



More Than Consumers

Listening
To Who God
Says We Are

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**Listening To Who
God Says We Are**

Highlighting the purposes and identity that God has given us, with weekly reflections and actions that remind us that we're much more than consumers.

By Baptist World Aid's Advocacy Team

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INTRODUCTION:

You Are More Than A Consumer

The pace of the world today is fast. Our food, fashion, download speeds and estimated delivery times are fast. Swept up by a desire to keep pace with the world around us, or the one we see on social media, we shop, watch, click, scroll, order and repeat at ever increasing speeds.

When do we stop to listen?
Rest? Create? Connect?

In Jesus, our lives are freed from bondage to sin and temporal priorities. In Jesus, we have new life and can realign our understanding of what flourishing looks like. In Jesus, we have the grace to step off the treadmill of consumerism and 'keeping up with the Jones!'

Remember that our God rested on the seventh day. Our own Messiah also feasted, retreated and listened. It's Jesus who invites us into the 'unforced rhythms of grace' of a life with Him (Matt 11:28-30, MSG).

To think of ourselves as only consumers is to diminish our creativity, influence and purpose; it paints a picture of reality where the flow of ideas, goods, and blessing is inherently one-directional—towards us, whereas the Bible assures us that God has given us purpose

and dignity beyond being passive recipients, existing to consume.

With that understanding, we can begin to see more clearly what God invites us into: to build understanding and embrace our influential role in our wider world; the people and environment around us. To embrace our potential to take responsibility and collaborate for the world we hope to see. We are more than just consumers; we are **stewards** of God's good creation. We are **co-creators** in this world with Him. We are **ambassadors** of Jesus among our communities and **advocates** for God's justice and kingdom around the world.

Join us over the next four weeks as we remind ourselves of these identities we carry, and our place in the world as having active God-glorifying purpose. Before we get started, why don't you take a moment to pause and pray. Ask God to help you reframe your understanding as active, powerful and called—much more than a passive consumer.

Each devotion comes with a set of questions to help you reflect, and actions to put these ideas into practice. We hope that you might find connection with God and inspiration to honour God in new ways as you follow along.

To get you started . . .

Read Luke 12:13 – 21

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.'"

Proverbs 30:8b-9

"give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
Otherwise, I may have too
much and disown you
and say, 'Who is the LORD?'
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonour the
name of my God."

Reflect:

- 1 What things in your life do you see as a need versus a want? How does this align with God's definition of needs and wants?
- 2 How do you think you and your family are going compared to this 'not too much, not too little' idea from Proverbs 30?
- 3 How do/can you honour God in your consumption patterns?
- 4 What do you hope to get out of this devotional series?

WEEK ONE:

You Are A Co-Creator



Being a co-creator with God gives our lives and work on this earth dignity and responsibility. Understanding ourselves as co-creators highlights the natural impact our lives have on others and our world and serves as a reminder that partnering with God aligns with His design and purpose.

Genesis 2:15 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'

Ephesians 2:10 'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'

1 Corinthians 3:9 'For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.'

The problem with seeing ourselves as consumers is this: it positions us as passive recipients, as takers. But you are more than a consumer, you are a co-creator with God.

There is a lyric from the popular musical, Hamilton, that is true and convicting - 'Every action is an act of creation.' Every interaction can either help create empathy or disengagement in our society. Every purchase has creative force - as that product enters into our daily life, and as we support a brand's ethics, sustainability

and messaging with our dollars.

In the beginning, God gave Adam the responsibility of naming the animals, and humanity the task of working with God's creation to glorify God and provide for humanity and all of earth's creatures (Genesis 2:15). From the beginning, we've been co-creating, not just consuming.

As the world's pace speeds up and our supply chains become more complicated, we can feel less and less connected to where our food is grown, how our clothes are made and where our waste goes. We can feel helpless as we passively

participate in this modern, globalized consumer culture. Despite this, it is still true that God created us in His image as His co-creators, destined for the good works He prepared in advance.

