



Memories and Forgiveness

It is easy to hate. Almost enjoyable to look down my nose and remember your sins with disdain.

However, my goal is not hatred, but love. Not memories of horror, but glimpses of pleasure.

Jesus Christ made it that way by challenging me to treat even the poorest and most awful citizens with respect, to “love my enemies,” and to “turn the other cheek” when whumped. Jesus ignored the easy way and commanded the impossible. Sometimes I wish I served a God who would allow me to beat up on those who do me wrong, to get even, and to cut ‘em down to size.

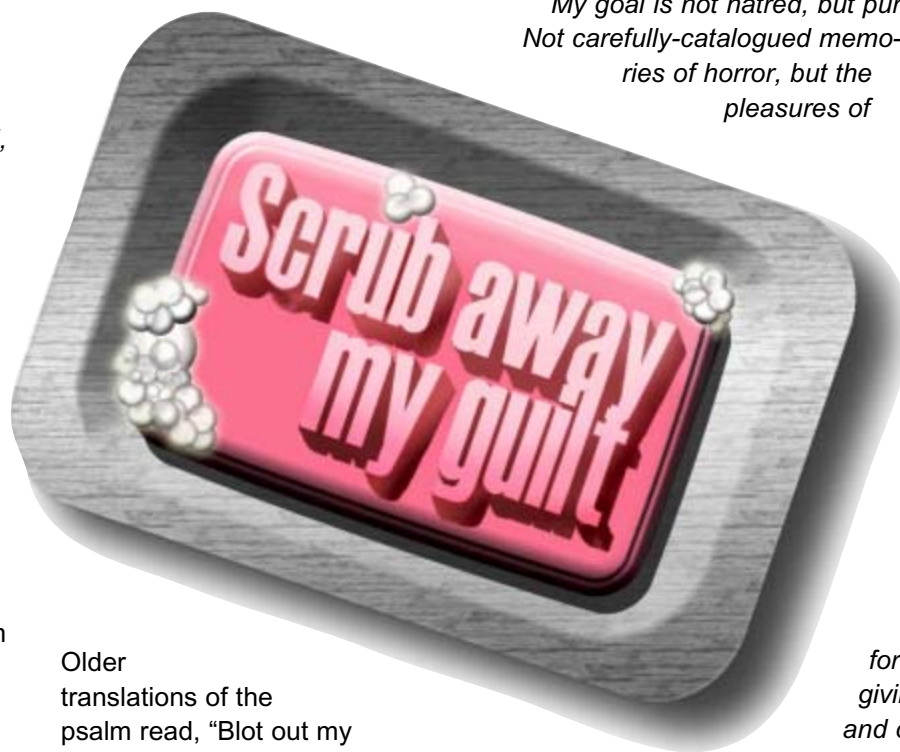
However, my goal is not revenge, but love. Not memories of horror, but the pleasures of forgiveness.

At times my enemy is a faceless fiend from afar. Often it is someone nearby, one whose best efforts accomplish the worst. On the darkest nights I discover my enemy within, a lurking craziness that eats away at my best intentions and transforms me into less than my weakest hope could allow.

I understand myself better when

I look into the heart of Israel’s King David. “I know how bad I’ve been,” he writes in Psalm 51, “my sins are staring me down ... Shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life ... Put fresh wind in my sails.”

The king sure knew how to sing about getting rid of the old! “Wipe out my bad record,” he pleads, “scrub away my guilt.”



Older translations of the psalm read, “Blot out my transgressions.” But a blotter doesn’t do a good job of removing stains. There is always a residue.

Maybe the text should be updated to say, “Delete the ugly files from my hard drive.” But, that’s a problem also. The FBI (and a thousand teenage hackers) know how to find everything I’ve ever allowed onto my hard drive! It’s all still there.

So, God (and King David) used a better illustration. “Wipe out,” “Scrub away.” “Soak out.” “Clean.”

All words you’d use if you were washing very dirty dishes. When you soak, scrub, rub, wipe, and clean a dirty dish, is there any dirt left? Any residue from lunch? Even a crumb of pizza? NOPE! It’s all gone, full stop and forever. All that’s left is the shine of purity.

When God scrubs me into his “Clean Plate Club,” I am ready to receive all the gifts God is ready to give. It doesn’t take long till the clean plate is filled with gentleness, forgiveness, mercy, joy, peace, patience, and Love.

My goal is not hatred, but purity. Not carefully-catalogued memories of horror, but the pleasures of

for-giving, and of being forgiven.

“Put fresh wind in my sails?” I’ve tried that. I’ve blown hard, pumped up the rhetoric, and plugged in the fans. But the sails of my life hung limp till I asked God to blow the wind of His Spirit my way. Then the real adventure began.

Wow! What a ride!

Dick Duerksen