

God's Grace as Seen Through Renewable Resources

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### Abstract

Renewable resources are materials that can be repeatedly used and naturally replaced. Such resources include biomass, solar energy, fresh water, and oxygen. These materials were placed on Earth for humans to utilize as continuous fuel and food sources. Because sin entered the world, humans destroy the perfect gift God gave the earth. Since God is sovereign and provides for His creation, He created natural cycles that fix human mistakes and allow for new resources to regenerate on Earth. As God's creation was made in His image, it is evident that nature reflects His characteristics. All people sin and break the relationships we have with the Lord, but because Jesus provides for us we can continue to follow Him as He cares for us. God reveals Himself in this way because it reminds people that He is our provider, and it shifts their focus from the ground to our provider in the heavens.

### God's Grace as seen through Renewable Resources

The overwhelming grace of God is seen in every aspect of life. Not only does the environment of Earth have the characteristics to support life, but the Earth is equipped with cycles that replenish used resources. These natural cycles that operate so perfectly without man's involvement stump non-believing scientists. This extraordinary fine-tuning of nature gives evidence for an intelligent designer. "The earth has intrinsic value and reflects the character and beauty of the creator" (Ingram, 2013, para.7). Likewise, Psalm 19:1-2 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands..." (New International Version). God ordained that life be sustained by natural fuels and food sources. When exercised properly, renewable resources such as water, solar power, biomass, and oxygen may be used without diminishing their value or amount. The relationship between these resources and humans can be disrupted when humans do not allow the material ample time to replenish what was used. Similarly, humans sin and destroy their relationship with God. However, by God's grace, He can restore worldly and spiritual relationships. For example, God provided a resource to the Israelites when they did not trust Him. Manna was a bread that God created from dew off the desert ground. It served as a renewable resource they lived off of for forty years. This example of grace serves as a reminder of human mistakes covered by God's perfect design, as does every renewable resource.

Man's footprint on nature normally has a negative connotation. God promotes a perfect cycle and it is followed by the degradation of resources. The water cycle is no different. It begins with evaporation, the taking up of water vapor to the clouds. When the water vapor is transformed into a gaseous substance, it is purified and leaves behind any pollution that was once in

it. The water vapor builds up and forms rain clouds, which result in precipitation. Rain falls over land and sea and replenishes the water sources from which it came. Unfortunately, during the raindrop's process of falling back to Earth, it may pick up undesirable elements such as sulfurous and nitrogenous compounds that harm plant and animal life. These harmful substances are emitted into the atmosphere by the burning of coal and gasoline. Humans interfering with nature turned a perfect cycle into something damaging to life. When the raindrops accumulate these harmful substances, the rain takes on acidic properties (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). God is gracious- by this cycle, the acidic water will be purified again. Not only will the cycle yield abundant clean water, but God provided water as a necessity for life and a tool to help operate technologies man has today. People can harness the energy through hydroelectric power. Water is run over a generator that rotates a turbine to conduct electricity. If it wasn't for the water cycle to rotate water in its different forms, many man-made technologies could not function. Water, a renewable resource, also provides man with an inexpensive way to travel and transport goods. For example, the transportation of coal and iron ore would be economically impossible with the use of a plane, truck, or rail (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). The Lord who made the oceans in Genesis was purposeful of all that could be done with water. In the Bible, Jesus Christ functions as "The Living Water" and in John 4:13-14 Jesus says, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Although humans can ruin the immaculate process God put on Earth, the provider in heaven covers the Earth in His grace and provides a way for water to be replenished.