When thinking about this, we can find comfort in the concept of dependent responsibility: we're responsible for our actions and commitment to living as Jesus's loving ambassadors of reconciliation and advocates for justice. We're called by God to carry out His vision, embodying His heart for humanity; but at the same time, we're fully dependent on the grace, provision and guidance of God. Every purchase and action we make contributes to shaping the world we desire to see, however without God's empowerment and blessing, our efforts lack sustainability and enduring impact.

It's likely that one word or the other of this phrase resonates with your spirit here. Perhaps you need to be reminded that you have responsibility—a deep God-given purpose. Or maybe you need a reminder that you don't carry this alone, that Jesus goes before you and equips your every need, and that His commitment to the restoration of all things will not be thwarted. Rest and connect with God about whichever of these truths you need to be reminded of today.

Reflect:

Humans create because God designed us to be like Him in that way! In what other ways can you see God's character imprinted on us?

Do you think of yourself as having co-creative power? What could change in the way you lived if you became more aware of this?

How might recognising that creativity extends beyond conventional ideas of "creatives" that include artists or writers, reshape our understanding of being co-creators?

Act:

1 Being God's co-creator isn't just work and responsibility; it also means creativity! Spend some time creating this week—perhaps go to your favourite place in nature and write a Psalm praising God, do some painting with your kids, or make a delicious treat to share with your neighbours.

2 Reflect on one consumption habit you have that's at odds with creating the world you want to see. What could you do differently? Some examples might be buying coffee in reusable cups, prioritising local produce, or walking with your kids to school instead of driving.

3 Create something you would usually purchase. Many of us are blessed with easy access to buy whatever we want or need, so it's great to try making some of these things instead, like a salad dressing that you'd usually buy, a gift for a friend, or planting some herbs and watching them grow.

Justice, Mercy And A Walk In The Park

By Cameron Semmens
From Give a Man a Fish

Micah left us a challenge:
Do justice.
Love mercy
Walk humbly with your God.

It got me thinking
'That's a good challenge. It's worthwhile.
I should do something about it.'
So I did.
I re-wrote it.

Be the figurehead of fairness.
and the heart of justice.
Be the face of grace.
and the patron of pardon.
Be the walking, talking travel guide.
for the travelling humbly with your God.

But then, having re-written it-
re-translating it for a new generation-
I realised to make it really powerful
I would have to keep translating it.
Not just into words.
But into actions.
So later that day

I signed a petition.
I forgave a friend.
And I walked in the park
with my son and prayed.



WEEK TWO:

You Are A Steward



To be a steward is to reflect God's image and care toward all of creation. It positions us rightly as caretakers of God's world rather than rulers over it ourselves.

Romans 1:20 'For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.' (NLT)

Psalms 65: 8-9, 12-13 'The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly . . .

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.'

Have you ever felt a sense of perspective and awe when looking at a mountain range, or the beauty and abundance of a rainforest or garden in spring? Have you been silenced by the power and mystery of a thunderstorm or ocean waves? Have you felt nourished by a healthy meal or the sun on your skin?

The Bible teaches us that God has chosen to communicate and witness to

humanity through creation. Through the beauty, power and mystery of creation, God is saying, 'see and praise me for my grandeur, abundance, power and provision.' Some Christians can be heard saying that while it's important to care for the planet, it's perhaps less vital work than sharing the gospel. However, when we read scriptures like Romans 1:20, we see the flaw in this simplistic dichotomy. Scripture asserts

that creation itself points people to Jesus. Therefore, when we degrade or neglect that creation, are we actually getting in the way of the gospel?

All of creation was designed to communicate and glorify God. The very fields and streams themselves were designed to sing praises with gladness to God. So when a river runs a toxic synthetic blue colour because of a denim factory upstream; or an abundant forest is felled to make space for more plantations; and the oceans teeming with exotic life are now on track to have more plastic than fish by 2050—we have to wonder, how well are they able to fulfil their purpose in their current states of degradation and overuse?

