardens Conservatory."

"Oh, I love the butterfly exhibit," Reagan exclaimed.

"Well, here we are. Let's go check it out!"

We entered the conservatory located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with its shiny glass walls reaching high to the sky. We followed the curving brick path into a tropical forest of tall bamboo plants and palm trees, past a living wall of orchids, and under a man-made waterfall that plunged into a winding creek. We saw many butterflies flying and landing upon fragrant flowers. Others were harder to spot as they hid in the rich foliage of the garden. Along the walkway we found several butterfly feeding stations—round ceramic dishes with slightly rotting fruit that

butterflies like. We observed several butterflies close-up on the feeders, as well as on the abundant flower blossoms. A large butterfly landed on the shoulder of a young girl, and we could plainly see its antennae, proboscis, spindly legs, and bulgy eyes.

"Gigi, do butterflies see like we do?" Reagan asked.

"Butterflies have about twelve thousand lenses on their eyes so they can see in many directions at once. How would you like to be able to see behind you and on every side while looking straight ahead?" We learned that butterflies don't have noses, but they smell with their antennae. They also wear their skeleton on the outside of their body—like having bones or a shell instead of skin. Butterflies use their legs to help them take off and land properly, as well as to hang upside down to eat or rest.

Y J E A N V A N H O U T E N



Jean Van Houten

Reagan checks out a newly emerged butterfly.

“Do butterflies sleep, Gigi?” Reagan asked.

“Well, they are only active during the day because they are cold-blooded and their bodies need to be warm to fly. At night or during bad weather, they perch on the underside of a leaf or hide in the shelter of a rock or long grass. They might look like they are sleeping, but they never close their eyes because they don’t have any eyelids.”

“Look how pretty their wings are,” Reagan said, pointing at a black one with striking orange and yellow markings.

“Reagan, do you remember when we ripped little pieces of colored paper and glued them to a paper plate? We got creative and made a piece of art called a mosaic. God showed His creativity when He made the butterfly. Each wing is actually a mosaic made up of thousands of tiny overlapping scales—like the shingles on a roof or scales like on a fish. As light shines through those scales, we see the lovely colors. A close-up of a wing shows these scales are so beautifully and delicately made. They also allow air to flow through the wings that helps the butterfly take off in flight and land safely. Butterfly wings are very fragile, and touching them can rub off scales and hurt the butterfly’s ability to fly.”

God created such variety that more than twenty thousand species of butterflies in all colors and various sizes exist throughout the world. One of the smallest, the pygmy blue, has a wingspan of only three quarters of an inch—about the width of a nickel. One of the largest, Queen Alexandra’s birdwing, can be as large as eleven inches across. Among the most popular and our favorite, the blue morphos, fluttered throughout the conservatory flashing their stunning iridescent blue wings. But when they landed and closed their wings together to rest, they appeared brown and perfectly camouflaged within their surroundings.

A favorite part of the exhibit is the glass incubating chamber containing hundreds of pupa or chrysalises hanging from rods. We were able to watch as a blue morpho butterfly struggled out of its cocoon. As we looked closer at the chrysalises, we got a peek at what was going on inside. We could see faint markings that would soon be the wings and other parts of a butterfly.

Every butterfly starts as a tiny egg about the size of the tip of a pencil glued to a leaf or blade of grass. After about a week, the egg hatches into a caterpillar whose main job is to eat and eat and eat.



Jean Van Houten

Butterflies feed on fruit placed throughout the conservatory.




Two stunning sara longwing butterflies rest on some greenery.

Some can double their size in just one day! After five to 21 days, the chubby caterpillar spins a silk chrysalis around itself, and then the most amazing thing happens. The caterpillar body breaks down until it is liquid. But God’s amazing design transforms this liquid into a winged creature that begins its new life as a butterfly. Scientists call this process *metamorphosis*.

In the Bible God teaches us an important lesson about metamorphosis. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” That means we can choose to live the kind of life God want us to rather than to be controlled by what the world wants. We can choose to think about, accomplish, and say good things that please God and bless others. And the good news is that He will help us! He will help us turn from sin and transform our minds so that we don’t even like to do the things we did before. He makes us a *new* creation similar to the butterflies because He loves us so much. As we trust and follow Him, we become more like Him.

Most butterflies do not live very long, but they perform a very important job during their short lifetime. While they flit from flower to flower, they pick up pollen and pass it on to other flowers and fruit tree blossoms that need it to grow. We, too, have an important job to do. We can spread the love of Jesus to those around us by gathering morsels of truth and

blessings from the Bible like being kind and then spreading it to others.

