

Hurray for Cracked Pots!

A water-bearer in India had two large pots. Each hung on opposite ends of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other was perfect.

The perfect pot always delivered a full portion of water at the end of a long walk from the stream to the master's house. The cracked pot arrived only half-full. Every day for a full two years, the water-bearer delivered only one and a half pots of water.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments because it fulfilled magnificently the purpose for which it had been made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its imperfection, miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After the second year of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, the unhappy pot spoke to the water-bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you," the pot said.

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all this work and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water-bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the cracked pot took notice of the beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path, bright in the sun's glow, and the sight cheered it up a bit.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad that it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, not on the other pot's side? That is because I have always known about your flaw, and I have taken advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day as we have walked back from the stream, you have watered them. For two years, I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. ***Without you being just the way you are, he would not have had this beauty to grace his house.***"¹

Do you like the person you see in the mirror or are you like the cracked pot—apologizing for being you? Are you struggling to become like someone else so you will be better loved and accepted?

In his book *Ruthless Trust*, Brennan Manning writes, "The cracked pot was sad because it compared itself to the perfect pot. Without the comparison, it would have been happy, content in the knowledge that it was exactly the way it was supposed to be."

He continues, "The pot had assumed that the sole purpose of its existence was to haul water from the stream to the house. The flawed pot had not suspected God's grand purpose for it: to give life to the dormant flower seeds along the path."

The pot's weakness actually became its strength.

When you measure the value of your life by comparing yourself to others, you are dishonoring

God and belittling the gift He has given you. (John 3:27)

Manning writes, “Despite our physical cracks, intellectual limitations, emotional impairments, and spiritual fissures, we are providentially equipped to fulfill the unique purpose of our existence.”

What was God’s grand purpose for you when you were born? If His grand purpose for me was to celebrate 50+ years of a wonderful marriage, then I have miserably failed. But I suspect God knew ahead of time about my flaws, and in His wonderful grace redeemed my messed-up life so I could minister to other hurting women who are affected by dysfunctional relationships or domestic violence.

What about you? Are you so focused on your flaws that you can’t see the purpose of your existence? Did you know that God adores you just like you are—flaws and all?

In his book *Bread for the Journey*, Henri Nouwen writes, “To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives—the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections—that requires hard spiritual work. Still, we are only grateful people when we can say thank you to all that has brought us to the present moment. As long as we keep dividing our lives between events and people we would like to remember and those we would rather forget, we cannot claim the fullness of our beings as a gift of God to be grateful for. Let’s not be afraid to look at everything that has brought us to where we are now and trust that we will soon see in it the guiding hand of a loving God.”

So instead of beating yourself up because you don’t measure up, ask God to show you how He has used your flaws as beauty to grace His table.

Stop apologizing to the world for not being perfect, and start living life to the fullest as the person God created you to be—cracked pot and all!

Manning writes, “God often uses those who have major flaws or who have been through a great deal of pain to accomplish many vital tasks for His kingdom. No one is too messed up for God to use.”

On Judgment Day, God will not ask you why you were not like

_____.
(fill in the blank with Mr./Ms. Perfect’s name)

He will ask you why you were not His beloved _____.
(fill in your name)

¹ A story from India—author unknown