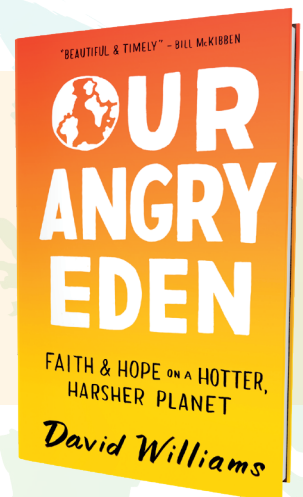


OUR ANGRY EDEN: FAITH AND HOPE ON A HOTTER, HARSHER PLANET
BY DAVID WILLIAMS

DISCUSSION GUIDE



PART I

1. Romanticizing creation comes easily to people of privilege, and particularly to “coddled moderns.” It takes a great deal to shake us out of complacency. In what ways have you been reminded of the power of creation—and your fragility in the face of it—during your life?
2. Significant weather events are now increasingly commonplace. How have you personally observed the impact of climate change? How do you respond to those who view the same events and describe them as “normal” or “just weather”?
3. While our angered Eden might be mollified, and significant efforts to change may reduce future harm, some significant change is likely inescapable. Does the acknowledgment that we can’t now escape some significant impacts of the climate crisis reduce your motivation to respond to it? Why or why not?

PART II

1. Our routines often distract us from larger realities. How does the climate crisis manifest itself in your day-to-day life? How frequently do you notice that things are different?
2. Think about all the resources you expend to maintain your work and personal life. The energy required to maintain the lifestyle of most Americans is incompatible with a meaningful response to global warming. What area of your life requires the most energy?
3. Change is hard, and deeply ingrained patterns of life aren’t easily shaken. Bright as we human beings are, we can struggle to adapt. Why? When is change hardest for you personally?
4. From endless inflation to ever-expanding home sizes to our huge, powerful SUVs, our culture interprets the spirit of abundance as meaning more, more, more. Is endless growth a desirable goal? Why or why not?



PART III

1. “Doomer” writing suggests all sorts of overwhelming, horrific outcomes to our current path. While some of it is provocative in a “buy my book” sort of way, many of those possible futures are all too real. Faced with the grim litany of terrible events that are well within the realm of possibility in a climate-compromised ecology, how can we avoid both denial and despair?
2. One of the core assumptions of this book is that the climate crisis is fundamentally a moral crisis. If this is true, the core ethics and virtues of Christian faith and discipleship should have a direct impact on how we respond. Do you agree or disagree with that assertion?
3. For millions of Christians, the idea of the Rapture—that believers will escape a great cosmic tribulation—is a significant part of their faith. How do theologies of escape shape your response to human suffering and the world we share?

PART IV

1. How can we retain a sense of rootedness and place in a culture that is in endless flux? Does connectedness to place deepen or limit your awareness of the shift in climate?
2. What are some of the ways people who consider themselves Christians justify their hostility to refugees and strangers in need?
3. Anxious hyperactivity and competitive busyness are spiritual blights that rise from our ever-on, overstressed society. How easy is it for you to slow down and do less? What scriptures might guide us to resist the pressure to be always doing something?
4. The desire for more, bigger, and newer things is strong in our consumer culture. In what ways do you feel that synthetic hunger personally? How do you find contentment and that place where you can say, “It is good; it is enough”?
5. Most evidence points to a vegetarian diet significantly reducing our impact on the planet. Is it a necessary part of a Christian response to climate change? Why or why not?
6. To what extent should our choices as citizens reflect our faith commitments? Can there be a separation of our personal moral commitments and our participation as citizens in a republic?
7. Must we get every single thing “right” in our response to climate change? Are you willing to show forbearance to others who may not be doing everything you think they should?
8. Are you willing to embrace actions taken to combat this crisis if they are taken by those who aren’t your “allies”? How does your view of the world shape how you perceive efforts by different groups to respond to this crisis?
9. Given the scale and the potential impacts of climate change, how hopeful do you feel? In what ways is a hopeful, faithful attitude helpful to human survival in times that test us?