

PASSIONIST  
EARTH & SPIRIT CENTER

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## DISCUSSION COURSE

# VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

**This eight-session course addresses the distractions of modern society which keep us from caring for ourselves, our relationships, and our environment.**



In a society that enjoys such unprecedented prosperity and abundance, why is there so much personal unhappiness and discontent? Why is there so much poverty and hunger? Why in a finite world do we continue to act as if there are no limits to growth, while polluting our air, water and soil and using Earth's resources faster than the natural systems can be replenished? Simplicity is a movement, a practice, and for many, a purposeful way of living in a complex consumptive society. To simply is to reduce to essentials, to streamline and to clarify. Simplicity results in a life that is outwardly simple and inwardly rich.

### PURPOSE:

- To understand the meaning of voluntary simplicity;
- To explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the Earth;
- To consider the connection between our lifestyle choices and the condition of the Earth.

The only fee associated with the course is \$25, which covers the cost of the book of readings. The course is being offered by the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center, located in the barn and on the land behind the Passionist Monastery at 1920 Newburg Road in Louisville, KY.

For more information about hosting or participating in this discussion course or other transformative learning opportunities, contact the Earth & Spirit Center by phone at 502.452.2749, or email: [earthandspirit@passionist.org](mailto:earthandspirit@passionist.org), or visit our website: [www.earthandspiritcenter.org](http://www.earthandspiritcenter.org).

### TOPICS COVERED:

**The Meaning of Simplicity:** The concept of simplicity, as a religious practice or philosophy of life, has a long history. Inner simplicity and outer simplicity are both involved. What are some common misconceptions about a simple life?

**Living More with Less:** Accumulating material possessions is part of the American Dream. For some, the dream has become a nightmare. When do material possessions add meaning to our lives and when do they detract?

**Your Money or Your Life:** A growing number of people wish to resolve the conflict between the desire to make and spend money and the desire for a simple life. Why is that so difficult in our culture?

**Do You Have the Time?** In modern society, our minds are focused on the "busyness" of the day, our current problems, and our future challenges. Are there alternatives to the fast pace of mainstream culture?

**How Much is Enough:** As a society, we engage in patterns of material consumption that are damaging the environment. How much do we *really* need?

**Swimming Against the Tide:** Our country's current guiding economic principles push growth, consumption, and technological advance as inextricable and desirable goals. In our efforts to live simply, we may feel like we are swimming against the tide.

**The Practice of Simplicity:** There are countless practical benefits in moving toward simplicity. What steps can be taken to move toward a life *simple in means, rich in ends*?

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SPONSORS COURSES DESIGNED BY THE NORTHWEST EARTH INSTITUTE  
MOTIVATING INDIVIDUALS TO EXAMINE AND TRANSFORM PERSONAL VALUES AND HABITS,  
TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EARTH, AND TO ACT ON THAT COMMITMENT.