



# REDISCOVERING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



## ACT 7 DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITY: LONGING FOR GOD'S NEW CREATION

### DEVOTIONAL READING

"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" (Revelation 21)

"[Moments of beauty] must be seen, as all beautiful things must be seen, as penultimate, not ultimate. We're meant to experience them with gladness, and then turn in gratitude to the One who made them." (James Bryan Smith)

"Life's pleasures - success at work, a good meal, a beautiful song, satisfying sex, a splendid aroma - are sacraments, yes sacraments, of the new Heavens and earth." (Scot McKnight)

### ACTIVITY

Keep a journal this week where you record experiences of pleasure or beauty - things you see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or experience. They might be brief moments that catch you off guard, like seeing a blooming flower on your walk to class or catching a glimpse of the sunrise over the Green Mountains. Or they might be more extended experiences of pleasure or joy with friends, like a good meal or a great conversation while on a hike. Write a brief journal entry that describes the moment of beauty you experienced.

Then spend some time reflecting on God's promise of new creation. How were your experiences of beauty sacramental - how did they point you beyond the here and now to God's promises of eternal joy in a new heavens and new earth? How does knowing that God's creation is good (and that his promise of a future new creation is even better!) bring meaning and significance to the present? How does knowing that God is not going to destroy this world affect your view of beauty? How does knowing that our future includes resurrection and a very much physical existence affect your understanding of the goodness of creation, work, and beauty today?

Write a prayer of thanksgiving and worship. Thank God for his promises, his gifts, and the meaning he gives to our lives through the beauty of this world.