

May 15, 2022

11. The Incomprehensible Magnitude of God's Creation — **Job 38:4–11, NRSV**

Lessons in Humility 101

Beauty has always been in my view of nature. I live in an area of the planet with the largest collection of freshwater bodies, not frozen. In Ohio, we get to see all four seasons completely. I am humbled to see where I stand in the scheme of life. Yet the diversity of ecology, the symphonic rhythms of the environment, even the multiplicity of creatures big and small—each contributes to the tapestry.

So many people complain about everything from A to Z. Not many seem content with their circumstances. They find an issue with any and everything. But this world doesn't belong to them, us, you, or me.

We are visitors here. Stewards take care of this place for the generations to come. I belong to the Creator. God has put the spark of life in me. Who am I to think I have a right to critique creation? So this passage rings as a justified rebuke, a loving chastisement, and a gentle redirection of any of my complaints.

- Why spend time arguing with God? Why not use that time to protect and defend all God's creation?

—Greg Battle, battlegregory1@gmail.com

If our contemporary economic leaders in charge of managing the use of soil, water, buried fossil fuels, and industrial systems were to answer God's questions to Job, they would have to say: "We were busy figuring out how to get the most profit from creation with the least ecological restraint." Market economies are proving to be woefully inadequate at the challenge of living within nature's limits when doing so actually limits a nation's economic vitality.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted the global food system, which is narrowly focused on a handful of grains out of all the edible crops God has given. Wheat production from Ukraine that used to go to Africa will be gone. Fertilizer costs are up 66 percent from a year ago—stifling the production of food crops.

Voices are calling for "temporary" cuts in US environmental controls to produce more fossil fuels to respond to Ukraine invasion-related energy shortages. This is pretty much the logical extension of justifying ever more costly (to the earth) fossil fuel extraction to sustain or increase a "quality of life" that ignores creation's boundaries.

- How can loving God enough to live a creatively humbled life with others become a godly witness?

—Greg Bowman, GMBowman33@gmail.com



Gregory Edwin Battle is a 66-year-old Black American elder and AV minister at Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, Ohio. He is a proud father, son, husband, brother, uncle, and neighbor. Greg's favorite Scripture is Micah 6:6–8 and his favorite saying is, "Everything I know is subject to revision, especially what I know to be the truth" (*Narcotics Anonymous* textbook). We do recover.



Greg Bowman and his wife, Ellen, live as active retirees in the northeastern Ohio community and congregation where they were reared. Previously living in other rural, suburban, and urban communities has humbled and challenged Greg as to God's ways of working in and beyond "the church." He is alert for God's transforming moves in his community as he keeps on gardening.

Resources for this session

The movie *Contagion* ("Contagion Ending Scene,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoKj5gDTsOc>

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

"How to Build a Pollinator Garden,"
<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/news/PollinatorGarden.html>

"18 Changes You Can Make to Help Endangered Species,"
<https://mom.com/momlife/changes-you-can-make-to-help-endangered-species>

Salt & Light Videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **Lana Miller** is the presenter for unit 2. The videos are now closed captioned, free, and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).