“Even though you are young, Reagan, you can brighten up the world and bring joy to others just like all those wonderful butterflies,” I encouraged. “This world is full of beauty if we only take the time to look for it. But God has even more amazing things for us as He promises eternal life in heaven with Him. The Bible says we need to thank Him for this promise (and even for the butterflies) as told in 1 Chronicles 29:13, ‘Now therefore, our God, We thank You and praise Your glorious name.’” 

Jean Van Houten writes from Hudsonville, Michigan, where she continues to explore the many wonders found in Creation in order to spread the blessings to others.



Spotted tiger glassywing cocoons will soon hatch.

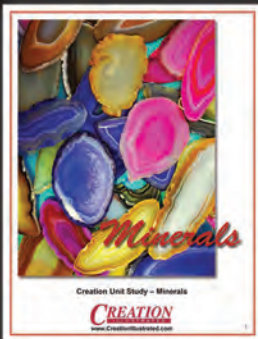
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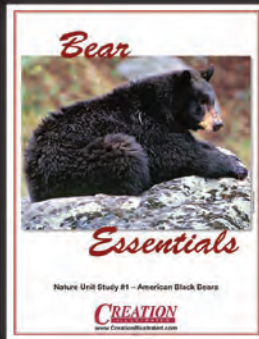


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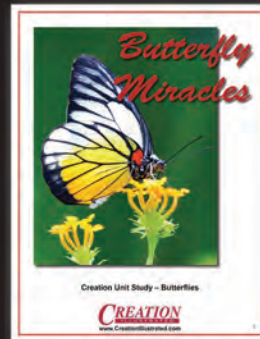
Bible-based Unit Studies



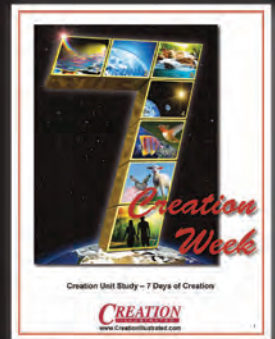
Minerals



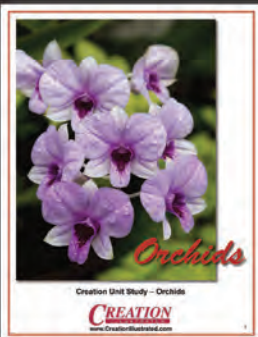
Bears



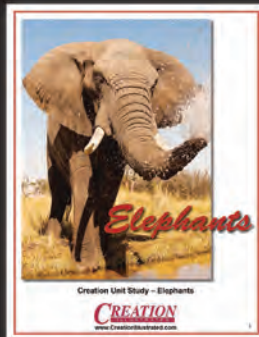
Butterflies



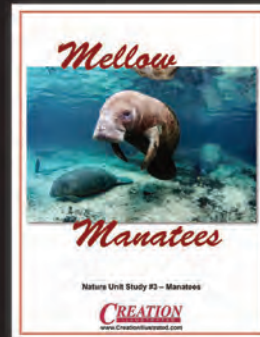
Creation Week



Orchids



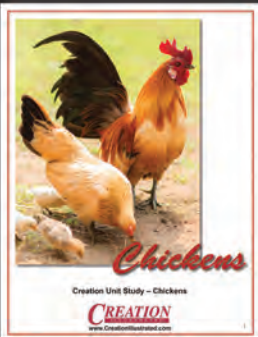
Elephants



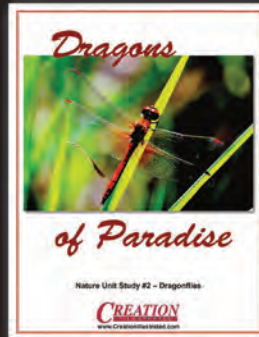
Manatees



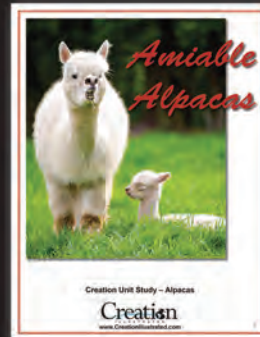
Horses



Chickens



Dragonflies



Alpacas



Sloths

with Cellphone Addiction!

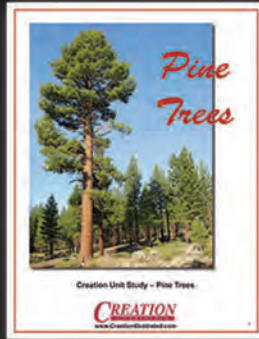
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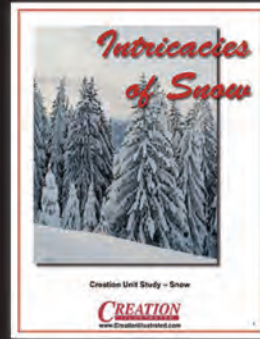
Inspire Youth to Explore Nature !



