

Why Christians Are Broke

The Bible says we are to be witnesses in all the earth. It's very important that we not only tell people about Jesus but also live in a way that testifies of His goodness.

No one witnessed to me about Jesus when I was in the world. My mentality was so far from God that if a person wanted to minister to me, he could not approach me from a religious standpoint.

Most of the people I knew who claimed to be saved painted an undesirable picture of salvation. I will never forget Mrs. Christina, a woman who lived five houses down from me when I was in the military at Fort Stewart, Ga.

She was a Christian who always told me that she had Jesus but never told me how I could get Him. Her living conditions were not the best, and she was always in desperate need of the simple necessities for herself and her children.

At the time, my goals in life were to have money and be famous. My exposure to the athletic world led me to believe I would find a husband who would sweep me off my feet and move me to Hollywood. Instead, the man I met swept me off my feet and moved me to a mental institution.

When Mrs. Christina sat at my kitchen counter telling me about her hard times, I was at a low place in my life. I felt as if I could not fight anymore. I was coming to the realization that I needed something, but I did not know what it was.

I remember that she would pause every now and then in the midst of her bad luck stories and shout, "Hallelujah," "Praise God," or "Thank You, Jesus!" I could not tell which one of us was in a worse condition.

I was a heathen and far from knowing Jesus. But Mrs. Christina

knew Him only from a religious standpoint. She had no concept of Jesus as her deliverer and provider.

My natural instincts told me that if she served a God who was so powerful and loved her so much, He would not allow her family to starve every night. Mrs. Christina would quote the few Scriptures she had memorized, but something on the inside of me knew she had no idea what she was saying.

My compassion for her was great because I could not imagine my babies being continually hungry. At least once a week, I cleaned out my refrigerator and gave her family all the food I could spare.

They lived in a house built by the government, so their mortgage was little or nothing. Still, their lights were often turned off, and their furniture had an odor that I'd smelled on her clothing. I am convinced that scent is related to the spirit of poverty.

Demons are referred to in the Bible as foul, unclean spirits. The definition of *foul* is "to be putrid, offensive and impure."

Today, I can detect the same odor that was in Mrs. Christina's house in many homes. My husband and I share the belief that there is a distinct odor that accompanies poverty and lack.

Poverty Complacency

The spirit of poverty has elements that a person does not need a spiritual gift to detect. For example, in the neighborhoods where I grew up, it is common to live with roaches. Christians do not have to call down fire or speak in tongues to get rid of them; just call an exterminator!

Some have been offended when I've ministered in this area. However, I know from experience that the devil will trick a person's mind to make him or her think living in a roach-

infested house is normal.

My ministry has been very effective in what we call the "guttermost," but sometimes my messages have to get down and dirty. I remember hearing the Holy Ghost say one day, "There are demons in the dirt!"

When I started preaching on spiritually and physically cleaning house, a few people felt as if I was picking on them about something they could not help. I understood where they were coming from because I had been there and done that, too. But as an apostle of God, it was my responsibility to let them know they did not have to stay where they were.

Many people who have lived in ghetto environments and survived welfare were never taught basic principles of living. This is the mentoring aspect of evangelism. Sometimes we have to get involved in the private lives of people.

There is a spirit that will make you settle for less. I know the signs, and they all add up to what I call "poverty complacency." People get used to empty refrigerators, having milk once a week or having to get gas money from the people they are picking up for church.

These things should be dealt with immediately. They are unacceptable spiritual assignments that will keep people from fulfilling God's vision for their lives.

Staying on top of everyday issues, such as maintaining a good driving record, having auto insurance and changing the oil in their cars is not common in the lives of many of the people I deal with. No one ever took the time to teach them that these are priorities in life.

They are used to hustling. And when people conform to what they have always been exposed to, their potential for transformation is destroyed. Without transformation of the mind, there will be no transition to the next level.

Numbers 14:24 says that Caleb and Joshua had “another spirit,” one that was different from that of the others who were wandering in the wilderness. The word *spirit* in this passage is *ruwach*. One of the meanings of this Hebrew word is “mind.”

Joshua and Caleb did not focus on what they were up against in life. They said, “Not only are we able, but we are well able!” (See Numbers 13:30, KJV.) They went forward to possess what God had promised them.

