

How to Respond When You've Been Cursed

About 10 years ago, after I returned from a trip to Nigeria, I began itching all over my body. At first I assumed it was an allergic reaction to a food or detergent. But I had no rash, and my doctor was baffled. He told me there was no apparent cause for the itching.

My skin was crawling. Lotion gave me no relief. Was this a spiritual attack?

I'm not the kind of guy who sees a demon behind every bush. But during my trip, I had confronted a Nigerian occult healer, and this man did not like me. I started wondering if he had cursed me after I challenged his deception.

I called my friend Mosy Madugba, a respected Nigerian minister, and he confirmed that this witch doctor, who is popular in Nigeria, does in fact curse people he considers enemies. Mosy prayed for me and asked God to break the power of any witchcraft aimed in my direction. Within a day the itching totally stopped. It never returned.

Thankfully I don't experience this type of spiritual warfare often. But last year I had an even weirder experience—this time involving *Christians* who believe they have biblical grounds to curse people they don't like.

Believe it or not there are believers who routinely ask God to send tragedy, financial misfortune or sickness to people they are angry with. I even know of pastors who curse people who leave their churches. (NOTE: A true pastor cares for wayward sheep; he doesn't wish them harm.) In Nigeria, there are Christians who believe they have the right to pray for their enemies to die—and they have sponsored conferences on this topic!

Maybe you've never been the victim of a voodoo curse, but "charismatic witchcraft"—soulish prayer that is aimed to harm you—is more common than any of us wants to believe. Here are five simple ways you should respond whenever you are cursed:

1. Bless the person who cursed you. Several years ago someone posted a video online to discredit me. Some of my friends urged me to retaliate, but I knew my first response was to maintain a Christ-like attitude. I didn't even watch the video for several weeks until I had prayed blessings on the person who was denouncing me. Romans 12:19 says: "Never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God." We must live by the law of love and resist all temptation to become bitter.

Our normal reaction is to get angry when we discover someone is gossiping about us, spreading lies or praying angry prayers. But Jesus told us to chill out and let Him handle it. He said in Luke 6:27-8: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, *bless those who curse you*, pray for those who mistreat you."

2. Put up your spiritual shield. If you are a believer in Christ, you are hidden with Him. The Name of Jesus is a strong tower, and you will find safety from all spiritual danger when you call on Him. No witchcraft, no slanderous accusation, no evil curse can harm you when God is shielding you. Get in a place of prayer, and ask God to defend you. When David was running from Saul, he prayed: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7).

3. Close the door to demonic influences. The only way the devil can gain a foothold in our lives is if we leave a door open for him. Close and lock all doors! Eph. 4:27 says: "Do not give the devil an opportunity." This means renouncing all known sin and making sure you have not allowed anything in your life (such as resentment or pride) or in your house (such as pornography or occultic objects or books) that could attract demonic activity.

4. Keep praising God. Witchcraft unleashes discouragement. After Elijah challenged Jezebel, she threatened to kill him—and the mighty prophet ended up depressed and suicidal (see 1 Kings 19:1-4). Witchcraft cannot harm you, but it can bring a darkness that sucks the joy out of you. The best weapon against a spirit of heaviness is praise.

The book of Psalms provides us with a playlist of David's joyful response to the threats of his enemies. If you are under spiritual attack, it is possible to sing and shout your way out. When we praise God, the enemy is wrapped in chains, and he must shut up!

5. Brush it off. Spiritual attacks should not be ignored. But we shouldn't fret over them, either. You have the Word of God. You have the Blood of Jesus. Your confession is powerful against the enemy. Martin Luther once wrote: "The devil has no real power over believers. He hates prayer, and flees from the cross and from the Word of God as from a flaming fire."

You do not have to fear the curses of your enemies or the misguided prayers of hateful traitors. When David looked around and heard a demonic chorus of critics telling him he had no hope in God, he said: "I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustains me" (see Psalm 3:1-2). You can sleep in peace knowing that God is fighting your battles.

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