

# YOUTH RESOURCES

## 15-18



LIFESTYLE

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# LIFESTYLE

*The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." Also, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." Jesus said to him, "Your answer is right. Do this and you will live." **Luke 10:27-28***



## INTRO

Today we're looking at what changes we can make to our own lifestyles to reduce our impact on God's creation, as our way of loving him and others.

With any element of being a disciple of Jesus there is a 'rubber hits the road' moment. A moment where all we've learnt about God and how he calls us to live needs to be put into action. James puts it this way:

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."  
– **James 2:14-17 (NIV)**

Once we know what is right to do by God and others, we need to do something about it. The amazing news is, God himself empowers us to live as he calls us to, and when we get it wrong he forgives us, restores us and empowers us afresh. That's why it says in Hebrews:

"I pray that the God of peace will give you every good thing you need so you can do what he wants. God raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, because of the blood of his death. His blood began the eternal agreement that God made with his people. I pray that God will do in us what pleases him, through Jesus Christ, and to him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

**Hebrews 13:20-21**



## GAME

Today we're looking at the lifestyle changes we can make to take care of God's creation – and the more of us that work together, the bigger impact we can have! Therefore, play a game to start which requires good team work. Here are a couple of ideas:

**Charades** – this is a classic, play in 2 teams against one another, whoever guessed the most correctly wins! <https://youthgroupgames.com.au/games/charades/>

**Actionary** – this is a fun amalgamation of charades, pictictionary and 'sculptionary'. Divide group 2 or more teams depending on size: <https://youthgroupgames.com.au/games/actionary/>



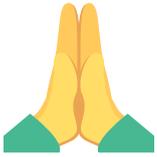
# BIBLE

## Read Romans 12:1-2

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A1-2&version=NCV>

- What does it mean to be a 'living sacrifice'?
- What does it mean to be 'holy and pleasing to God'?
- In this letter from Paul, he is encouraging followers of Jesus to offer our whole body and life to God as worship to him. We can do this because of his compassion and love towards us!
  - Have an honest chat – what parts of your life are not currently offered to God? Is there stuff you know you need to change? Where could you start?
  - Take some time to talk and pray about this together – ask God to help you
- Part of worshipping God with our lives is living in a way that takes care of his creation and others along with it
  - Have an honest chat – in what ways do you already know your lifestyle isn't looking after creation?
  - Take time to talk and pray about this together – ask God for his help
- What is the 'pattern of this world' when it comes to how we treat the environment as a society? What rhythms and systems do you see that are good, bad, or somewhere in between?
- Paul tells us – don't be shaped by that pattern – the pattern of this world! Instead, be shaped by God's pattern – let him renew your thinking
  - Have a dream – what do you think God's 'pattern' might look like for our lives and society when it comes to how we treat creation and other people?

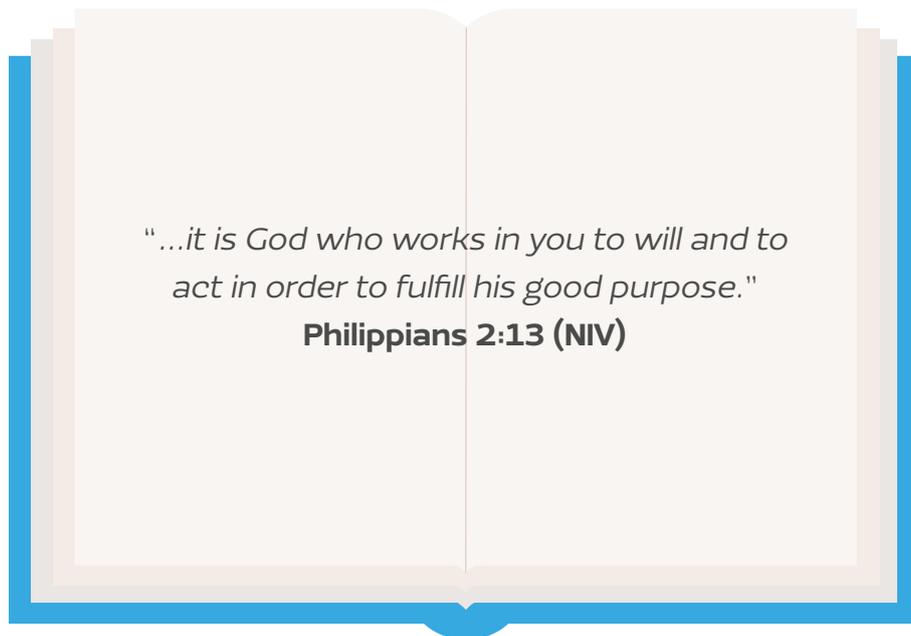




# PRAY

We don't start living in God's pattern for this stuff just by gritting our teeth and trying really hard! This passage says 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind' – that means it's happening to us rather than us making it happen ourselves. But how?

Another of Paul's letters in the New Testament shows us –



Take time together as a group now to 'be transformed' by praying and asking God to renew your mind and work in you so you can take good care of his creation.

