

A Surefire Way to Escape Sin's Sneaky Grip

We are broken. Our distance from God is immeasurable. We are not just disconnected from God, we are disconnected from people. Therefore, we feel we are alone as we walk through life.

We are insecure, overwhelmed at times, with a sense of worthlessness. Failure seems to be fatal. Guilt never leaves us. Shame seems serial. Pain is perpetual. Life is a burden.

Knowing we do not measure up, we manipulate ourselves to spend most of our time trying to win the approval of others. We quickly discover this is a treadmill race to nowhere, but we often stay on the treadmill anyway.

We feel bound. Trapped. Dead inside. Hopeless.

But then, God comes. Mercy begins to wake us up. Hope rises like the sun on a clear day.

Someone connected with me, telling me a story about a man named Jesus who came to heal the sick, wake up the dead, forgive sins and set each person free.

I listened. I opened my heart. Something happened to me. The one telling me the story said it also happened to him.

Jesus saved me. Changed me. Set me free.

Today. Tomorrow. Forever.

Free.

As I began to hear stories about Jesus, what had just happened to me began to make sense. One time when Jesus was sharing His message of freedom, many believed in Him. Then Jesus told them

something profound: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). He then went on and said it with even more force and conviction: "Therefore if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Now I know why I feel like I do. Jesus set me free. Not just free, but really free.

Before Christ came into my life, there were times I felt dead. I felt bound, trapped and held captive by a power bigger than I was. I wanted to do the right things consistently, but I never could. The very things I did not want to do, I ended up doing. And the very things I wanted to do, for some reason, I could not do.

There is a reason for all of these things. I was dead spiritually. There were moments when I fell from where I knew God wanted me to be. I missed God's mark for my life horribly and continually. I wondered then and still periodically wonder even now, *Why?* Here is the short answer: I was living in and out of Ephesians 2:1. I was dead in my trespasses and sins. I was trapped, held captive by sin, by a power bigger than me, by Satan. I was living in and out of Ephesians 2:2. I was carrying out actions in order to satisfy my personal desires and inclinations. Even with the pleas from others and God Himself, I continually kept turning away from God. Yes, I was living out of my own selfish desires and sinful nature.

As I reflect upon that season of my life, I still get mad at Satan and even madder at myself. Since sin ruled me, my actions were stupid. Sin did not just affect my life; it dominated my life.

No one but me is responsible for any of these things. I own them today, and I had to own them then in order to deal with them when God began to convict me. Knowing what I know now makes me regret the choices I made then. But today, I accept responsibility for myself and for my sinfulness.

Perhaps you need to do as I just did. You may need to go back and take full responsibility for yourself and your sinfulness. You were just like me, dead in trespasses and sins. While it may not have been pretty then, and it may not be pretty now, own it. Take responsibility for it. It is imperative in order to become fit spiritually and healthy inwardly. {eo}

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