

BURSTING THE BOTTLED WATER BUBBLE

Many people think that bottled water is a cheap beverage of choice, that it is safer than tap water, that plastic bottles get recycled so it's fine to buy them, and that water bottles pose little harm to the environment. What do you think?

1. Is bottled water a cheap beverage? Tap water costs about \$0.002 per gallon compared to the \$0.89 to \$8.26 per gallon charge for bottled water. If the water we use at home cost what bottled water costs, our water bills would run approximately \$9,000/month! Why do you think we consume so much bottled water in the U.S.?
2. Is bottled water safer than tap water? American tap water is among the safest in the world. However, plastic bottles can leach chemicals into the water if left in the sun, heated up, or reused several times. As much as 40% of the bottled water sold in the U.S. is just filtered tap water anyway! The EPA sets much more stringent quality standards for tap water than the FDA does for bottled water. How many times have you let a bottle of water sit in the sun before drinking it?
3. Do most plastic bottles get recycled? 2 million plastic beverage bottles are used every 5 minutes in the U.S. and 88% of them are not recycled. The Container Recycling Institute says that plastic water bottles are disposed of (not recycled) at the rate of 30 million a day. Why do you think people don't recycle more plastic bottles?
4. What is the harm to the environment in the bottling process? Production of the plastic (PET or polyethylene) bottles to meet our demand for bottled water takes the equivalent of about 17.6 million barrels of oil (not including transportation costs). That equals the amount of oil required to fuel more than one million vehicles in the U.S. each year. Around the world, bottling water uses about 2.7 million tons of plastic...each year. On a weekly basis, 37,800 18-wheelers are driving around the country delivering water. There is a floating plastic garbage patch twice the size of Texas in the north Pacific. Marine mammals ingest plastic mistaken for food and 100 million die each year. Birds die of starvation as they mistake plastic in the ocean for food. The ocean fish we eat, consume plastic daily. What can you do to help encourage plastic recycling and limiting plastic bottle use in your home, church and school?

GUARDING GOD'S GREAT GIFT

5. Almost 1 billion very important people lack access to clean water. They drink from polluted lakes and streams where animal waste, human waste, and parasites infect the water. Even though we don't know those billion people personally, are they less valuable than we are? What makes a person valuable?
6. Women and children your age and younger, walk several hours each way to fetch water daily, hauling dirty water back to their families. If you spent 2 – 7 hours per day hauling heavy buckets of water across many miles, how would you spend the remainder of your day?
7. Preventable water related diseases kill one child every 15 seconds. That's 5,000 every day (and that's just the children). Do you think that would ever happen to children in this country? Why or why not?