

Acts 3:19 *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”*

When I was growing up, I was a part of Royal Rangers. This is a Christian equivalent of the Boy Scouts. We would do many outdoor and survival skill training and activities. It was a lot of fun for energetic boys. My favorite part was doing camp outs. We typically went to Wilkeson or to Dash Point and camped overnight and ran amok in the woods playing tag and capture the flag.

One year, my Royal Ranger leaders decided that it would be a good idea to have a snow campout to teach us young boys to survive in the cold. While I can safely say thirty years later that the best way to survive the snow and cold is to get a heated hotel, I loved the idea. Our church found a campsite open in the winter near the mountain, and we set out for a three-day campout. We arrived, set up tents and had a blast, learning wilderness survival, fire starting and other fun things.

We all brought metal frame cots to keep us off the snowy floor and set up our warm, thermal bedding. My tent mate had a nice cot and as I was admiring the frame I saw there was a hole drilled into the frame to strap down bedding or other items. Upon further examination I noticed that my finger was just big enough to slide into the hole so naturally I did just that. Unfortunately, it was just big enough to put it in but once I slid my knuckle in, I could not get it out. I immediately panicked and my tent mate ran to get a leader. He came in and couldn't get the finger out either. I was really stressed now because I thought I would have to live the rest of my life with my finger stuck in this cot. After about 45 minutes, I just decided to pull my finger out and if I lost my skin, so be it. I yanked it out as hard as I could and my finger looked like hamburger meat – but I was free. I got bandaged up and continued with the trip.

This can be the same way in our spiritual life. We get stuck in a sin; a habit; a way of thinking; bitterness or something destructive that keeps us stuck. When we are finally sick of living that way we have to pull our lives out no matter how badly it hurts and face whatever consequences that may result. I have learned when I pull myself out of my sin and repent, I find healing so much sweeter. When I wait a long time and try to avoid God, the results are harder.

We need to make a habit of recognizing the conviction of the Holy Spirit immediately, turning to God through repentance and allowing Him to set us free. Even if it hurts!

I love you and God loves you!

Pastor Eric Lundberg