



Living With a Loose Grip August 10, 2021

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this offering will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

Our bi-monthly resources are sent the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month; you can access an archive of past resources by logging into your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via video conferencing. If you are new to video conferencing, Zoom tutorials are available on our YouTube page – [Click here to access.](#)

This resource explores the draw to simplicity: how to live life happy, with little. Please send this link to your group in advance of meeting and ask them to read it over and pick out three or four of the forty life lessons that each person found particularly challenging or compelling: <https://www.theminimalists.com/40lessons/>

While we hope that this twice-monthly resource will inspire and sustain your community, now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs. Today's resource speaks to themes which touch on spirituality, consumerism, and justice which are highlighted in varying ways in our "JustFaith" and "Engaging Spirituality" series for small groups. For more information, click [here](#); scroll down to the square labeled "JustFaith Series" or "Spirituality" and click on any of the options.

Last but not least, all of our work is a collaboration with people like you. When you donate, your gift helps us sustain and equip individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out.](#) Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

With gratitude,
The JustFaith Ministries Staff



Welcome, Reflection, and Prayer (20 minutes)

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around a short reflection before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds

Story for Reflection

Reader 1: The Contented Fisherman

The industrialist was horrified to find the fisherman lying beside his boat, smoking a pipe.

“Why aren't you out fishing?” said the industrialist.

“Because I have caught enough fish for the day.”

“Why don't you catch some more?”

“What would I do with it?”

“Earn more money. Then you could have a motor fixed to your boat and go into deeper waters and catch more fish. This would bring you money to buy nylon nets, so more fish, more money. Soon you would have enough to buy two boats... even a fleet of boats. Then you could be rich like me.”

“What would I do then?”

“Then you could really enjoy life.”

“What do you think I am doing now?”

From Anthony de Mello's [Song of the Bird](https://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/songofbird.pdf), found at <https://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/songofbird.pdf>

Opening Prayer

Reader 2: Gracious God, we give thanks for the gift of life

Reader 1: A gift freely given

Reader 2: A gift given in love



Reader 1: The universe you have created is a banquet of gifts
Reader 2: It is a banquet of generosity
Reader 1: The sun's light and warmth is given to all
Reader 2: The earth yields its bounty without reservation.
Reader 1: This world reflects the Creator who does not hoard
Reader 2: Our God's very essence is expressed in self-giveaway.
Reader 1: And so, too, for us.
Reader 2: We are most human when we share, even with abandon.
Reader 1: We are most alive when we are free of attachment.
Reader 2: We can walk in the footsteps of Jesus when we are given to give away.
Reader 1: So be it then. Amen.

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

Ask these open-ended questions. If you are by yourself, journal about them.

Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?

Reflection (30 minutes or so)

Participants should have read this compilation of "Life Lessons" and chosen three or four they found challenging or compelling: <https://www.theminimalists.com/40lessons/>

Preface your discussion in these or similar words:

While the authors of the article we are considering today do not write from a deliberately religious perspective, their observations provocatively mirror a piece of the Gospel dedicated to the best understanding of possessions. Today's conversation is intended to provide each of us a chance to share where we found inspiration and to share some piece of ourselves that resonates with the author's words.

Then, invite 3- to 5-minute responses (depending on the size of your group) from each member to the questions:

**Which of the “life lessons” did you choose and why?
How were you inspired, intrigued, or troubled?**

Announcements (10 minutes-ish)

- Remind participants that today's conversation offered only a brief insight into a huge topic. If they would like to take a deeper dive into this subject matter, they should consider the JustFaith or Engaging Spirituality program.
- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff in order to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. To support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- JustFaith Ministries hosts a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice.” Join us on Thursday, August 19, 7:00 EDT for a presentation by JustFaith founder, Jack Jezreel, entitled “A Dynamic Church for a Dynamic Mission,” discussing a new template for church life. Visit the [JustFaith Ministries Facebook page](#) for more information on times and topics. You can also register [here](#).
- Are there any opportunities for action or advocacy happening in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways to support the work of local groups working for justice.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)

Say: Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

Pause for 30 seconds.

Closing Reflection

Reader Two: The Holy Rabbi

In the last century, a tourist from the States visited the famous Polish rabbi, Hofetz Chaim. He was astonished to see that the rabbi's home was only a simple room filled with books. The only furniture was a table and a bench.

“Rabbi, where is your furniture?” asked the tourist.

“Where is yours?” said the Rabbi.

“Mine? But I’m passing through. I’m only a visitor here.”

“So am I.”

From Anthony de Mello’s [Song of the Bird](https://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/songofbird.pdf), found at <https://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/songofbird.pdf>

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

We are disciples on a journey.

We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.

We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.

If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, a more just and peaceful world. Amen.