This is what we mean by stewardship: We are called to care for, and be sustained by, God's gift of creation in a way that reflects His purposes. We are to wisely steward the earth's resources to practice God's provision and care for humanity in a sustainable, respectful way and protect the earth's ability to provide for future generations.

You are made to be much more than a consumer. You are a valued steward. You're not here to take and extract. You're here to care for and tend to the garden and enjoy its fruits! Together, we're invited to be part of the choir of creation, alongside hills and meadows, singing with gladness for all that God has done for us.

Reflect:

Can caring for the environment be an act of worship?

What do you think God intended true stewardship of creation to look like? How are we going compared to this vision and what's your part to play?

Act:

1 Connect with God in His creation. David Attenborough once said, 'No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.' So go and experience God's gifts in creation however you enjoy, maybe a bushwalk, swim or picnic. Thank God for his character revealed to you in that place and join in praising Him alongside creation.

2 Bin audit. Though maybe not the most glamorous suggestion, it's so helpful to simply notice what you and your household are putting in the bin and ask yourself if there are things you could be recycling or composting instead—either by making use of what your council offers or by looking for a specialty recycler.

3 Repair something you own. Often those pieces of clothing that need hemming, patching or taking-in get pushed to the back of the wardrobe before eventually getting tossed. Use this as your prompt to go find that item that's been on your to-do list forever. Take it to the tailor or learn how to mend it yourself!

I Need To Pray For Bigger Things

By Rachel Huckel
From the book Making Whole

I think I am praying to a god
who doesn't exist.

By this I mean,
I am praying to a god
who does only logical things,
proportionate things,
things within the realm
of human capability.

I admit, my prayers
have become pocket-sized,
even though our God
can carry the whole world
in His back pocket.

I need to pray for miracles
like a farmer prays for rainfall—
each day looking upwards
to ask for transformation
in this land.

I need to ask for restoration
in unfathomable amounts.
Something like a generation
turning to Jesus.
Something like a war-torn country
knowing peace.
Something like plains of destruction
being made new.

There is an audacity
to these prayers,
yes,

But wouldn't it be even more audacious
to pray asking God
to move a blade of grass
when He has told us
He has the power
to move mountains?



WEEK THREE:

You Are An Advocate



Through advocacy, we actively participate in God's movement towards justice, working towards a world where everyone experiences dignity and respect, as God's image-bearers. Advocacy serves as a crucial tool in creating a better world by amplifying marginalized voices, addressing systemic injustice, and promoting a society where all can flourish as intended by God. Sometimes described as 'standing in the gap', or 'amplifying the voices of the marginalised' both these metaphors describe how advocacy is actually an act of grace that symbolises what God does for all of us - generously providing that which we can't provide for ourselves.

Psalms 82:3-4 'Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'

Isaiah 1:17 'Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.'

You are not a consumer, you're an advocate. Your voice, actions and influence can contribute to a better world for all, but the work of creating a better world is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to proceed with endurance and creativity—using our efforts and voices in multiple ways to bring about sustainable change.

Jesus advocated for those living in poverty, just as we're called to do today,

and when we read passages of scripture that highlight God's vision and heart for a just world, we're reminded of the need for patience. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated 'the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.'

As we look to Jesus we recognise that we're surrounded by the 'great cloud of witnesses,' spoken of in Hebrews 12:1; followers of Jesus who throughout history have had courage to speak truth to

power and interrupt systems of injustice. Our dearly held forebears in this faith can inspire us to continue in that calling. God equips us uniquely for our part in this work as opportunities arise, driven by Christ's love and empowered by the Spirit to remain steadfast. Having been given the gift of living in Australia at this point in history, we believe we're not mere spectators in the grand procession toward of societal change. Instead, we believe we have unique opportunities to participate by influencing decision-makers and power-holders. We also direct resources to where they might be most effectively used for good by raising our voice, and keeping it raised in whatever area God directs us. While we can achieve a lot as individuals, we believe that in advocacy, like in so much of life, we're better together. So, we're committed to harnessing the collective will and energy of many followers of Jesus so that our advocacy efforts might be multiplied and sustained.