The other folk in the wilderness had no hope of transition. Just like Mrs. Christina, they came out of darkness (Egypt), but they never entered the marvelous light (the land of milk and honey). After God delivers us from whatever our Egypt was, we must get a new attitude in order to enter into the fullness of salvation.

The word *salvation* means more than going to church every week. It is *soteria* in the Greek, and it means “welfare, safety, deliverance and health.”

I understand that people will have challenges in life, but we must consider the vicious cycle of the python spirit of poverty. It is so called because it slowly squeezes the provision out of a person’s life. It will allow much to go out and nothing to come in.

Financial Curses in the Word

A sure sign of the poverty spirit is a lot of bills with no provision to pay them. These financial curses found in the Scriptures must be recognized and then renounced:

The curse of Cain. Because of Cain’s actions—withholding his best offering from God and killing his brother in a jealous rage—he was banished from the presence of the Lord and cursed in his ability to produce a harvest.

Cain was also subject to wander in the land of Nod, east of

the Garden of Eden. When we try to hold back on God, we end up with nothing. But Proverbs 3:9 says if we honor the Lord with all our substance and the firstfruits of all our increase, God will fill our barns with plenty.

The curse of Malachi. Malachi 3:10-11 tells us to bring all the tithes into the storehouse. When we obey this principle, God promises to open the windows of heaven over our heads and rebuke the hand of the devourer on our behalf.

Many are plagued with curses because they do not honor God in their tithes and offerings. These are holy unto God.

Some make the mistake of not releasing their tithes in their minds. Mentally, they follow the money to the offering room, the bank and even the board meeting, worrying about how it is spent.

The word *holy* means “separated unto God.” Our tithing is not pleasing unto the Lord until we have the right attitude about it.

The curse of Haggai. The people’s disobedience to God produced bad fruit and brought poverty into their lives in several ways:

- They expected much, but little came in. The little they brought in, God blew away (Hag. 1:9).
- Heaven withheld its dew, and their crops failed (v. 10).
- God decreed a drought on the ground and on the work of men’s hands (v. 11).

God was angry because His house was wasted. The people said that it was not time for the Lord’s house to be rebuilt; instead, they took care of the needs of their own houses (vv. 2-3).

The generational curse of poverty. Exodus 20:5 explains that the iniquities of the fathers can affect as many as four

generations.

If the fathers do not hearken to the voice of the Lord to do His commandments, poverty is one of the curses that shall be a sign upon their seed. Deuteronomy 28:46 says, "And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever."

The curse of Ananias and Sapphira. In a time of great revival, the people were laying their offerings at the feet of the apostles (Acts 5:34-37). But Ananias and Sapphira withheld from the church a portion of the profits from the sale of their property and lied about it to the Holy Ghost. Both of them received the same punishment—death—when Peter exposed their sin.

Through God's power, all these financial curses can be broken. I have seen people with tragic situations miraculously set free. But I get the greatest joy out of seeing a poverty-stricken person transition into the financial promises of God.

Liberty From Lack

The keys to freedom from poverty are available to every one of us who is willing to do what God tells us in His Word. If you will start being faithful in your tithes and offerings; if you will honor God's house and seek to pass on a godly inheritance to the next generation, then you can begin to reverse the curses mentioned and, with God's help, break their power over your life.

As a preacher and an apostle to the nations, I feel that my ministry is not fulfilling the vision of Christ unless the lives of the people around me are changed for the better. I believe it is a sin to live below the standard that God has given us.

Jesus died so that we would not have to suffer from poverty

and lack. When He came to set the captives free, He took the chains off our bank accounts and unlocked our minds, too. Selah! (Pause and think on that.)

The church doesn't need any more Mrs. Christinas making Jesus appear unconcerned about a person's physical condition. You can walk in victory over the spirit of poverty and lack and give others a reason to hope for their own deliverance.

Allow God to bring the transformation in your life that will take you to the next level. Then His blessings will become a reality that everyone can witness.

Read a companion devotional.

Kimberly Daniels *is the author of From a Mess to a Miracle, published by Creation House Press, from which this article is adapted.*