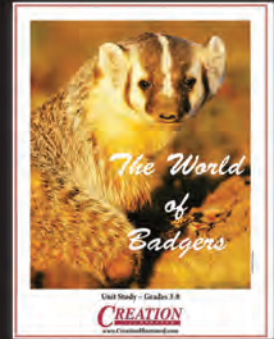
Fragrance



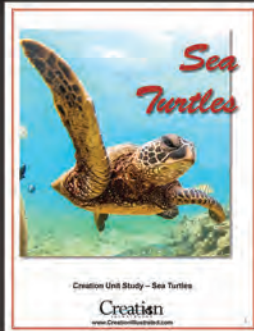
Pine Trees



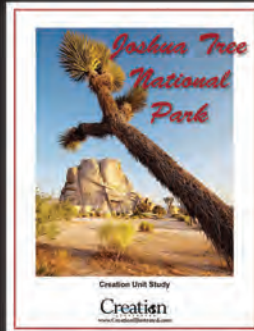
Snow



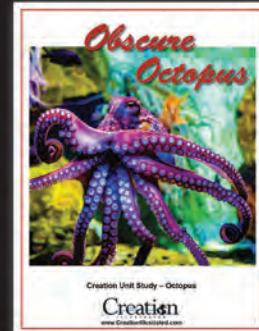
Badgers



Sea Turtles



Joshua Tree National Park



Octopus

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ADAPTABILITY



God has made grass very adaptable. It grows over a wider range than any other family of flowering plants. It grows in deserts, swamps and even on the tops of mountains.

Christians also must be adaptable to carry the gospel to the entire world. God's love is livable and adaptable to every climate, language, and culture of the world.

A blade of grass does not refuse to grow because it is not on a beautiful lawn. It can adapt and grow in the crack of a sidewalk. It will grow here without notice or appreciation.

Like grass, most of us work in our little niche without recognition or thanks. In this little place many are discontented. They feel their life is useless.

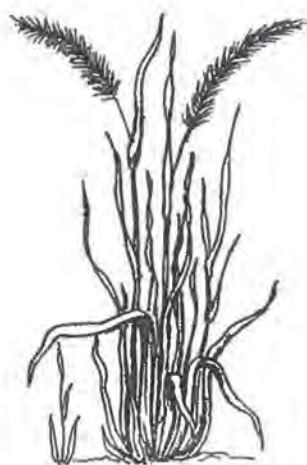
However, our little blade of grass growing in a crack will labor on, pouring out its bit of purified air. This little waft of air makes its way quietly through the city streets bearing its whiff of healthy vitality.

We need this lesson. Talent is too often praised and position sought. Some children will do nothing unless rewarded and praised. We need to learn faithful adaptability to the little jobs we are given.

*As grass can adapt to a sidewalk's crack,
My little chore I will attack.*

*Man's praise I may not much attract,
God's favor, I surely will not lack.*

"A faithful man will abound with blessings"
Proverbs 28:20.



