

Have You Cleaned Out Your **DESPISERY?**

By Joanna D'Costa

Do we have a place in our minds which is occupied by people we dislike—people who have caused us harm, imaginary or real—people whom we enviously have distaste for because they seem to have been 'lucky' in getting their lives together, while we haven't? People we dislike because we cannot get along with them? After all they are not our type.

Let me relate to you a story I read some time ago. There was a man who enjoyed possession of a good share of the world's goods, but for some reason or other went around glum faced and irritable most of the time. Working for the man was a cheerful old Negro whose toothless grin spread from ear to ear, day in and day out. He was perpetually happy, this hired hand.

Calling the happy servant to him one day, the man asked: 'Mose, you haven't a dime to your name, and if it were not for the little jobs I give you, I don't know what would become of you. Now tell me, how can you go around looking so happy all the time?'

The old man rolled his eyes, wrinkled his brow, scratched the top of his head, and then his broad grin bloomed again: 'I dunno boss', he said, 'less it's 'cause I ain't got

nobody in my despisery. I don't hate nobody'.

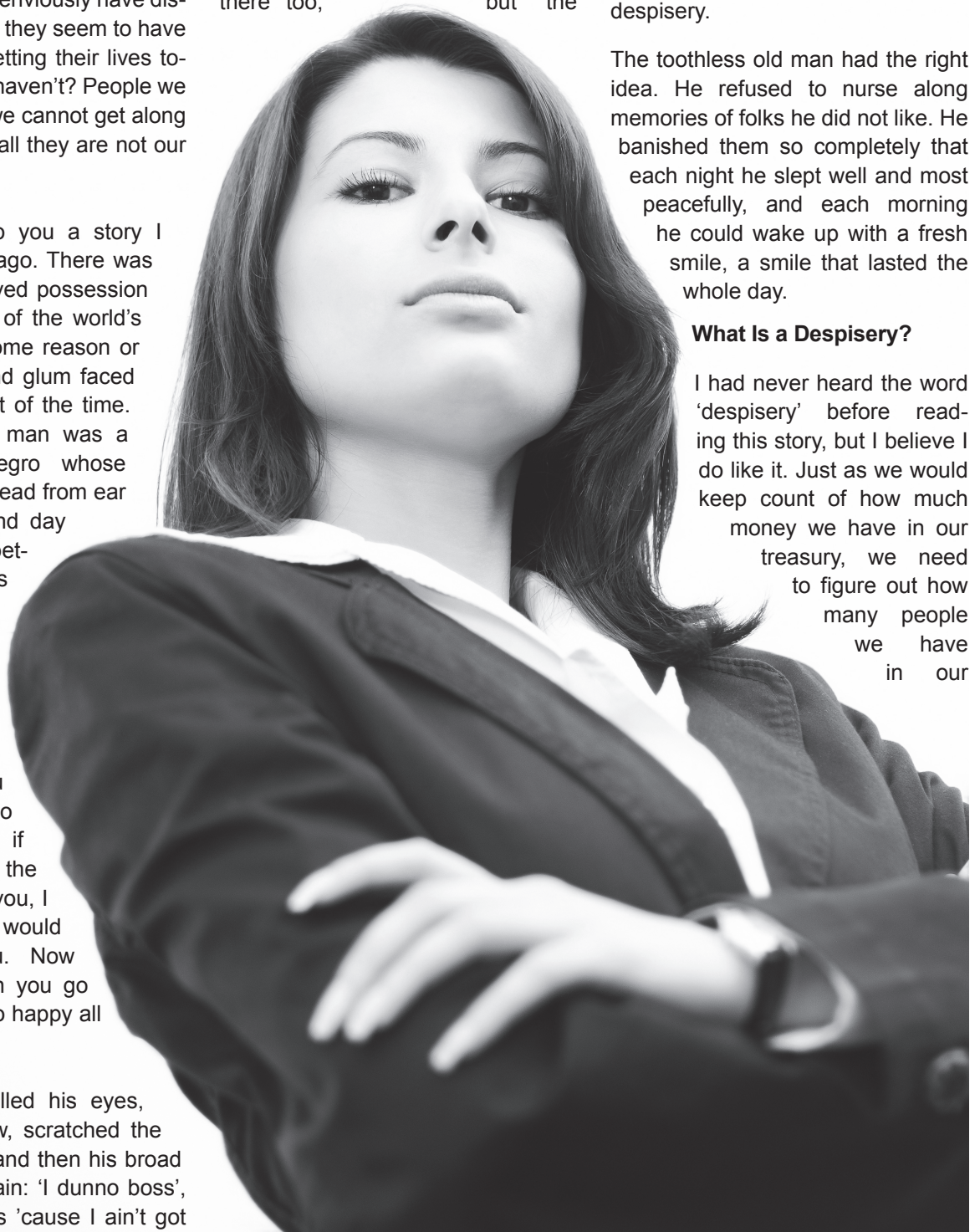
His grim-faced employer nodded and walked away to think. Yes, he did have a number of people in his despisery. They deserved to be there too, but the

