



*Experiencing
Breakthrough:*

**5 PRAYERS
TO IGNITE
YOUR FAITH**

**GLOBAL
CHRISTIAN
RELIEF**

1

Freedom from Debt

Debt has become a massive problem for many people in America. According to a recent Consumer Affairs report, overall household debt has reached \$17.5 trillion with mortgages taking the cake at \$12.25 trillion, auto loans at \$1.61 trillion, and credit cards at \$1.13 trillion. With all this debt, and the suffocating interest charges, no wonder many Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. This means most are unable to save or invest and barely able to pay for essential living expenses each month.

God warns us in scripture about the realities of debt. Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender." When we go into debt, we risk losing our power and becoming a slave to someone else. Proverbs 6:1-5 proposes that if you have been ensnared by a debt, "Go and humble yourself...Give no sleep to your eyes...Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter." The wisdom God gives here is to get free as quickly as possible. Scripture doesn't indicate that debt is a sin, but God simply wants what's best for people: financial freedom.

Azeeb's Story

Global Christian Relief aims to provide financial literacy training to persecuted Christians who are trapped in bonded labor. However, sometimes through prayer and God's provision, we are also able to free such Christians from their debt completely.



Scan the QR or visit
www.GCRelief.org/Pakistan

Azeeb is one such person. He is a Pakistani Christian who has worked in the dusty brick kilns outside Lahore for the past 25 years. He works to support his wife and 9 children as well as 3 grandchildren. He became indebted to the kiln when he took a loan from them for his daughter's marriage. "It's what the poor man must do again and again," Azeeb lamented. "After paying all our monthly expenses, our debt will still increase." His debt will undoubtedly be passed onto his children.

"It's what the poor man must do again and again," Azeeb lamented. "After paying all our monthly expenses, our debt will still increase."



This practice of brick kiln owners offering loans to their poor employees, most of whom are Christians, is very common for things like medical bills, marriages, rent, or even food. Heavy interest payments are deducted from their daily wages, and since these wages are so meager, it guarantees a lifetime of debt slavery. Christians, making up about 2% of Pakistan's population, often work in such hard labor conditions due to being denied education as a form of religious persecution from the Muslim majority.

Fortunately, through the generosity of GCR supporters, in collaboration with our partners in Pakistan, GCR was able to raise funds and give Azeeb and his family freedom from their debt to the brick kilns. Azeeb happily declared, "The increase in my income has made our financial and living situations significantly more stable. My family and I are now free from the mental and physical stress that we had as a result of our loans...I no longer feel like a slave." Since brick making is all Azeeb has known, he continues to work there, but he now receives a full paycheck.

Respond in Prayer

Are you in debt? There are many available resources to help us gain a better grip on our finances and restore sanity to our wallets. Some churches even offer free programs that teach financial wisdom and give steps for people to gain freedom. However, the most important step to take first is to pray.

The word "debt" has an interesting history that has a lesson for us. It derives from the Middle English and Old French word dette. However, Middle Age scholars at the time thought that this word should pay homage to its Latin origin word debitum meaning "to owe." Thus, they began to insert the "b" into dette to create our modern word "debt." So, what is the lesson we can take from this bit of history? The letter "b" in "debt" is just as unnecessary as debt is to our financial management; its silence is just as deadly. In other words, it should be eliminated.

"Father, I know You care about my finances. You want me to handle money responsibly so I can live in freedom. I pray for Your wisdom and provision to get out of debt and to move forward in life."



2

Drawing Closer to God



Scan the QR or visit GCRelief.org/Nepal

If a 1st century woman can become distracted from this one thing over meal preparations, how much more can we in the 21st century become stressed by our screens, schedules, and scattered attention? Mary's example lies in her stillness and listening.

Modern society is a rather busy, fast-paced, and distracted world. We live at the speed of 5G, fast food, and freeways. A bit like the frog in the boiling pot, we grew up in this milieu and find it hard to see just how stressful our lifestyle can be. For all the convenience our technology provides and all the stress it eliminates, we may still find ourselves too inconvenienced to draw close to God in times of prayer, still too stressed out to notice what we've missed. One thing that can help us is learning to slow down and receive God's loving presence in simple stillness and contemplation.

In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary. While Mary was sitting and listening at Jesus' feet, Martha was distracted by all the preparations she had to make. Martha became indignant not only that Mary hadn't helped her yet, but that Jesus hadn't told Mary to do so either. In frustration, she commanded Jesus, "Tell her to help me!" Can you imagine telling God what to do? It reveals an impatience but also a familiarity that Martha had with Jesus, but Mary's heart posture shows us a better relationship. Martha's heart had become bothered by many things, but Mary's heart was focused on one thing, which helped her tune into what God was doing. This one thing was Jesus Himself.