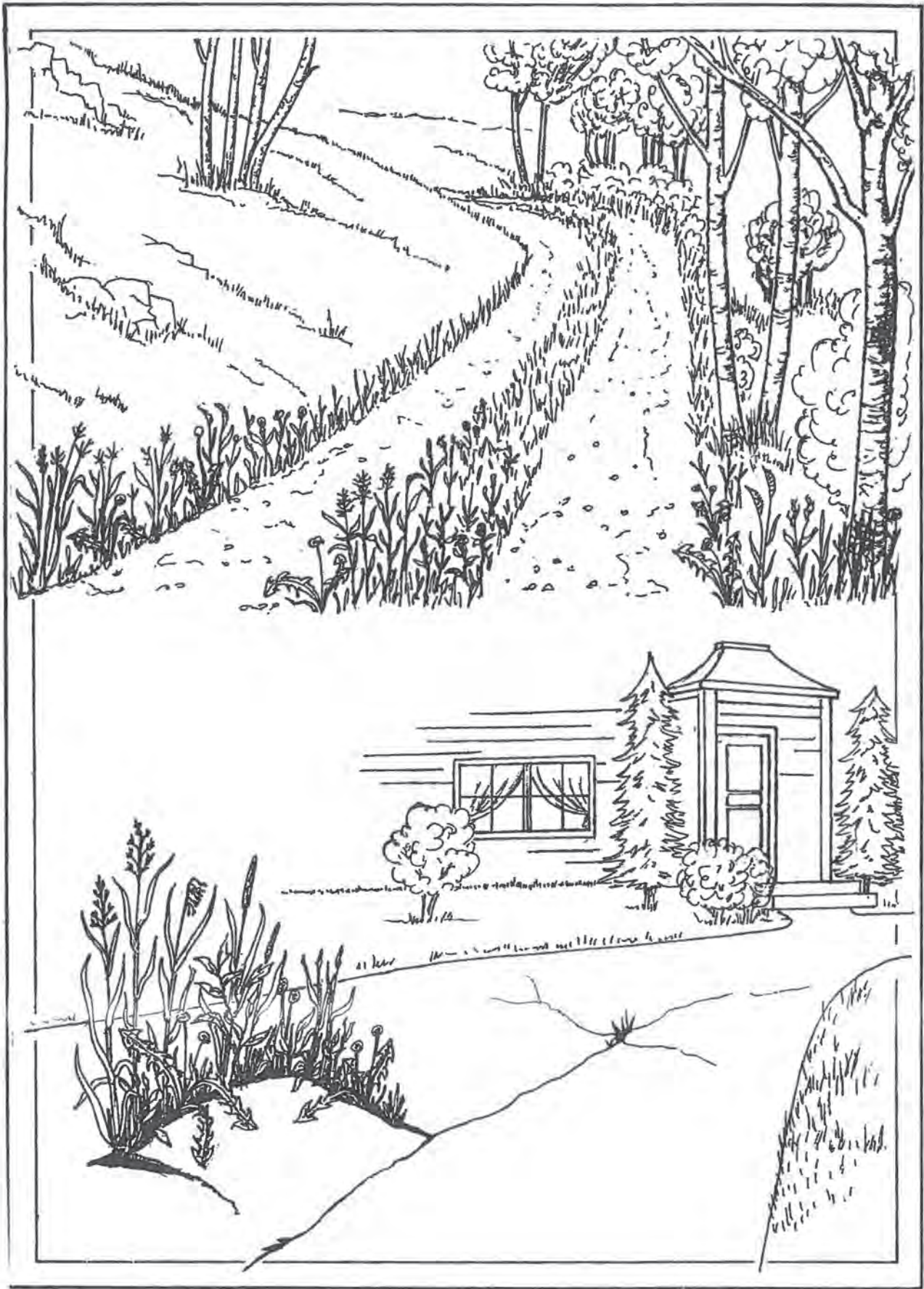
PRACTICAL PROJECT:

Go for a walk around the block of your home. See how much grass grows in the cracks of your sidewalks. Try trading family chores and see how joyfully adaptable all can be.



This character-building lesson was excerpted from *The Gospel According to a Blade of Grass* book by Terry and Jean McComb. To order the complete book and others in their series, go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com.





Summer 2023 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
(deadline & details on page 60) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

Winners From the Spring 2023 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 6–11
Savannah W., age 7
of Lincoln, California



First Place, ages 12–18
Rachel F., age 12
of Chariton, Iowa



First Place, ages 19+
Mickey W., age 67
of Saint Cloud, Florida

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for summer 2023 entries is August 15, 2023**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for (Like) any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, the first week of December from fall-edition pictures, the first week of March from winter-edition pictures, and the first week of June from spring-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com

Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

Winners From Spring 2023 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Samuel S., age 9, of Dallas, Texas, wrote, “I took this picture at the Celery Fields Bird Sanctuary in Sarasota, Florida. ‘The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever’ (Isaiah 40:8).”



First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Hannah C., age 17, of Granada Hills, California.



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Ruth M., age 80, Yakima, Washington, wrote, “My tulips were in full bloom. They each got a tall white cap. I chose Proverbs 26:1 to go with this picture. ‘As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool’ (KJV). I think of the four seasons as stages in our salvation. Fall represents death to sin, winter when the snow covers the earth reminds me of being clothed with Christ’s righteousness, spring is when new birth begins, and summer is when we produce fruit for God.”

Here’s how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for summer 2023 entries is August 15, 2023**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for (Like) any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12 –18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of September from summer submissions, the first week of December from fall submissions, the first week of March from winter submissions, and the first week of June from spring submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



STUDY GUIDE

for *Creation Illustrated*, Summer 2023 Edition, Vol. 30, No. 2

This instructional guide is designed to help readers of all ages integrate practical spiritual lessons available through the study of God’s handiwork. Studying nature will help lead individuals to a personal, awe-inspiring relationship with Jesus Christ, the Author of Creation.