**Youth leader note:** you will know how your group best pray – feel free to lead this time in line with that. Here are a couple of suggestions if they would be helpful:

## Option 1 – Guided prayer

**Youth leader note:** put some worship music on quietly in the background if it would be helpful for your group, otherwise encourage them to embrace the silence and stillness and focus on God's presence with you now. Read out each of these steps to guide the young people in coming to God and asking for him to transform them, and allow pauses where indicated:

Get comfortable, close your eyes if it would be helpful for you – and focus on God now. **(Pause)**

Romans 12:1–2 in The Message version says: 'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.' **(Pause)**

Picture your everyday ordinary life. How do you interact with God's creation along the way? **(Pause)** Think about what you wear, what do you have for breakfast? How do you get to school, and what do you see along the way? **(Pause)** What does your day look like? Who do you talk to, what do you do? What do you eat and throw away? **(Pause)** Once you get home, what do you do in the evening? What's for dinner? How do you chill out? **(Pause)**

Bring this all before God in your mind – ask him to show you how he is with you through your whole day. **(Pause)**

The passage then says "Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him." What do you want to thank God for that he has done for you? Take a moment to thank him now. **(Pause)**

It says 'Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.'

From your day – can you see where you have become adjusted to the culture around you when it comes to creation care? Ask God to show this to you. **(Pause)**

Ask God now to change your heart and mind on these things, to want to live in his way. Please God would you change my heart and mind on those things? **(Pause)**

Please God would you show me now how you want me to act instead? **(Pause)**

Ask God to transform you and empower you to do this now. **(Pause)**

We thank you Lord that you love us, that you died for us and rose again, and that you are restoring and reconciling all things to yourself. Please transform us from the inside out so we are part of your restorative work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Option 2 – Letter prayers

### Equipment

- Screen to display verses on or printed on paper
- Paper & pens
- Sound system or speaker to play music

### Set up

- Put Romans 12:1–2 in The Message version on a screen or print off in large print and stick it to a wall.
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A1-2&version=MSG>
- You could play worship music quietly in the background if this would be helpful for your group.
- Make sure each young person has a piece of paper and pen and finds a spot where they are comfortable to take some time writing out their letter prayers.

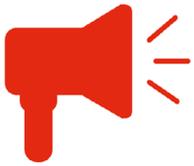
### Instructions

Tell the youth to read the passage on the screen and then to take some time to place their 'everyday, ordinary life' before God in their hearts and minds.

Invite them to write out their prayer to God asking him to change their minds and actions towards creation, and especially asking for his help to change in the areas they know they need it.

Tell them this is just between them and God, and they will receive these letter prayers back in 3 months time to thank God for the changes they've seen in that time and to pray the prayer again especially for areas they still need change in. Transformation is a process and can take time – Jesus is with us on the journey, working within us.

- Allow them time to write their letters
- Once done, ask them to fold it up so you can't read it and place their name on the outside – it's just between them and God.
- Collect in the prayers and set yourself a reminder to give or post these back to the young people in 3 months time.
- Encourage them when they get their letter prayer to see how it's gone and to pray the prayer again



## ACTION

### Life Changing Choices

It's time to make some lifestyle changes that will be life changing – for you, others and the planet!

First, why not audit your lifestyles? WWF has an app that helps calculate your personal carbon footprint. Youth leader note: You might want to incorporate this into the session or suggest the youth do at home: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/myfootprint>

Or head straight to this page where Count Us In gives 16 clear steps which you could take to reduce your carbon footprint and influence others to do the same. Some of these are actions you can take personally, others will require a conversation with your family, your friends or your MP: <https://www.count-us-in.org/en-gb/16-steps/>

Chat as a group and decide to commit to the same one all together, or choose individually. You can also sign up to 'Count Us In' to tell them you've taken this step.

Whatever you choose – share with each other as a group what lifestyle change you're making. Make your goal realistic, achievable and brave!

In your next session together, share how it's been so far and encourage each other to keep going! We can make a real difference through how we each live our lives, but we can make an even BIGGER difference together.





## GOING DEEPER

If it would be helpful for your group to get inspired, here is a video by Katherine Hayhoe that talks about how we can make a difference, in big creative ways as well as smaller practical ways we can change our lifestyle to have less impact on the planet: I'm only a kid, I can't do anything about climate change...right? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsIL9WC-2cQ&t=50s> (6.58 mins)

Here are some further links to go deeper on certain topics of lifestyle change that young people usually engage well on:

- To explore more about sustainable fashion, check out SustainYourStyle: <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/>
- Good On You <https://goodonyou.eco/> has an app available to look up brands' sustainability ratings before you buy
- You can buy an annual subscription to Ethical Consumer to look up almost anything you'd normally buy and see the most eco-friendly, ethical brands to buy from: <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>
- If you want to explore the issues and solutions around plastic further head to Plastic Free July: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>
- WWF has good information on why switching to sustainable Palm Oil is better than boycotting it altogether: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/8-things-know-about-palm-oil>

Some of the Eco Church lifestyle resources will be relevant to your youth group too (such as '*Sustainable fashion*' and '*You and Your Stuff*'):

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/lifestyle/>