

July 21, 2024

Caretakers of Creation

Leviticus 25:1-7; 18-24

People always compliment my daughter on how well-behaved she is when she visits them. I smile and thank them politely while images of her stomping mud through my living room, slamming doors, and throwing dirty clothes on the couch run through my mind. She's young, but she knows how to be a good guest. She knows how to treat things that do not belong to her; how to speak to adults who are not her parents; and how to, in her mother's words, "show her raising." There's something in us that understands we need to be on good behavior when we are invited guests. We want our hosts to know that we are worthy of the invitations.

In Leviticus 25, God told Moses that this land we humans inhabit is not ours to run roughshod over. We are reminded that we are caretakers of creation, and it feels a bit like a parent sitting down their children to get them back on track. "Look, back in Genesis, I told you to take care of your planet. You're not doing a good job, so here are specific instructions on how to do it correctly." God tells us that the land, like us, is meant to rest. That is how it was created. We can't squeeze and squeeze and expect it to keep producing without problems.

As the student book author writes, "From the beginning, God created the world with a rhythm of work and rest. God commanded that every person, every animal, and even the land would have moments of respite."¹ When we do not honor God's creation, we're not honoring its Creator. We may live here, but as God told Moses, "You are just immigrants and foreign guests of mine" (Leviticus 25:23). When we fail to take care of creation, we aren't being good guests in a place that is not our permanent home.

1. What are the characteristics of a good guest? a bad one?
2. What does it mean to you to be a "foreign guest" of God on Earth? Does that affect the way you behave?
3. What are actionable ways you can help God's earth experience sabbath?

¹From *Adult Bible Studies*, Summer 2024, by Sue Mink (Cokesbury, 2024); page 77.

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