There is a renewable resource that is set apart from the others. If a resource is perpetual, then it never runs out and does not need to grow back after it is used. Solar energy is one of these special resources. The Sun powers other processes such as the water cycle and aids in the growth of plants. Not only does the Sun give life the ability to thrive, but it also can be used to power electricity through solar power. The Sun gives off powerful rays that are harnessed and transformed into electricity through solar panels. Those panels send the electric currents to a breaker box and outlets where electric appliances can be plugged in (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). According to a book published by NASA, “Nothing is more important to us on Earth than the Sun. Without the Sun's heat and light, the Earth would be a lifeless ball of ice-coated rock. The Sun warms our seas, stirs our atmosphere, generates our weather patterns, and gives energy to the growing green plants that provide the food and oxygen for life on Earth” (Gilman & Maran, 1981, p. 15). Similar to the sun supporting all life on earth, so does the Son. John 8:12 says, “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”” Darkness is an alternative way to define the absence of light. If Jesus is not present in the lives of His children, they are living in darkness. Because the Son and Sun are both fundamental necessities for life, they are needed in every circumstance people face.

Biomass is a very common and well known renewable resource that is used for fuel. All organic matter is considered biomass. Trees are frequently used for fuel by burning them to heat water and create steam. The pressure of the steam is used to rotate a turbine that runs a generator to produce electricity (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). Forests are common in many regions of the world and can be readily logged and used for fuel. “Forests cover 38 percent of the European

Union's land area" (Wu & Liao, 2015, para. 1). In fact, many European countries are promoting biomass as a renewable resource resulting in an increase of international markets for biomass fuel (Wu & Liao, 2015). "Currently, there are 159 million hectares of the forest in the European Union, which represents four percent of the world's forests" (Wu & Liao, 2015, para. 1). Trees are an available resource all over the world and make a good substitute for the finite amounts of fossil fuels that remain on the Earth's crust. With the expansion of renewable resources as a major fuel source, people cut down on resources such as oil and coal. In 2013 alone, the European Union aimed toward renewable energy and saved over 193 million tons of oil (Wu & Liao, 2015). There are numerous benefits to using the renewable energy over the alternative such as a fossil fuel. When a substance like coal is burned it releases a harmful sulfur substance into the Earth's atmosphere. However, burning biomass creates environmental problems as well (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). The majority, if not all, of the perfect cycles God operates on Earth are polluted by humans somehow. "Human greed is destroying God's creation" (Belknap, 2017, para. 5). Mankind logs forests to gain products like paper, fuel, and the tools to build infrastructure. However, the forests that are taken down are homes to countless species and services. When a plot of land is deforested, the animals that previously lived there have no shelter or food. The trees also stop contributing to oxygen production and transpiration (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). "Overexploitation of renewable resources today has a high cost on the welfare of future generations" (Hauser, 2014, para. 1). God is an intelligent designer, and human actions will not come close to ruining His plans for the Earth. There is something to be said about the creation that God so brilliantly made. To combat extinction, He designed the trees to drop seeds and grow new generations around them. Resorting to biomass is an available and relatively inexpensive way to

acquire fuel. However, it is imperative that the forests be replanted so that more trees can provide oxygen and homes to those around them. Scientists may believe that the cycle of growing, reproducing, and dying happens naturally. There is an evolutionary idea that trees have come to this day in age by methods of natural selection (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). How then, do scientists explain the intricate design of this reproduction. A maple tree, for example, is unique in its seeds are shaped as a helicopter wing. The seed does not release from the tree until its wings are dry, for the purpose that it will fly farther and the seed will separate and begin growing when deposited (Dandy Designs, 2006). If every type of tree existed today because of natural selection, then would they not all carry the same successful way to reproduce? Why doesn't every tree have helicopter shaped seeds? God is not only an intelligent provider but a creative one too. This is why there are numerous seed dispersion techniques and they are all unique to each plant. God provides ways for His creation to continue spreading life even after death. He thought of and delivered ways for humans to use materials on earth that would last us generations. He provided plants a way to reproduce using the power of the wind. He has never and will never let His children down and He will continue to provide for His creation.

