

Blotted Out

“If you’re selling your computer you need to get rid of your sensitive data,” the boss told Ian. “I have deleted all the files,” he replied.

“Oh! That isn’t enough. That marks them as empty, but the information is still there. It needs to be over-written in a special way.”

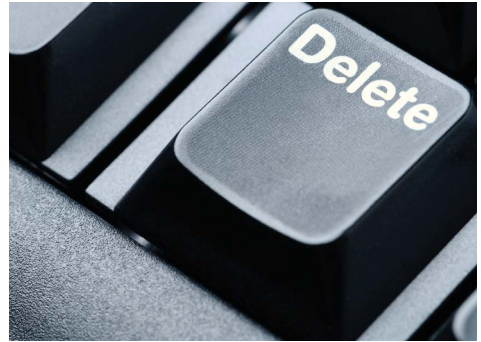
“Well that sounds worse than getting a blood stain out of a cloth. Should I consult an expert?” Ian looked worried.

Getting a stain like blood out of a cloth can be very difficult. But at least we can see whether or not we have been successful. Removing information from computers is much harder. Technical experts can often read computer information that has apparently been deleted. Of course, if we have no sensitive or unlawful data, we should have nothing to worry about.

However, when it comes to our consciences and memories, we all have things to be concerned about. Removing the effects of things we have said or done in the past can be virtually impossible. We all wish we could ‘undo’ some of our less virtuous deeds. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to forget what either we or someone else has done.

God Doesn’t Always Remember

God knows everything. This includes not only what we do or think but also why:



O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off (Psalm 139:1-2).

Similar ideas are expressed in Psalm 44:21 and Hebrews 4:12-13.

He knows our deepest secrets – things unknown to even our closest friends. It is therefore amazing that He actually offers to forget what we have done wrong. In the past, when pleading with Israel to return to serving Him, God compared their sins to blood-red, and offered to wipe them out:

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah 1:18-19).

When He forgives our sins, He also chooses not to remember them – things we find so hard.

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins (Isaiah 43:25).

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

Going east we can never ever get to the west, so this is total separation. This idea is repeated throughout the Bible.

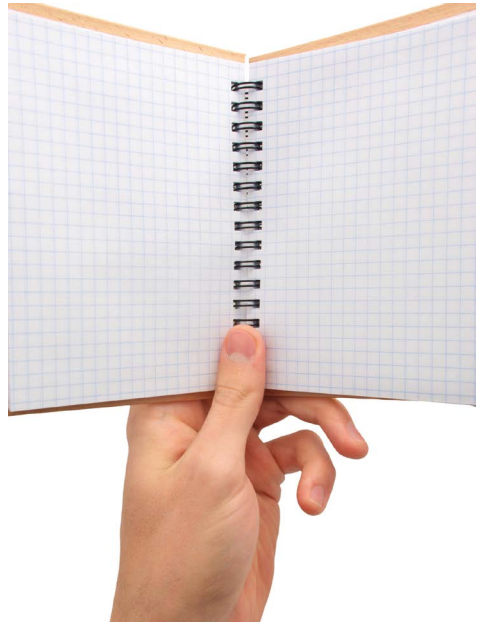
However, God's forgiveness is not automatic. In fact, it is conditional. God hates sin (Habakkuk 1:13; Romans 2:6–11), and we have no claim on Him. It is a stark fact that we deserve nothing but death (Romans 6:16–23). He cannot do anything that is unfair or which breaks His own laws and so He cannot save people who do not truly want to be saved.

We Need to Repent

We must acknowledge that we are, by very nature, in a desperate, hopeless situation. We must humbly admit that, despite our best efforts, we repeatedly disobey God (Romans 7:13–25).

God then asks for our repentance – a conscious and deliberate change of heart. Repentance is mentioned over 50 times in the New Testament. Paul preached that God “*now commands all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:30).

Repentance involves changing our ways and being baptised (Acts 2:37–39). In this way we are joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (as we read in



Romans 6:3–8). This is the one way by which we can be forgiven and saved.

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

The sacrificial death of Jesus is the only means by which God can and will take away our sins (Hebrews 10:3–14). If we want our sins to be forgiven so that we can be saved from extinction, we need to be ‘in Christ’ now (Romans 8:1–2).

Given our sad track records we need a solution urgently and God has provided it. I am needed advice. We have God's advice in the Bible.

Do we want our failings to be on record for ever, or wiped away and forgotten by God? The choice is ours right now.

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