

A Lesson From the Clutter in My Purse

I carry the basic essentials of life in my purse. Aspirin, lipstick, hand lotion, credit cards ...you name it, it's in there. If it's not, it will be. I seem to have some sort of purse reflex. I can stuff things in there without even knowing it.

On the positive side, I found a five-dollar bill in a sneaky secret pocket last week. Even better, I found a candy bar. Now that was interesting! It was squished—almost liquefied—but it was still inside the wrapper.

Unfortunately, there are other encounters now and then that aren't exactly positive purse experiences. One day, for example, I was returning an item to the store and had to do an emergency receipt search at the customer service counter.

My purse stuff started piling up. I pulled out five loose Life Savers, an old Valentine card, sunscreen, one mitten, six kids-meal toys (including a mini tractor with only one wheel), three keys of unknown lock origin and a dead cricket. But no receipt.

There were 12 tissues (none I would actually use), last year's Christmas list, a ticket stub to the junior high spring concert and the backs from four adhesive name tags.

I also found two gummy worms stuck in a hairbrush, a Denny's coupon that expired and a plastic Easter egg. I was pretty sure the egg was older than the coupon. I shook it to see if it rattled. It did. I think I made it angry.

There was also enough purse fuzz in there to stuff a sofa pillow. How embarrassing! Inside the purse fuzz, something green and squishy caught my eye—and it frightened me. I gained

courage by tossing the dead cricket and drinking the candy bar.

Just before I dove into the fuzz, I got to the heart of my purse: my mini Bible. It had all my family pictures tucked inside. That's when I realized everything important in life could be found in my purse.

OK, if you want to get technical, I didn't exactly find Jesus in my handbag. But I could pull out the pictures of my husband and children and see reminders of His gifts to me.

And His Word was there. Granted, it smelled a little like Juicy Fruit, but it was a great reminder that there's really no place I can go—not one fuzz-covered place—where I won't find the Lord's presence.

Psalm 139:7-10 confirms this truth: "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast" (NIV).

There's no place I can go without Him—not the heavens, not the depths, not the far side of the sea. I could climb all the way inside my purse, and He would still find me.

And there's nothing He doesn't know about me. The opening verses of Psalm 139 remind me that He knows when I'm sitting or when I'm standing and that He knows my every action, word and thought. He knows my thoughts even before I think them. He knows not only the contents of my purse but also the contents of my heart, and He still loves me, guides me and holds me fast.

It's amazing to me that my heavenly Father thinks about me—and that He thinks of me so often! "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I

should count them, they would be more in number than the sand” (v. 17).

God is thinking loving thoughts of you too. If He had a wallet, it would not only be clean (unlike my purse), it would also contain your picture, tucked in a special place reserved for those He loves.

I’m rejoicing in His love—even though I never found the receipt.

For the record, I think that green squishy thing used to be a jelly bean. I guess we’ll never know. One of the kids ate it.

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1-3).

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