If a 1st century woman can become distracted from this one thing over meal preparations, how much more can we in the 21st century

become stressed by our screens, schedules, and scattered attention? Mary's example lies in her stillness and listening. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." Sometimes prayer looks like crying out to God; other times it is the continual conversation we can have with Him as we go about our day. However, prayer that embraces stillness can allow our minds to shed its pent-up worries and to contemplate the holy. You may not be able to have an extended quiet time each day, but one thing to try is to take brief pauses of prayer, particularly after a time of working or driving, and just be still. In the stillness, we can listen.

Pulmaya's Story

As a Hindu witch doctor in Nepal, Pulmaya had gone down a dark spiritual path. She recalls this life with sadness due to being controlled by spirits. But one day, Pulmaya's grandson shared the gospel with her and read Bible passages to her. She said, "I felt joy in my heart when my grandson read the New Testament to me," and eventually she attended a church. After some pastors visited her home, Pulmaya accepted Christ and later was baptized.

Pulmaya's conversion came at the cost of losing her family. With tears in her eyes, she shared, "My parents and brothers abandoned me," but that "the Lord gave me the strength...I live for Him, not for other people." Also, like 23% of adults in Nepal, Pulmaya is illiterate, so she couldn't enjoy the Bible while at home. However, GCR partners provided her with a solar-powered audio Bible in her own language. Now she can listen at any time and be encouraged.



Respond in Prayer

Have you become worried and bothered? Like Mary and Pulmaya, sometimes faith and peace come just by being still and listening to God's word. One thing to try is to use a simple phrase or word that centers your attention on the Lord. Ask God how you can embrace stillness and draw closer to Him.

"Father, I want to slow down and receive peace in Your presence. Remind me to pause throughout the day and be still long enough to give You my heart and hear You speak."

3

Hopeful Future

The story of Mephibosheth is one of restored hope. When we meet him in 2 Samuel 4, he was a young boy whose father (Jonathan) and grandfather (King Saul) had just been killed. Fearing reprisal on Saul's family, the child's nurse fled with the boy in her arms, only to drop him in her haste, causing his feet to be crippled. Later in 2 Samuel 9, King David is seeking to show kindness to anyone still alive in Saul's family. He discovers that Mephibosheth is crippled and

living (or hiding) in a wilderness town. When he appeared before David, Mephibosheth considered himself a "dead dog" and bowed low in fear. But the king demonstrated immense kindness and restored to Mephibosheth all the property that belonged to his grandfather Saul. David even gave him special access to eat at the king's table.

Mephibosheth suffered great trauma from his childhood, losing not only his family but his mobility. He lived in fear in a town where not much happened. He probably expected to die there or to be found by King David and killed. Despite his loss of hope for a good future, it was restored by David's kindness towards him. Mephibosheth now lived in peace and could pass his property onto his son Mica.

Many of us may also be struggling to have hope for the future. Some may even relate to Mephibosheth who struggled with a traumatic childhood and lived in fear. Whatever our current circumstance may be, we must first remember who we are in Christ to recover hope. It says in Titus 3:4-5, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy..." and in verse 7, "...having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." This life will have its troubles, so we must find our primary hope in the kindness of God to have saved us from our sin and to have given us the expectation to live forever with Him



Scan the QR or visit GCRelief.org/hassan

in eternity. We are like Mephibosheth, broken and fearful, yet shown profound kindness by a powerful king. We can rest in this hopeful future as we practice to see God's kindness day by day.

Hassan's Story



Hassan is a Pakistani Christian who grew up in financial slavery to his nation's exploitative kiln industry. His father took out a meager loan to pay for a wedding, but due to high interest, this ensnared his family with debt generationally. Hassan worked nearly two decades for a debt that wasn't even his own. Much like Mephibosheth, he suffered from childhood for things out of his control, and he despaired, saying, "We have been in debt for 3 generations...sometimes we didn't have what we needed."

However, Hassan's future changed when GCR facilitated his debts to be fully paid by a group of generous believers. "With our debts paid off," Hassan recounted with gleaming eyes, "we won't have to work in the kilns. God has given us life!" Furthermore, he was given supplies to start his

own business selling produce, which set him and his family on a path of sustainable income. "It's a whole different feeling to have something of your own, earning for yourself," Hassan exclaimed.