I. Re-creation Outdoors—“Mount St. Helens Restoration” story, pages 6–13

1. When and why did Mount St. Helens get its name? What was it called before? p. 6
2. List the variety of fauna and flora that inhabited Mount St. Helens before the 1980 eruption. pp. 7, 8
3. What wildlife casualties resulted from the eruption? p. 9
4. What does the Mount St. Helens environmental recovery teach us? Within how many years, what percentage of original plants were found growing again? pp. 9, 10
5. List some of the animals that were able to survive the eruption. What types of flora repopulated the mountainside first? pp. 10, 11
6. What spiritual lessons are gleaned from viewing the healing lands that were once devastated? p. 13

II. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Graceful Giraffes” story, pages 14–19

1. Where did research scientists discover that giraffes hum to communicate?
At what frequency are the hums? p. 15
2. Describe the unique aspects of a giraffe’s heart. p. 16
3. How many subspecies of giraffes are there? p. 19
4. Explain some of the interesting behaviors of giraffes. What is a crèche? p. 19
5. What spiritual insights are found in Job 12:7–10, Psalm 66:4, and Revelation 5:13? p. 19

III. Creation Up Close—“Aloes—The Wonder Plants” story, pages 20–24

1. When is the aloe season in South Africa? p. 21
2. How many times are aloes mentioned in the Bible? List each of these Scripture references. pp. 21, 22
3. How many different species of aloe are there in the aloe family?
4. Where is the largest aloe farm located, and how much aloe gel do they produce each day? p. 22
5. Explain how the aloe can grow in harsh areas and still absorb moisture. What spiritual lesson is learned from this? pp. 22, 23
6. List some of the healing properties found in aloe plants. p. 23

IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 6—Animals, Creeping Things, and Humans” story, pages 28–37

1. List some of the most amazing eyes and what makes them unique. pp. 29–31
2. How many pairs of cranial nerves are devoted specifically to the eyes? p. 34
3. How does thinking hard affect the eye? p. 34
4. What does Matthew 6:22 tell us about the eye? p. 34
5. List the different species that can cry emotional tears. p. 34
6. What does the Bible tell us about tears? p. 34
7. List the many related sight terms referenced in scriptures and what they teach us. pp. 35–37

Summer Family Fun Activities

This summer challenge your family with a digital media detox day once a week! This will be a special “unplugged day” where everyone can learn while doing some fun outdoor activities.

Here are some suggested steps for this great nature activity:

1. Have each person in your family choose a nature topic to study—birds, stars, trees, wild flowers, reptiles, mushrooms, insects, wild edibles, amphibians, etc.
2. Purchase supplies at a discount store including notebooks, colored pencils, magnifying glasses, bug nets, glue, tape, etc.
3. Checkout from the library or buy some nature-identification books on each selected topic.
4. Have everyone create their own nature notebook on their chosen topic. They can decorate the cover and put their name on it. Inside their book each person will record everything they find out about their topic with the date and location of each entry.
5. On the designated weekly “unplugged day,” each person spends some of the day exploring outdoors, collecting and/or photographing specimens, as well as drawing and writing down information about their nature topic.
6. At the close of the “unplugged day,” gather everyone around a table and have a sharing time when everyone can give a mini report on what they saw and learned.
7. When summer is about to end, have each person in the family write in their nature books what their favorite things were about the digital media detox “unplugged days” that summer. What did they value most; how did it make them feel; and what topic would they pick next time?

You can do this activity every quarter and focus on the natural wonders of each season! Soon you will discover that your digital media is not so important.



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 S N Q O I I Q O I I M I
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WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

The puzzle at the left contains words that are associated with this edition of *Creation Illustrated*. Simply find the words listed below and circle them. They can be spelled backward, forward, up, down, or diagonally. When you are finished, try to find the story or other part of the magazine from which each word came.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. ALOE | 11. HUMS |
| 2. ASH | 12. PROBOSCIS |
| 3. BUTTERFLIES | 13. RECREATING |
| 4. CRATER | 14. RESTORATION |
| 5. DOMINION | 15. SOIL |
| 6. EYES | 16. VISION |
| 7. GARDEN | 17. VOCAL |
| 8. GENESIS | 18. VOLCANO |
| 9. GIRAFFE | 19. WILDFLOWER |
| 10. HARMONY | 20. WINGS |

