The Wrong Deed for the Right Reason

In *Murder in the Cathedral* T. S. Eliot wrote the famous words, "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason." What about when it's the other way around?

Do you ever do the wrong thing for what you think is the right reason? Are you ever so totally convinced that you are right that you are willing to do whatever it takes to prove your point, no matter the damage or cost?

Someone has said, "Overconfidence gives you the courage to act on your misguided convictions." Overconfidence is a bad thing. Spiritual overconfidence is a very bad thing.

Sometimes we can be so full of ourselves and so sure of ourselves that we convince ourselves – perhaps for just a moment -- that we are no longer susceptible to sin, at least not in the area under consideration. That is the ultimate hypocrisy, and it is deadly. It is spiritual arrogance carried to its extreme.

Jesus Christ is praying for us prideful, arrogant hypocrites when He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Jesus Christ shed His holy, innocent blood for a clueless, hard-headed clod like me. Thank God I don't have to pass a worthiness exam to qualify for God's forgiveness.

Rejoice in God's forgiveness toward you. The blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sin. How can we who have been so generously forgiven do anything but forgive one another? As God's mercy has triumphed over judgment in the cross of His Son, may our God-given mercy win out over pride-driven judgment in our relationships with one another: fellow sinners washed clean in the blood of Christ.

What's your most seductive temptation to do the wrong deed for the right reason? If you can't think of anything, think again. Think harder. Think deeper. God already knows what it is, so you don't have to hide. You can be completely honest with God and with yourself.

Your sins are forgiven. You are clean in Christ, so come clean with God. That's doing the right thing for the right reason.