strange fact was that it was hurting him more than it was hurting them. The poison of anger surged through his system and his mouth tightened. His vision was distorted by the fury aroused through his frequent inspections of the prisoners in his despisery.

The toothless old man had the right idea. He refused to nurse along memories of folks he did not like. He banished them so completely that each night he slept well and most peacefully, and each morning he could wake up with a fresh smile, a smile that lasted the whole day.

What Is a Despisy?

I had never heard the word 'despisy' before reading this story, but I believe I do like it. Just as we would keep count of how much money we have in our treasury, we need to figure out how many people we have in our





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despisery. Our treasury we fill, but our despisery, which is filled with people we despise, we empty.

The Bible tells us that if we despise someone, we sin.¹ When we sin, we hurt ourselves more than we hurt others.² The Bible also tells us to put away all bitterness and anger,³ to quit ‘biting and devouring each other’ in hatred, lest we destroy each other.⁴ It also tells us that if we hate, we live in darkness.⁵

Not all poisons are kept in sealed bottles on pharmacy shelves. All cases of strange illness are not due to poisonous pollution or pesticides. The commonest, deadliest, and most dreadful of poisons are those we carry around with us—in our hearts. The poison of anger and hate can produce a deadly effect. It is the cause of many physical ailments, but more importantly it can destroy us inwardly.

Let’s clean our despisery: throw out all its contents and let the light of goodwill overflow its dark corners.

How to Empty Your Despiser

I had an old neighbour that lived in a house just across the street from my home. She would spend a lot of time near her front gate greeting every passerby. If the passerby stopped to talk, she could speak for hours to that person. No harm in that except that her voice was loud, discordant, and very irritating to me. I rarely talked to her and she became one of the prisoners in my despisery. I found it hard not to despise her, and eventually I hit on an idea. I went over and talked to her. After a while I learnt that she was lonely and needed someone to talk to, so she filled the void by greeting and talking to anyone she met on the street. She had no idea that her voice was irritating to others.

When I got to know her and realised her difficulties, I could not help but like her and I was surprised that her loud voice did not disturb me anymore.

A few years later she sold her house as she was too old to look after it,

and went to live with her married daughter in another town. Surprise of surprises I actually missed her voice, and the street I live in seemed to have become too quiet.

Our minds are very powerful. With help from God and some effort on our part, we can alter our attitude to someone or something to such an extent that even the worst of our despisery prisoners can be set free. In releasing these prisoners we will be doing ourselves and others a big favour.

If you know of other ways of emptying your despisery, you would be doing a service to all of us in sharing them with us. Your story could be published in a future issue of *Inside Life*.

Notes

- 1 Proverbs 14:21, Galatians 5:19
- 2 Proverbs 26:27, Galatians 6:7-8
- 3 Ephesians 4:31
- 4 Galatians 5:15
- 5 1 John 2:9-11