

Things to Let go of in Lent by Rev. Magrey deVega - Senior Pastor, Hyde Park United Methodist

1. Give up the need to be right all the time.

Business author Patrick Lencioni said, “People don’t need to feel like they are right, as much as they need to feel like they’ve been heard.” Yes, claim your voice, assert your convictions, and engage the issues that matter to you. But once you’ve been heard, consider the possibility that you might have something to learn from those who disagree with you. That’s often how we learn our most important lessons in life. ([James 1:19](#))

2. Give up your reluctance to ask for help.

It is true that giving up something for Lent requires discipline, will, and self-mastery. But it also requires the recognition that we cannot always be self-sufficient. You are not superhuman. You do not have inexhaustible reserves. Turn to loved ones for support, seek the wise counsel of others, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. ([Psalm 69](#))

3. Give up your fear of failure.

Mother Theresa said, “God does not call us to be successful; God calls us to be faithful.” You may sometimes gauge your self-worth by what you have achieved and how you have succeeded. You might subconsciously depend on the affirmation of others to feel good about yourself. But your worth does not equal your work, nor are you defined by your failures. ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#))

4. Give up comparing yourself to others.

Forget the Joneses. They are not worth keeping up with. Find contentment in what you have, and in who God has created you to be. You do not need the envious admiration of others. You need not be defined by what you do not have. And you don’t have to evaluate your life in comparison to others. It’s not worth it. ([James 4:2-3](#))

5. Give up the need to have things all figured out.

Dance with your doubts. Embrace mystery. Accept that you do not and cannot know it all. Recognize that some of the greatest things in life are those which cannot be explained or fully understood. Things like God’s love for you, and how God is with you even when you don’t believe it. ([Romans 11:33-36](#))

6. Give up your fears of the future.

I get it. These are frightening times for many people. There is great nervousness about the way things are in the world. And I would guess that you are dealing with fears yourself. We all have our fears, but no one has to be defined by them. God is a God of hope. ([Matthew 6:33-34](#))

7. Give up anesthetizing yourself to pain and suffering.

The long shadow of suffering lingers in many forms: loneliness, grief, abandonment, betrayal. None of us are immune from them, and our instinct is to numb ourselves from the pain, sometimes in self-destructive ways: addictions, accumulating possessions and escapist pleasures, and cocooning ourselves from the rest of the world. These might anesthetize us in the short term, but they prevent us from allowing that pain to help us to stretch, grow, and trust in God. ([Romans 5:3-5](#))

8. Give up the need to be in control.

This one is at the heart of the season of Lent. It is a reminder that we ultimately are not in control of what happens to us. We cannot control others, and we can hardly claim to have full control of ourselves and our future. Let the Covenant Prayer of Wesley be your guide, to remind you that you are not your own; you belong to God. ([Matthew 16:24-25](#))

9. Give up the need to make everyone happy.

It's not like you can, anyway. You may have a knack for understanding what others want from you, but you must also claim your own convictions and understand your limitations. Your job is not to be all things to all people and please everyone you know. God calls you to live a life of integrity, and God, after all, is the only one you need to please. ([Galatians 1:10](#))

10. Give up all the non-essential noise in your life.

This may be the toughest one of all to give up, but it may be the key to a deeply moving Lenten season for you. Your life is inundated by competing voices and blaring noises from the culture around you. Pay attention to your breath. Take walks. Drive without the radio on. Set the cell phone down when you're at the family table. Watch less television, and look people in the eye when you talk to them. Most of all, pray to God, "Silence all voices but your own." Turn down the volume of your life, and connect to a God who knows you better than you know yourself. ([Psalm 46:10](#))

Blessings to you on your Lenten journey!