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When I was in my early twenties, I made it my goal to travel to all seven continents. My original goal was to do it before I turned thirty. I made it to four of the seven continents and figured I'd have time to see the last three. I'm not in as much of a hurry as I was in my twenties. One of the continents I haven't hit yet is Australia. Now I wish that I had gone there earlier. Even if I start planning my trip now, there is very little chance I will be able to see the Great Barrier Reef. Of course, the reef will physically still be there. What will be missing are all of the coral and all the other living things dependent on the coral. Think about this. No one will be able to see the Great Barrier Reef. Gone and stolen from future generations, another victim of the ever encroaching issue of climate change.

Coral live in a delicate balance in their ecosystems. The beautiful colors of the coral come from algae that live symbiotically with the coral. This symbiosis provides the coral the nutrients it needs, and in turn, the coral gives the algae protection and other nutrients. These algae have a very small window of temperature tolerance. When the waters get too warm, the algae dies off, and the coral is left white and dying. This process is called bleaching. Bleaching events have happened in the past but because other areas of reefs did not suffer from bleaching, the reefs were able to recover. The surviving corals would spawn and spread until the whole of the reef was covered in a living rainbow again. But this chance for recovery probably won't happen now.

Previously the worst bleaching recorded in the Great Barrier Reef still left over 40% of the coral alive. Add to this the fact that bleaching has never been recorded in back to back years. In 2016 the worst bleaching ever seen had occurred. Less than 10% of the coral survived. And now in 2017, another bleaching event has begun. No recovery time. Based on all the information at hand, the only way to save the coral is to reverse the global warming effect. Only if we can cool off, or at least stop the

heating of our oceans, will we be able to save the coral. This isn't just happening in the Great Barrier Reef; it is happening worldwide. Time and again I hear the stories of my friends and colleagues that travel to see these places. Their stories are of dead areas with few fish. They went to see an ecological beauty and instead witnessed an ecological nightmare.

This doesn't just stop at the coral. The coral is a cornerstone species in massive ecosystems throughout the world. Their loss will have an impact felt everywhere. Reefs make up less than 1% of the Earth's undersea area but house about 25% of the Earth's marine life. From there you can just imagine what this will do to the world's fishing industries. Even tourism industries will take an impact as travelers are less inclined to see a dead, slime covered, and empty reef. As the fisheries and tourism economies crash, a downward economic ripple will move over the world.

This issue is coming to a head for our planet. We no longer are talking about fixing these problems within a few generations, but now. Right now is when we can fix things and when we have to fix the issues of climate change. Luckily we have the technologies to stop this. What we need to do is to push for implementation. Push our legislators for well thought out energy plans that incorporate zero emission options. Push our companies and corporations to utilize zero emission processes by choosing products made from zero emission methods. Walk or bike short distances instead of driving. Install energy saving measures in our homes.

Previous generations had the excuse of ignorance. These problems came from new technologies the planet had never encountered before. Our generation now knows what the problem is and has the methods to fix it. If we don't, then the next generations will be living in a drab, mediocre world struggling to survive. Together we have to fix things, and we have to start now, not soon, now.