The negative effects of fertilizers can be used to understand how society needs Jesus and His grace. The use of fertilizers on crops is desired by some farmers wanting to expand the yield of their labor. However, when fertilizers runoff into waterways, it can damage the ecosystems that reside in the groundwater. Fertilizer's purpose is to expedite the growing process of plants. The same chemicals that can aid in the production of large crops can cause an algal bloom in the water. Algae is a of plant that will react when a fertilizer is present, and it will begin to grow in vast numbers. Once the food source of the algae is depleted, it dies, and the next process takes

over. Bacteria in the water that used to exist in healthy numbers begin to grow rapidly in the presence of the dead algae. Like the algae, the bacteria dies off when the food source is drained. All of the growing, eating, and decaying is exhausting to the waterway's oxygen levels. The plants and animals in the body of water are participating in cellular respiration and too much of this activity can create an intolerable zone where no life can thrive (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). The destruction of the body of water is devastating to fish and organisms living in it because of the low oxygen amounts. Oxygen is necessary to sustain life, and the use of fertilizers can jeopardize that. People can learn from this process and stop the growing of suffocating substances before there is no oxygen left in the world. Jesus operates as oxygen in this toxic world. Fertilizers are the unrealistic ideas that society broadcasts as the way people should live. The algae and bacteria are people that feed off of those concepts but ultimately live unhappy lives. The media constantly shows interpretations of happiness that Jesus is not involved in. This is deceptive and can lead people on a search for life that may only lead them farther from it. Jesus is the oxygen in the world. All life depends on it and no life can exist on earth without it. Luckily, there is hope for the "dead lake" as the decayed matter can be removed and processed into biofuels. The lake can be re-oxygenated, so it can again support life (Miller & Spoolman, 2012). In meeting Jesus, and a new wave of life can spread among people.

A clear example that renewable resources are from the provider in heaven is found in Exodus, specifically the story of manna. Manna was a bread that was similar to a coriander seed and had a similar taste to a wafer made with honey. Halfway through the second month out of Egypt, the Israelites entered the Desert of Sin. They complained about their situation and began to fear of starvation. Moses had faith that God would provide. Exodus 16:4 states, "Then the



Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day." True to His word, the Lord covered the camp with dew that evening and in the morning the Israelites found flakes of manna on the ground of the desert. Because of human sin, some people gathered more than instructed and in the morning the bread was covered with maggots. This example in the Bible foreshadows many human actions. God extends grace to his children despite their wrongdoings. The manna continued to form in the desert even though the Israelites did not trust God. "Thus both were the free, unsolicited gift of heaven, prompted by the sight of man's helplessness and man's misery" (Moore, 2011, para. 2). God provided manna for the Israelites for forty years. In the same way, when God created renewable resources, He was making a way for life to be sustained for forty million years. Manna, in this sense, is a renewable resource. A material that God made for humans to use indefinitely.

The creator of the universe would not make a world that would be degrading to life. If people lived as if our supplies on Earth were numbered, our planet would be drenched in chaos. God gave what He knew we would need so He made resources that did not need managing or the creation of new ones. This is where renewable resources come in for the benefit of all living things. God created materials that can be replenished and restored to their natural state. These extraordinary cycles power each other and extend into everything that exists today. Since some people know these cycles are crucial for life on Earth, the claims of evolution fall apart. These cycles could not have evolved- they would not have functioned except as a whole. Their parts would have been useless and the Earth would not have been able to survive. How did a collision of matter in space create life that breathes out a compound that other living organisms (plants) take in and use? How does a collision loop the cycle back to the same plants that need animals'

carbon dioxide to produce oxygen, the compound animals breathe? How does a collision not only create water, a necessity for all life, but a cycle in which it can be purified and spread over the earth? Scientists may make theories about how organisms develop, however, they can not ignore the fact that intelligence is required behind the cycles that thrive on Earth. God is a Father, who provides for His children. In the Garden of Eden, the Lord not only provided for Adam and Eve but set a pace for all mankind by developing naturally operating cycles to sustain life.

The world is broken because of human sin, however, the Lord has made it evident that He is gracious toward His creation. Mankind may continue to misuse the resources God placed on Earth but the planet is equipped with cycles to replenish and cover human mistakes. When Christ returns He will restore how He intended His creation to be. Until that day, humanity will continue to use the perfect gift God gave our planet. Ezra 9:8 says, "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage."

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