

When Your 'Peanut' Can Tips, Do Peanuts Spill Out?

Peanuts. It is amazing that I still love them after all the drama they caused me as a very young boy. My mom kept a very large can of them in the cabinet. She kept a container the size of a tub of coffee, or an old "Crisco" can shut up tight with a plastic lid.

It is funny how certain events that happened even when we were very young are forever burned into our memories. This is one such incident. One night I was watching television and had one of those "I need a snack" thoughts. I quietly went into the kitchen and climbed up in a chair where I could just reach the elusive peanut can.

I got it down. It was very heavy ... a good sign ... it meant LOTS of peanuts to enjoy as I watched *Lassie*. I carried the can into the room with the television and proceeded to climb up into my mom's *favorite* overstuffed chair.

By all outward appearances, this was shaping up to be a great night. When I tried to get the lid off of the peanut can I noticed that it was very tight. I turned the can slightly on its side to get better leverage. POP ... the lid came off. *Instant tragedy!* Used fried chicken oil spilled all over and worse, all over my mom's special chair. My mom had used an empty peanut can to save her fried chicken oil to use again.

And then, an even worse situation began to unfold. I heard my mom coming down the hall calling my name (I think I knew how Adam felt). Two random thoughts went through my tiny brain. First, WHY is there nasty used chicken oil in the peanut can? The label says *peanuts*. There is even a picture of peanuts on the outside. Why does the inside contain something different than what is displayed on the outside?

The second thought that shot through my mind was ... *run Leonard, RUN!* And I did. I ran right to the front door where I quickly noticed that it was dark outside. I could face the darkness or face my mom. In looking back, the darkness may have been a better choice.

Jesus said, "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (See Matt. 12:34). And then later He declares to the very religious people of His day that they were "like whitewashed tombs which on the *outside* appear beautiful, but *inside* are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (See Matt. 23:27).

Wow! That had to sting. They took pride in their religious perfection, but Jesus destroyed that theory. "You can't judge a book by its cover" took on a whole new meaning.

Not only did Jesus say that they were full of rotten, stinking bones, but also you could tell what was in their hearts when they opened their mouths. In other words, when the "lid" popped off, when they were jostled, when the "peanut can" tipped over, what was really on the inside came out. The outside could be made to look good for people to see. But if you upset them, what was really on the inside was sure to spill out.

If you are "jostled" in life, what pours out? When your "peanut" can is tipped over, do peanuts spill out? Be honest with yourself. What are you full of? To a great degree, that is determined by what you are putting *into* your life. If you are putting garbage into your life (what you watch, what you read, what you listen to) and then "life" tips you over, chances are that garbage will be dumped out.

This week in your Christ-walk journey, make it a daily event to do some self-examination. Don't be nearly as worried about what people see on the outside, as you are about what God sees on the inside. If you tip a jar over that is full of muddy

water, honey will *not* spill out. Do not despair though!

Here's the beauty of being a child of the King of Kings. He can turn your garbage, your muddy water, into pure honey or sweet pure water. But be honest with Him. Be sincere. Hand Him the junk. Get rid of the garbage. Ask Him to change you. He will give you back grace and mercy. Then what is inside will match the outside.

Prayer Power for the Week of September 14, 2015

This week ask God to help you examine what you are putting into your life and purge all that is not godly out. Empty yourself of what is not of God (1 John 2:16) and fill your life with what is (Phil 4:8-9). Ask Him to renew your mind by the Word so that it propels you into godly behavior patterns that exhibit a pure heart. Continue to pray that God would send laborers into His harvest fields, bring revival to our churches around the world, expand His kingdom and hasten the Lord's return. Continue to pray that President Obama and those working with him would seek God for solutions to the crises we are currently facing. Remember to lift up Israel, the persecuted church, and those serving in the military (1 John 2:16, Phil. 4:8-9; Matt. 12:34-35).