

Witnessing: Living Your Mission

When Justin Bieber's life came crashing down in 2014, he visited Pastor Carl Lentz of Hillsong Church in New York City. Carl not only led him to Christ, but baptized him in NBA star Tyson Chandler's bathtub. Since his conversion, Justin's life has had numerous ups and downs. Making \$60-80 million a year brings many temptations. Pastor Lentz says, "Justin is in a horribly toxic world" and calls him "a work in progress".

Will Justin be like Van Morrison or Jane Fonda, celebrities who affirmed faith in Christ only to fall away? Or will he be like Kirk Cameron or Kathie Lee Gifford, Christian celebrities who walk the talk? In Acts 8, a celebrity named Simon converted to Christ. Or did he?

Four Issues Seekers Must Wrestle With:

1. _____(Self)

- a. We must help seekers of Christ see themselves as God see them. *"Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low gave him their attention and exclaimed, 'This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.'" Acts 8:9-10.*
- b. Simon thought he was someone great which people constantly told him. But the Bible pictures all of us as sinners in need of a Savior. Many people have a hard time seeing this until major problems come.
- c. Even unbelievers have a capacity to do good works by virtue of the fact that we are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). But we are also hopelessly tainted by evil and unable to save ourselves (Romans 3:12,23).

2. _____(Salvation)

- a. We must help seekers understand how they can be made right before God. *"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles." Acts 8:12-13.*
- b. It is difficult to determine if Simon's curiosity and astonishment led to true faith. King Saul is another person whose salvation is questionable.
- c. Success is both exciting and intoxicating. The Hillsong Church movement, whose vision is to be "constantly innovative", has exploded in growth with 130,000 weekly attendance. The early church also had periods of explosive growth (Acts 9:31), which can lead to many false converts. Humility is key.

3. _____(Spirit)

- a. We must help seekers understand the role of the Spirit in their lives. *“When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them...then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given...he offered them money... ‘Give me also this ability.’” Acts 8:14-19.*
- b. The Spirit brings power (Genesis 1:2), points people to Jesus (Revelation 22:17), and helps believers discern right and wrong (John 16:8). The Spirit is available free of charge (Isaiah 55:1). A true Christian will rely on the Spirit’s power continually (I Thessalonians 5:19).

4. _____(Sanctification)

- a. We must help seekers become more and more like God himself. *“Peter answered, ‘May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ...Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you’ ...Then Simon answered, ‘Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.’” Acts 8:20-24.*
- b. The state of Simon’s heart is impossible to determine. Jesus taught that many who profess faith will fall away (Matthew 13:18-23). Only the final judgment will reveal their true condition (Matthew 13:24-30).

Philip took a risk in reaching out to Simon the Sorcerer. The apostles also attempted to mentor him and establish him in his new faith. Pastor Lentz did the same thing with Justin Bieber whom he is attempting to mentor. God wants us to take a risk in sharing our faith, never giving up on anyone! Are you ready to do that?