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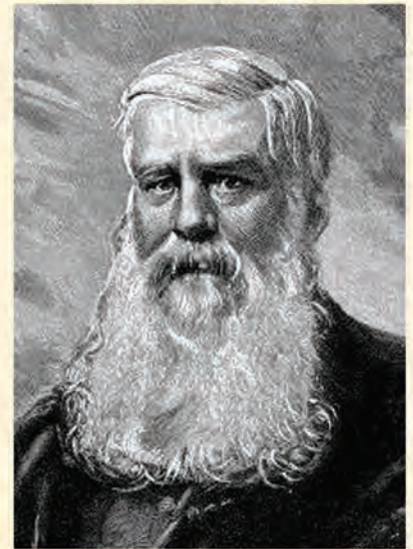
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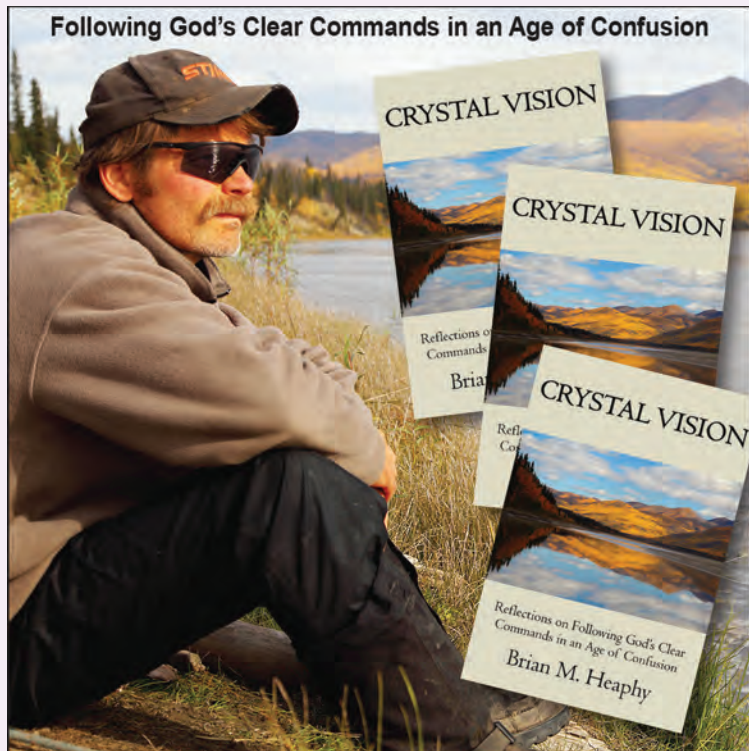
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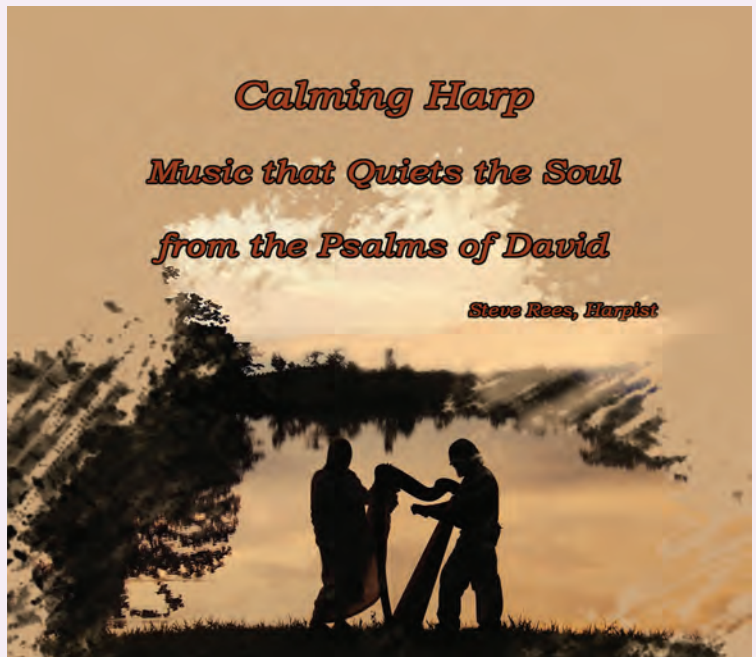


CRYSTAL VISION
Reflections on Following God's Clear Commands in an Age of Confusion
Brian M. Heaphy