Respond in Prayer

Have you struggled to hope? God wants you to know that you have a good, eternal future with Him. This kind of hope grounds us in peace and puts things in perspective. But He also cares about your current life. As we practice seeing His kindness every day, gratitude grows and expectation increases.

"Father, thank You for the kindness You've shown me, not only through Christ, but also in everyday life. Help me to see like You see, and let me pass Your kindness and hope to others along the way."



4

Leadership

Sometimes being a leader is most challenging after a failure or tragedy. Peter's story reflects this well from John 21 when the disciples went fishing. At this point, Jesus had been crucified, resurrected, and had appeared to the disciples at least twice. Despite seeing the resurrected Christ, it is apparent that the disciples needed more encouragement and power from the Holy Spirit to take up their call.

So, Jesus appeared to them again on their fishing trip. Once John recognized that it was Jesus on the shore, Peter immediately jumped into the water to swim to Him, revealing his zeal for his Rabbi. After some breakfast, Jesus spoke to Peter privately and asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" For each time that Peter responded, "Yes Lord, You know that I love You," Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep." Thus, for each time that Peter had denied the Lord outside the high priest's house (Luke 22:54-62), Jesus was re-establishing love and purpose. He knew that Peter carried great shame from his denial, deflating his sense of strong loyalty. He had once boldly claimed to Jesus, "Even if I have to die with You, I'll never deny You" (Matt. 26:35). But Peter had to learn that it's not by his own strength or commitment that he follows God's call, except by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. Only God's love would compel Peter.

Have you felt discouraged or disqualified regarding a call from God to leadership? We all have leadership roles or positions in our lives, but some of us may be weary, doubtful, or altogether

shirking such responsibilities. It may be time to let the love of God refresh you. It may be necessary to release burdensome guilt that says you don't love God enough. We are all practicing to let the love of God shine in our hearts and compel us towards good deeds day by day. A good prayer for this is found in 2 Thess. 3:5, "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the perseverance of Christ."



Scan the QR or visit GCRRelief.org/simran

Have you felt discouraged or disqualified regarding a call from God to leadership? We all have leadership roles or positions in our lives, but some of us may be weary, doubtful, or altogether shirking such responsibilities. It may be time to let the love of God refresh you.

Simran's Story



Simran is a Christian widow living in rural Punjab of India, known as the spiritual heartland of Sikhism. She and her late husband, Rajiv, had been serving the Lord there since their marriage in 2009. Rajiv was a pastor, and they worked together in evangelism and discipleship. At times, the Sikh community would challenge their ministry with some harassment, but nothing prepared them for a mob of 35 men who came after Rajiv at a church dedication in January of 2024. He died in a hospital from his wounds.

Simran and her family were devastated. When a GCR team spoke with her, she recalled everything through grief and tears. Amazingly, she said, "I have forgiven my husband's killers. It was very difficult. But because of the Lord, I was able to reach that point where I could forgive..." She also confessed that initially she felt abandoned by God, but it was the love and support from believers that encouraged her and her family. Because of this, she chose to continue the ministry that she began with Rajiv and to lead the church. Furthermore, through our partners, GCR was able to help Simran start a small store at the front of her church. The shop will give financial stability to Simran after losing her husband.

Respond in Prayer

Do you feel guilty like Peter? Or abandoned like Simran? Has tragedy caused you to doubt your role or ability to serve the Lord? God understands that our hearts ache and that we can be fearful to engage our purpose. Let His love wash over your heart through other believers and the promises in His Word.

"Father, I cannot be a leader through my own strength or zeal. It is only Your love that can sustain me in this life. I pray that by Your grace I would take a step into the leadership roles You have for me."



5

Depression and Anxiety

According to statistics, rates of depression and anxiety are on the rise globally, particularly in the US. Suicides are also on the rise, 80% committed by males. Most of us either know someone or are someone who struggles regularly with depression and/or anxiety. Some of us have been grappling with these issues for a long time, perhaps not seeing as much progress as we'd like. However you've witnessed this burden, we may need to release some guilt and shame about it. Guilt would say, "It's all my fault I'm like this...I'm a Christian; why can't I do better?" Likewise, shame says, "I wish I could be someone else...I don't just have a problem; I am the problem." Can you relate to these thoughts?

