

# Facing the Future with Faith

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I remember several years ago when my kids convinced me to green up my life. They were learning about recycling in school and regularly chastising me that I didn't recycle more. I had always been a bit of a "nature girl" and believed wholeheartedly in conservation of wildlife habitats. However, I needed to take my lifestyle to the next level, to be more deliberate in my efforts to live sustainably. That was the beginning of my green journey. I haven't looked back since, though learning new habits never seems to get any easier!

Have you been thinking of making some green changes in your life? You won't be alone. People are beginning to wake up to the reality of a changing climate. A study done in September by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication found that 70 percent of Americans think that global warming is happening, up from 57 percent in 2010. Fifty-four percent believe that humans have largely caused the changes in our climate, an increase of eight points from March 2012. Four in ten people say that they believe global warming is already harming people and their way of life (see the study at [environment.yale.edu/climate/about](http://environment.yale.edu/climate/about)).

Rather than just worrying about our uncertain future, some individuals are finding ways to conserve resources now. Seeking sustainable solutions is the harder path—it's much easier to be cynical. But I believe I'm called by God to witness to hope—hope that we are a redeemed people, and hope that God is redeeming his creation. Hope is catching! So here are some hopeful actions I'll be working on in 2013.

**ACTION: Waste less food.** I am going to plan meals and snacks for the week to cut down on the food I have to throw out. Americans wasted 34 million tons of food in 2010. That's not just poor stewardship, but it's bad for our public health, according to the EPA. It's also an affront to the many, many hungry people in the world.

So I'll plan to shop a few times during the week for perishables, keeping frozen veggies and fruits on hand. I'll keep a bag in the freezer for chicken bones, veggie tops, and peelings—once it's full, I can use it to make a simple stock I can freeze for soups. I'll keep composting outside in small batches. Along with all this, I'll ask God to give me a deep dependence on him as the source of everything, including the food on my plate.

**ACTION: Get control of my stuff.** I want to learn to re-use and repurpose more of the things I already own and give away my extras. It would be great if everything in my house had a use, a reason for being there. Clutter is not a sin, but in my life, I spend an inordinate amount of time sifting through stuff, feeling stressed. Getting control will be a stretch for me. I'm not naturally organized or disciplined. But I can do better. And one thing I've noticed is that discipline in one area can often "leak" into other areas of my life. Who knows—maybe I'll lose those ten pounds!

**ACTION: Wean myself from car-dependence as much as I can.** Combustion engines create most of the fossil fuel emissions that are warming the planet. Can I plan my trips so biking or walking is a possibility? Plenty of people around my little town walk and ride their bikes in all kinds of weather, usually because that's all the transportation they have. Even if the weather is bad and I want to drive my car, I can still carpool, consolidate my errands, and drive the speed limit, all of which help limit emissions.

There's a lot of talk around the topic of climate change right now. I hope 2013 is a year when we stop talking and start doing the things we need to do to sustain life on earth. We can't all do the same things—some of us might not be able to do much at all. But together we can form a patchwork quilt of faithful lives that tell God's story. ■

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