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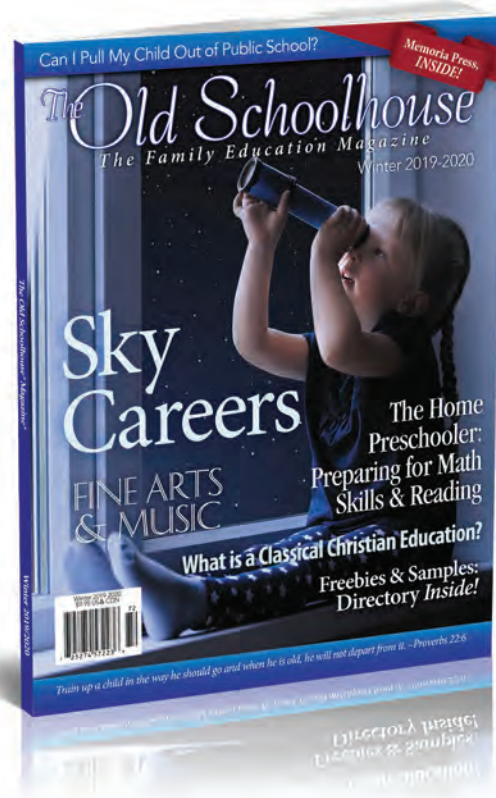
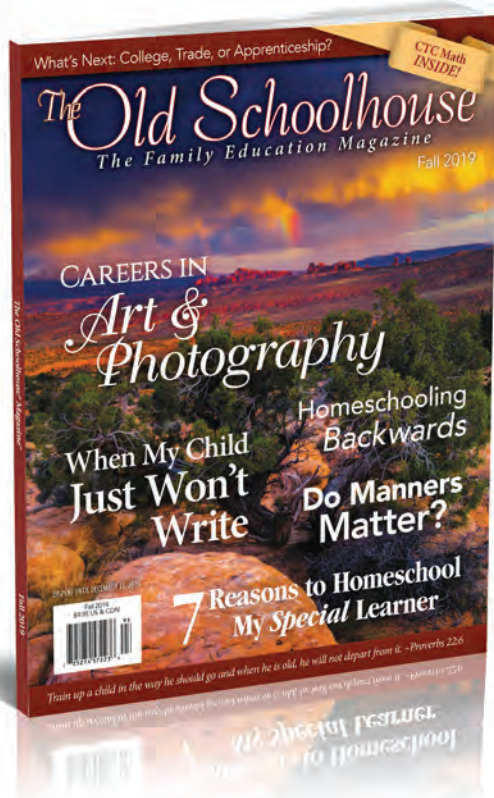