One man who could relate from the Bible is David. His psalms are evidence of dark but honest laments of the soul. In Psalm 22:1, David cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me and from the words of my groaning?" What is incredible is that our Savior would repeat this cry to His Father on the cross. Hebrews 5:7 says that Jesus "offered up prayers...with fervent cries and tears." Some of us who think we're strong might have told Jesus and David to get a grip. Unfortunately, it's common to hear that anxiety is a sin, that depression is just an excuse for grumbling doubts. But God knows the difference between a bad attitude and a traumatic disturbance of the soul.



Scan the QR or visit GCRelief.org/dongwon

Can we also appreciate this difference and give ourselves compassion for having a persistent, troubling complex? Can we not condemn others as sinful or pathetic for working through serious mental issues? Can we appreciate that God sees our condition and that mental health is a journey with Him overtime rather than a quick fix? We can let go of the perfectionism and criticism (Eph. 4:2). We can be strengthened with other believers by growing in awareness of God's love (Eph. 3:16-19). We can trust God's heart of compassion from 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

Unfortunately, it's common to hear that anxiety is a sin, that depression is just an excuse for grumbling doubts. But God knows the difference between a bad attitude and a traumatic disturbance of the soul.

Dongwon's Story



Growing up in North Korea, Dongwon had a peaceful, comfortable life as his father had a respected government job. However, when he was older, he witnessed a famine and saw the corrupt failures of the government. Disturbed with society, he took a risk and fled into China, hoping to end up in South Korea. However, his journey was halted as he greatly feared capture if he sought asylum at a South Korean embassy. All Dongwon felt he could do was hide among a Korean population in northern China.

...when he was older, he witnessed a famine and saw the corrupt failures of the government. Disturbed with society, he took a risk and fled into China, hoping to end up in South Korea.

Dongwon's anxiety grew into a great despair as he was on high alert of being caught. He couldn't

go back home, but he also couldn't go to South Korea. He lived this way for many months and began to contemplate suicide. However, he eventually met a pastor who shared the gospel and invited him to accept Jesus. Dongwon said he began "weeping uncontrollably as an unfathomable peace flooded my soul." Soon after this, he was arrested by Chinese police, but he clung to his favorite Bible verse, "Don't be afraid. I am with you. I will be your God" (Isaiah 41:10). After a year of detention, he was released into South Korea. He now lives freely but secretly helps the underground church in North Korea.



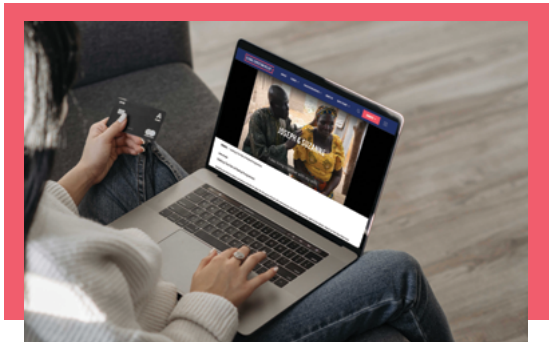
Respond in Prayer

You might feel like Dongwon, trapped and hiding in depression and anxiety. You may even want to give up on life. God understands. He wants you to practice a life of genuine expression and confession while taking steps forward in love and self-compassion. With God and the body of Christ, you can overcome.

"Father, I cry out with all my heart. I thank You for Your deep love for me. I believe I can overcome."

JOIN US

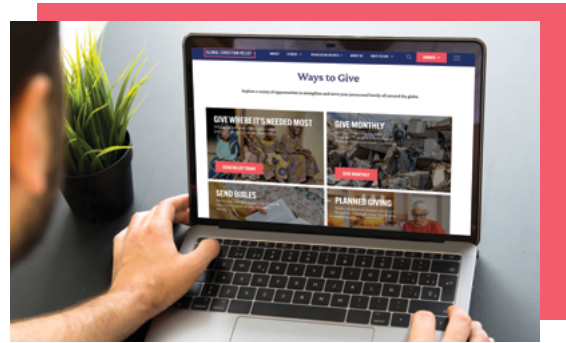
Our mission is to create a movement of prayer and support for persecuted Christians so they can be a light for the Gospel in their communities. **We invite you** to actively take part in the global Body of Christ by praying, learning about, and engaging with the persecuted church.



WATCH AND SHARE OUR VIDEOS

Stay engaged with these powerful stories of courageous faith and share them with your community.

GCRelief.org/video



GIVE A GIFT

Your gift tells persecuted Christians that they are never alone.

GCRelief.org/give



PO Box 27001
Santa Ana, CA 92799 USA

To contact Global Christian Relief by phone,
call 888-5-BIBLE-5 (888-524-2535)

GCRelief.org