

Leaky Buckets

When I was a little girl, I watched “Captain Kangaroo” on TV. His friend Mr. Green Jeans wore green overalls, to which he would pin little pieces of paper like Post-It Notes (long before they were invented). I remember him pulling off each square and reading it out loud to remind him of something he needed to do. At the time, I thought it was a silly thing for a grown-up to do.



I get it now.

The older I get, the more memory assistance I need. I don't know, really, that it's so much about growing older, but rather about the overwhelming glut of information that cascades over me every day, which leads to a long list of things to do and things to remember that probably wouldn't have existed in previous generations. But it's not just me, and it's not just about remembering to pick up the dry cleaning.

We are like leaky buckets, and we leak stuff. *Important* stuff. We leak the reasons why we should eat healthy foods God made instead of Twinkies and Diet Coke. When our children are small, we leak the perspective that our job is to lead them to their own personal relationship with their heavenly Father and to prepare them for life as adults. We leak the “lightbulb moments” of supernatural enlightenment and illumination that the Holy Spirit gives us, and they fade into forgetfulness. We leak the conviction that a loving God is in control, so we freak out when things go wrong. We leak the memories of the many little and big things that the Lord does to show us that He loves us, personally and intimately.

God knows that fallen people in a fallen world would leak, and He understands how very weak we are. Leaky, weaky people we are indeed! That's why He lovingly instructed His people in the Old Testament to keep talking about the things He did for them, to keep teaching their children so they would teach *their* children the things He did for them. That's why in Joshua 4 He told them to build an altar of remembrance by picking up 12 big rocks from the middle of the Jordan River when they crossed into the Promised Land. Then, when their children asked, “What's up with these rocks?” they would remember together God's faithfulness and goodness.

We need to do something physical to help us leaky vessels remember. Some people have planted a tree as their “altar of remembrance.” Others have created monuments; at our previous church, one family had a large well built of rocks, into which was planted a tree with a plaque commemorating the life of a child who had died. It was right in the middle of a gathering area so people would ask, “Why is that there?” and remember the one who had died.

At the very least, recording in a journal helps us remember the things that leak. Two of my most

valued possessions are my “God sightings” journal containing stories of when He has shown up in my life as well as the lives of other people, that I didn’t want to forget. And my “wisdom journal,” a collection of sayings and passages from other people that I re-read from time to time to refill my leaky bucket with the good stuff that had leaked out.

We leak the truth of God’s word too, which is why it’s so important to keep refilling our bucket from the well daily. I love that Peter says it’s good to be reminded of the things we already know but aren’t “on the surface”: “Therefore, I intend to remind you constantly of these things even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have” (2 Pet. 1:12).

Look, we leak—that’s a fact of life. It is wise to live in intentional awareness of that unfortunate truth and keep getting our buckets refilled.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/leaky_buckets on Jan. 31, 2012