

How Have You Been Living Your Life?

A little over a year ago, I and all the people in my training unit (or flight) were divided into smaller groups, along with other flights from multiple squadrons on base, and directed into gas chambers. The purpose of sending us into these rooms was so that those who have made the commitment to serve our country could feel the effects of tear gas, and when faced with these effects, learn how to cope with this foreign agent and effectively carry out our mission. To ensure we inhaled this component, they had us perform physical exercise in the chamber and then take off the gas mask, forcing everyone to take a deep breath once the mask was removed. Immediately when the gas masks were removed, and the effects of the gas kicked in, not a single person wanted to stay in that room, but everyone could not wait to get out. This example is used because as followers of Christ. We are not forced to expose ourselves to the weapons of our enemy, Satan, only strive to avoid them and seek protection. However, all of us at some point, whether before becoming a Christian or after, have chosen to walk into that chamber without proper protection, and let ourselves be exposed to spiritual pain and anguish. Don't forget, however, that while you made the decision to enter that room, you can choose to exit whenever you like. More than that, Jesus is standing on the outside, ready to wipe away the sin and protect you from any dangers.

The next obvious question would be, "How do I leave the room?" In other words, "How do I come back from the choices I have made that has led me to where I am now?" That is a good question to ask, and the answer can be put into one word — repent. Although, there is more to repentance than just saying sorry. True repentance, although being one thing, is more so a process. You do need to seek forgiveness from God, passages such as 1 John 1:9 or Acts 8:22 tell us that; but consider what Paul wrote in Romans 6. In this chapter, Paul details that if we are Christians then we are supposed to be dead to sin, meaning that if we are dead we shouldn't return to it. Verse 6 says, "that the body of sin might be done away with ..." — that our sinful decisions might be done away with, that we will choose to no longer indulge in these sinful things. That's what repentance means.

Unfortunately, there may be more to the process than praying to God and making a commitment to abstain from sin. A lesson my dad instilled within me from a young age was that the decisions I make in life do not only affect me, but they can and often times will affect everyone around me. Making application, whether or not it was our intention, when we sin, it is not only toward God and ourselves that we have sinned, but we have quite possibly sinned against a brother. If so, then when going through the process of repentance, we need to reach out to our brother and admit our fault. There are many scriptures telling us this is what needs to be done. In 1 John 1:7, John talks about the fellowship we have if we walk in the light but if there is still sin between brethren, how can there be fellowship? Verses such as Luke 17:3-4 imply that we should be willing to confess our sins to one another so that forgiveness can be granted, and fellowship can once again be restored.

Looking back on what's been said, if we truly want to put an end to the suffering and anguish that sin causes, then we need to repent. We need to pray to God for His

forgiveness when we have done wrong. If we have sinned against someone then we need to go to them and ask for their forgiveness. There is no better time than the present to make a change. We need to say, "Enough is enough! I'm sick and tired of living this way, more than that I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired of the way I have lived my life, it's time to make things right!" Like the story of the prodigal son, our father is waiting and watching for us; it's time to come home.

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