



# Sermon Illustration 6

**Title:** Holding Too Tightly

**Key Text:** John 10:10, NRSV

## Did you ever play the egg-toss game when you were a child?

A standby of outdoor childhood parties, the game starts easily enough with gentle, back-and-forth tosses of a fragile egg.

With every successful toss, however, each person takes another step back – and tries again. Inevitably, a toss falls short or someone catches the egg – but clutches it too tightly, leaving nothing but a gooey mess.

It may have been awhile since we tried to catch an egg without crushing it, but most of us know what it is like as adults to hold too tightly to other things – such as the resources God gives us.

The fear of loss tends to drive our perspective. We fear there is only so much to go around; therefore, we think we need to hold tightly to all we have. We hold it close, thinking that the more we have, the happier we will become. However, God calls us to a different lifestyle – one marked by faith in our abundant God to provide for our needs.

The Psalmist tells us that God owns “the cattle on a thousand hills” (Psalm 50:10). He paints a word picture of God’s abundant ability to provide all things for those who trust in God. God never lacks

anything to provide for God’s people.

Unfortunately, we struggle to live in that truth. We allow what we can see to control our lives. We fall into a scarcity mindset of fear. Our first reaction to a need is to pull back, tuck in and grip tighter to all that God has given us.

It is as if we are afraid God’s abundance will run out. However, the God of abundance longs to give us a life that God defines as abundant, one filled to overflowing. Jesus tells us why he came to earth in the first place in John 10:10, NRSV. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

How tightly are you clutching what God has given you, no matter how small or how large it may be? Let us not hold God’s generous gifts so tightly, crushing them like the tossed egg and keeping them from passing through us to others. God is infinite, and so are God’s resources.

When we firmly fix our faith on God, we will never lack what we need. God will never fail to provide for God’s children who are busy completing God’s mission.

Trusting in this truth allows us to grow our faith in such a way that we become gentle in spirit, open-handed and ready to receive – not clutching too tightly, but passing along to others in need whatever God may send our way.





- Choose a way your local church takes a risk in serving your community. Encourage your congregation to give generously and serve courageously to support it.
- Connect this illustration with God's global interests by sharing a way your church's local giving multiplies through connectional giving with The United Methodist Church.

1. **The Black College Fund** supports United Methodism's historically black colleges and universities. These schools create vibrant spiritual environments that encourage pride and self-esteem. Through United Methodist Church giving, we support the important work of 11 schools committed to academic excellence based on the Christian perspective of community service and social responsibility. Students interact with academic staffs that serve as strong cultural and spiritual mentors.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-black-college-fund>

2. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." The **World Communion Sunday** offering makes education and vocational impact possible for gifted and qualified students from around the globe, allowing them to become the world-changers God created them to be. The people of The United Methodist Church believe God created and gifted all of God's children to build the kingdom Jesus ushered in. Together, our giving provides more opportunities for many deserving students to have the resources they need to succeed. Our giving on World Communion Sunday, enables the most powerful tool to change the world—education.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/world-communion-sunday>

3. The **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund** enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations. Together, we work in partnership with ecumenical organizations to bear witness to a common Christian faith. This fund provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these organizations.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-interdenominational-cooperation-fund>

4. The **General Administration Fund** provides for the expenses of the sessions of the General Conference, the Judicial Council, special commissions and committees constituted by the General Conference and other administrative agencies and activities recommended for inclusion in the budget by the General Council on Finance and Administration and approved by the General Conference. It is not quite as glamorous as the more visible work The United Methodist Church does such as eradicating malaria, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ or raising up new leaders to develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing our world today. Guided by God's Spirit, the General Administration Fund is the oil that lubricates the gears moving the church's work forward to influence hearts and lives. Without it, the life-giving work of The United Methodist Church simply would not be possible.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-general-administration-fund>