Having been empowered by the Holy Spirit, who goes with us and is already at work in the world, we know we walk alongside the author of all creation, and are filled with courage to continually speak up, and out for what is right.

Reflect:

What characters in the Bible or history of the church model faithful advocacy? What can we learn from them?

There are many mentions in scripture regarding the need for advocacy on behalf of 'the fatherless and the widow;' this is reflective of those most on the margins of society at the time those scriptures were written. Who do you think are the equivalent people living on the margins of our society today?

Is advocacy a task requested of every follower of Jesus? Or only those gifted for the task? Reflect on the injustices you feel your heart stirred by - what might be stopping you from using your voice and taking your unique opportunities to advocate for vulnerable people?

Act:

1 Think about the places where your voice has power. If you haven't already, consider using your voice by [writing to your local MP](#) about issues close your heart, and close to God's!

2 Pray for the marginalised people caught in unethical supply chains. Pray they would be paid a living wage, that their health and wellbeing would be protected by safer working conditions, and that those trapped in forced or child labour would be released.

3 Contact your favourite fashion brand via our [Speak Out Tool](#) found on our Ethical Fashion Guide webpage, or try out another advocacy action from our Advocacy Bingo Table.



Advocacy Bingo

Here are some advocacy actions to get you started. Have a think about the first one you'd like to cross off!

Volunteer for an organisation or community group	Read a book	Talk with friends and family	Buy a product or service	Speak to someone with lived experience
Host an event to raise awareness	Share / promote on social media	Provide a submission to a legislation review	Pray for justice	Attend an event
Put a sign of support on your property or person	Vote for an aligned politician	Subscribe to receive emails	Boycott products or services	Write a letter to your local MP
Sign a petition	Enrol in training to learn more	Follow relevant organisation or advocate on social media	Attend a rally or march	Take a break or take care when you feel overwhelmed

WEEK FOUR:

You Are An Ambassador

Being an ambassador means representing Christ and His values in our words and actions to those around us.



1 Peter 2:12 'Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.'

2 Corinthians 5 'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.'

Matthew 5:14-16 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

You are not just a consumer, you're an ambassador. You represent your values and your faith in your everyday actions and decisions—those that are deliberate and those that are unintentional.

If you're outspoken about your faith, that puts you in a meaningful position. When people notice the decisions you make, and ways you interact with the world— they might say to themselves 'so this is how a Christian acts.' If our faith permeates our lives and worldview, then everyday choices and activities can be made sacred as we model the love of Jesus and seek to draw near to him in all things.

This might feel overwhelming, but it serves as a reminder that every choice we make holds significance. Whether it's how we react to being cut off in traffic or our choice to support small fair-trade businesses when buying Christmas presents, these actions reflect how Jesus is shaping our character. And Peter 2:12 reminds us that all of our choices have the potential to bring God glory.

Jesus rebuked greed, pride, and worry and calls us to follow suit; not out of obligation or guilt, but because of the gift of unconditional love! What a blessing! The Spirit empowers us to discern a path of freedom that leads to peace.

Being an ambassador looks like living confidently as well as ethically, revealing Jesus through our speech, actions and priorities. 'Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven' (Matthew 5:6).

Reflect:

Both 1st Peter and Matthew highlight that seeing another person's good deeds can point someone towards God. Have you found this to be true? Is there someone whose faith in action inspires you?

Why would a perfect God choose imperfect people as his ambassadors?

Act:

1 In order to represent and model our values, we need to know what they are! Spend some time reflecting on and praying about what your top values are, how your actions and habits align with your values and how you can reflect them in your daily actions.

2 You represent the brands you wear and use, but have you wondered whether the logos you're sporting are linked to brands that align with your values? Have a look at our [Ethical Fashion Guide](#) to see how some of your favourite brands perform in their treatment of workers and the environment.

3 A great way to be an ambassador is by inviting your community into a different way of doing things by sharing your own experience of doing the same. Try sharing with one friend or family you know about a change that you've made or a new reflection you've gained from this devotional.



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