



“God  
looked over  
everything  
she had  
made:  
it was  
*supremely*  
good.”

~ Genesis 1:31

## Ask The Beasts: Darwin And The God Of Love

*With Elizabeth Johnson's book as our guide we will explore and deepen our understanding of God's love by looking to the beasts, birds, plants, and fish.*

### Chapter one - Beasts and Entangled Bank: A Dialogue

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As I read this first chapter of Ask the Beasts, the piece that has stuck with me this week is about the disproportionate impact of global climate change on our World's poorest women. How those who already struggle for their daily life are faced with the harshest impacts from increasingly ferocious hurricanes, parching droughts and deadly landslides. A United Nations report goes further;

“The threat of climate change, manifested in the increase of extreme weather conditions such as, droughts, storms or floods, has been recognized as a global priority issue. Climate change is a sustainable development challenge, with broad impacts not only on the environment but also on economic and social development. Women form a disproportionately large share of the poor in countries all over the world. Women in rural areas in developing countries are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, because of their responsibility to secure water, food and energy for cooking and heating. The effects of climate change ..., make it harder to secure these resources. It is therefore imperative that a gender analysis be applied to all actions on climate change and that gender experts are consulted in climate change processes at all levels,” ([http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/))

In the beginning, just before God celebrated in the supreme goodness of creation, God called us to care for our beloved world and with that care for all the peoples of the world. Our short-sighted consumption is wreaking havoc on those who are in most need of care. Perhaps this isn't the message I should have come away from this chapter with. Maybe instead I should be waxing poetically about bald eagles flying over head, which it just so happens there are, or the cacophony of bird songs as the sun slips being the cedar tree, which is magnificent. But instead I'm bound to this harsh reminder that while we account for less that 5% of the World's population as a nation we are using more than 30% of the world's resources each year; and are setting our poorest sisters up for climate failure in the process. Johnson calls us back and reminds us of our ecological interdependence, “theology in our ecological era needs to broaden it's anthropocentric focus for it's own adequacy” “The ecological crisis makes clear that the human species and the natural world will flourish or collapse together.” We as Christians in the United States are not isolated from our sisters and brothers beyond on theological practice or our national borders. As we have lost touch with the universe and the natural world around us we have also lost touch with our ability to be relevant not only to the current genera-

tion but to the ecological era in which we live. Our internal bickering over Creationism vrs. Evolution has set us back and we are quickly becoming obsolete in a dialogue to which we have the potential to be dynamic leaders.

As Carl Sagan and his group of fellow scientist points out in their 1990 statement to people of faith “ As scientists, many of us have had profound experiences of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded.” How might our faith practice and social justice ministry change if we viewed our communities and world with as much reverence and sacredness as we do our steepled churches and cinder-block basements? As people of faith we have a creation narrative that imbues the world with the sacred. As God surveys and claims the world “supremely good” so should we.

As you read this week I encourage you to view the world around you through a “supremely good” lens. How might daily life change if we celebrate the wonder of creation.

Taking it a step further, how might our interactions with fellow humans and creatures change if we recognize that we are ecologically bound to each other.

What stands out for you this week? Any connections to current events or personal experiences? Going back to the disproportionate impact on women, I wonder how climate change effects women’s personal safety. Is there an ecological connection to plight of women kidnapped in Nigeria(<http://www.brethren.org/partners/nigeria/news.html>) or the rape and murder of young women India (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2014/05/29/317052124/teenaged-sisters-allegedly-gang-raped-murdered-in-india>)?