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Luke 6:40

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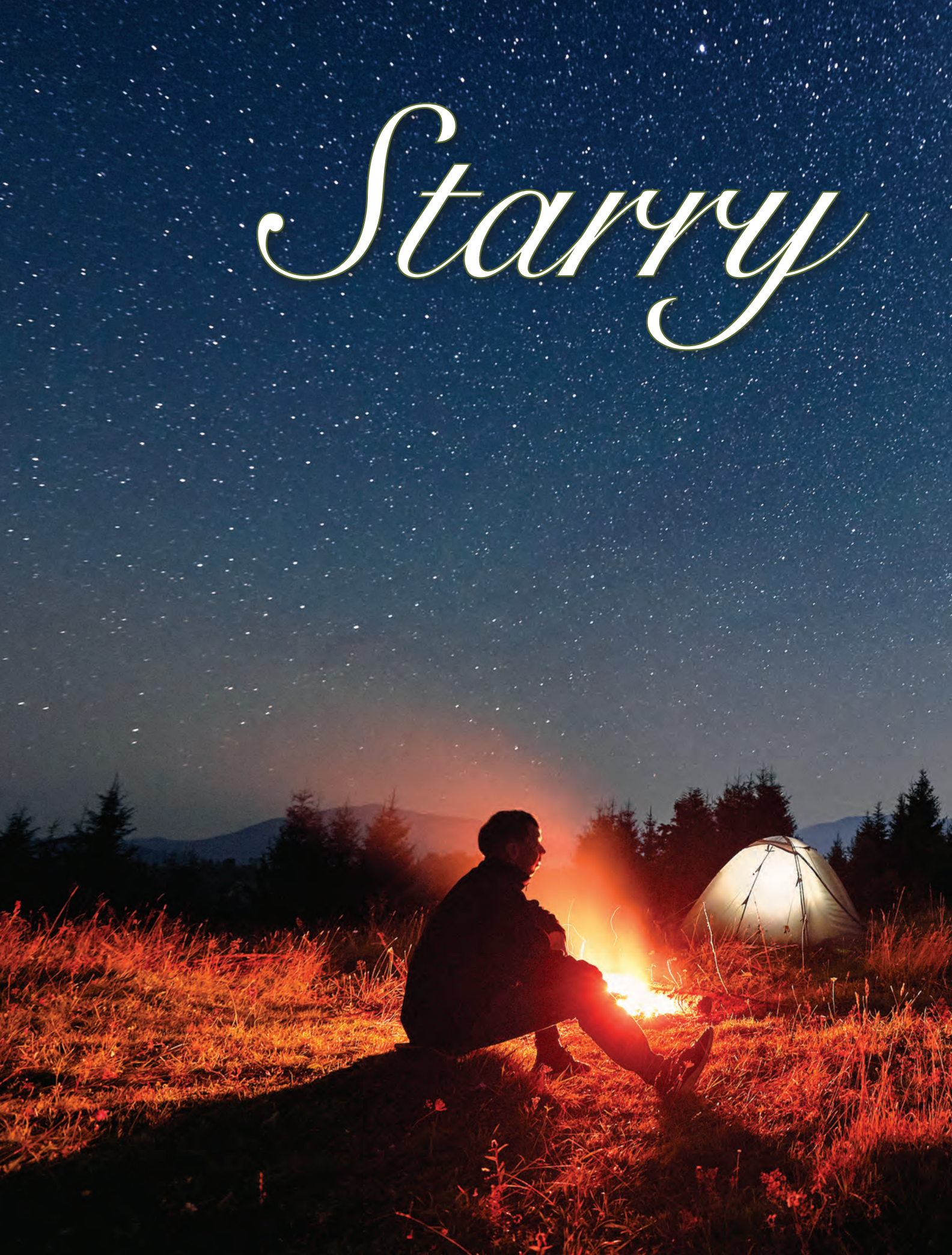
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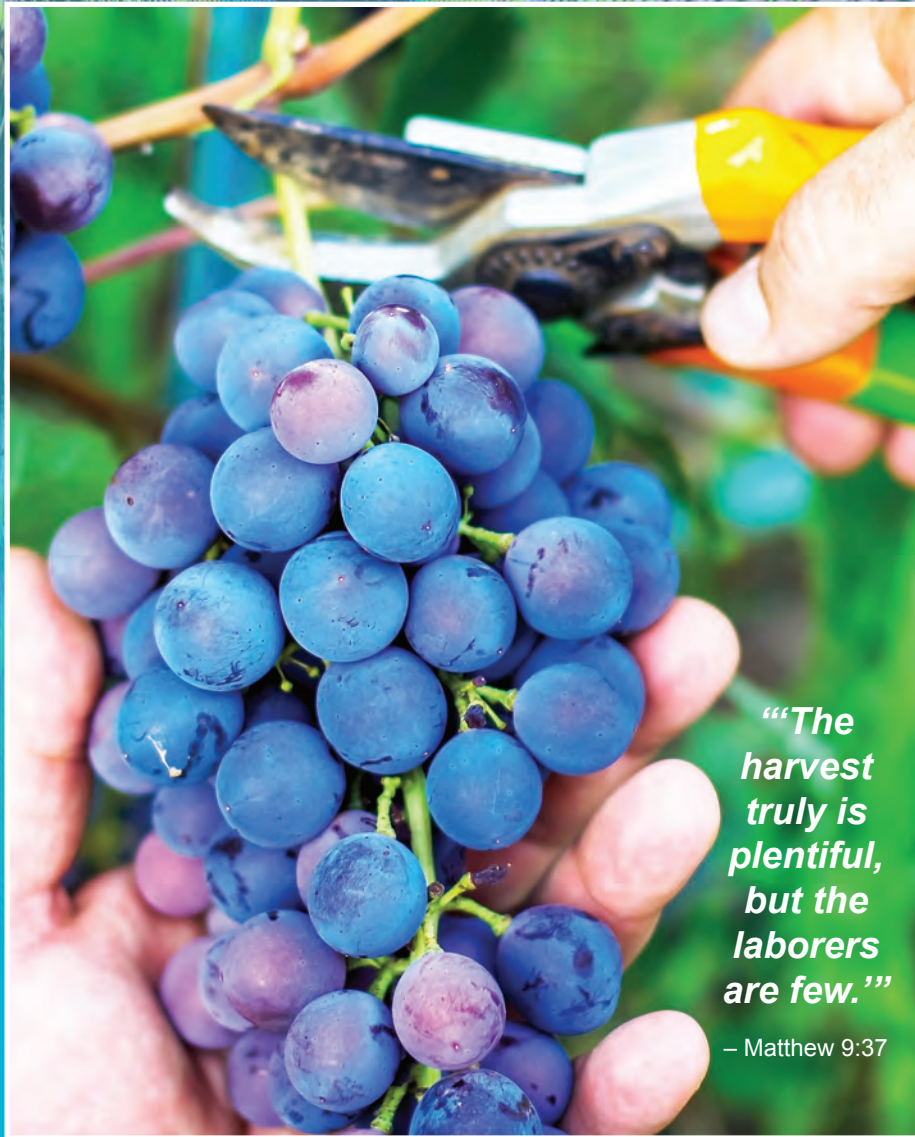
Sky

**Your faith in God has crumbled with pressures of the day,
You did things you now regret; said things you shouldn't say.
Darkness starts to settle in your sky turns midnight-blue,
Just lift your eyes to heaven to see the stars shine through!**

**Sometimes you need the darkness to help you see the light;
Sometimes you need to see the wrong to help you choose the right!
Don't ever get discouraged – weak sinner that you are,
Remember that the blackest night reveals the brightest stars!**

**Walk out beneath the stars at night when God seems far away!
Look up and view His universe that's hidden through the day!
Your doubts will soon diminish, your faith be lifted high;
Your trust in God will shine again beneath a starry sky!**

– Gloria Wilde



“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

– Matthew 9:37

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