

What's in Your Spiritual Pocketbook?

By: Pamela Hoade

I'm thrilled to be talking to you today about pocketbooks because next to shoes, they are some of my favorite things.

I even have a book about pocketbooks, "Mad about Bags." I'd love to read a little bit...

Any diehard handbag lover knows only too well the pleasure of purchasing a gorgeous, gleaming handbag. The mere fact that the two of you are joined in this happy union gives you instant, calorie-free joy. Moreover, you don't need to worry about trying it on with fingers and toes crossed in the vain hope that it will fit you. Handbags never let you down! Whether your style is tote or clutch, vintage or cutting edge, chain store or Chanel, your stunning new handbag will be admired and envied long before anyone notices the size of your thighs or the bad hair day you may be experiencing. What better fashion accessory could a woman want?

I even searched the Bible to see what it might say about pocketbooks and was surprised to find scripture in...

Luke 22:35 (New International Version)

³⁵Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?"

"Nothing," they answered.

Of course Jesus was talking to a bunch of men I can only imagine the response if the question was directed toward women.

There are very few women who would leave home without their handbag. Our bags are very important to us and what's inside reveals a lot about who we are.

A few years ago I was gathered together with a group of women. We were told we were going to play an icebreaker game, a silly way to get to know the others better and to see a little into each woman. A tray was being passed. When that tray reached you, you were to dump the contents of your purse on it for all to see and for you to explain. It was very entertaining and revealing.

-One precious lady revealed that she was a very organized, thrifty and creative person. Her handbag was nicely organized with different sizes of zip lock baggies. I was very impressed.

-You can only imagine what conclusions were drawn about me, when I dumped my bag it revealed at least a half dozen or so lipsticks, a compact, hair brush, hair spray, mascara and I'm sure a few other cosmetic items but very little money.

-And when it was my friend's turn, she began to squirm because she couldn't remember if she had left her cigarettes in her bag. That was a secret she wanted to conceal.

Unless we spill our bag in the middle of the grocery store or someone passes a tray around and instructs us to “dump our bags” we can conceal the contents of our bag not allowing anyone to see what may hide inside.

God as has given us spiritual handbags, our hearts. We can do the same thing with our hearts. We can clutch them tight for no one to see what hides inside but sometimes just like our purses our spiritual handbags can accidentally get dumped out or opened a little too wide for others to see the mess inside.

I’ve brought a few handbags of my own to talk about this.

(Beautiful Heart Shaped Judith Leiber bag)

I love this handbag. It is beautiful and helps to make the outfit complete. It has been used at wonderfully lavish functions. Can you imagine what might be inside, a beautiful matching mirror, a small gold comb, maybe even a lavish lipstick case?

Let’s take a look at what could be in this “spiritual handbag” –

(Pull pieces of paper out of bag that say)

1. Insecurity
2. Gossip
3. Jealousy
4. Anger
5. Self Pity

This bag is not so beautiful on the inside, is it? We can be like this handbag having one look on the outside but no so attractive on the inside.

(Black and White Tweed Oversized Bag)

Well, this bag is much more practical. It’s not as beautiful but I can focus less on beauty and more on being sensible. It’s easier to clean, it holds more and let’s face it’s the wiser choice. There’s room for my bible so I can read it while waiting for the children in carpool line, a snack for the children (they are always so hungry after school), my address book (never know when you might need an address to send a get well card) and my knitting will fit in here too (I need to get those scarves knitted for the needy)

Let’s peak inside this “spiritual handbag” –

(Pull pieces of paper out of bag that say)

1. Put Family First – My husband wanted to spend more time relaxing together and I needed to get my chores done. My son needed help on his homework and I was just too tired. Boy, I haven’t done a very good job putting my family first.
2. Fulfill My Community Responsibilities – The school could use more volunteers and so could my church. My neighbor is recovering from surgery and I haven’t taken that meal yet. There’s that elderly person who is lonely and would love me to visit her.
3. Have A Positive Attitude – I just had to yell at that man who cut me off in traffic today and let’s not even mention the women in the grocery line who was so rude.

4. Be Responsible With My Health – Can't tell you the last time I worked out. I run out of time and end up eating cake for dinner way to many nights.
5. More Time With God – I fell asleep during my prayer time, can't remember the last time I had time to pick the Bible up and read it. I haven't made Sunday school in weeks.

Boy, I'm not so sure I like this bag; it's full of things that I don't do very well. I'm falling pretty short.

(Medium Black Kate Spade Bag)

Now, this bag, it's black, it goes with everything. Not too big or too small. Not too practical or over the top.

Let's peek inside this "spiritual handbag".

(Pull out large cloth envelope with the words – "GRACE - the unmerited favor of God toward man" printed on it)

This bag is full of God's GRACE and look it covers it all.

(Put all of the items that were pulled from the other bags into the "Grace bag")

GRACE - the unmerited favor of God toward man.

God wants to come in and clean out our spiritual pocketbooks, He wants to transform hearts. All we need to do is say "yes" to Him by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The good news is that this cleaning out process is in His timing done through His love, tenderness and grace.

I'd like to close with this scripture from:

2 Timothy 1:9 (New International Version)

New International Version (NIV)

...by the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,