

Why black Christians are not off the hook

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Black middle-class Christians are not off the hook. The dirty little secret in the black community is that many middle-class African American Christians often only speak up about racism if it impacts them directly (or has the potential to). ***In some spaces, stories are told of glass ceilings but with no mention of those stuck in the basement.*** Many African American Christians tell stories of being followed around the store by a clerk or other times they've personally experienced racial profiling. But they are silent when it comes to the devastating and ongoing impact of police brutality and mass incarceration on poor black communities. Some love to point people's attention to how their presence has too often caused white people to cross the street or to clutch their purse, but yet turn their faces away from how young black people are stereotyped and criminalized as thugs and jezebels.

Cosby Show

What isn't talked about honestly is how some people only challenge racism when it affects them directly. The very "least of these" in poor African American communities often find no advocate or champion among the black middle class who are too busy trying to climb up the ladder, are are apparently too self consumed to reach a loving hand down to those caught on the bottom rung. We fuss (rightfully so) about the daily discriminations we face compared to white counterparts with similar education or in comparison to those employed in similar positions as us. This is expected. But let us never forget the masses of black people that live in poverty, or that are much more vulnerable systemically than those now in the black middle class. Too many people who refer to themselves as Christian only want the system to work for themselves (and their family) rather than seeking shalom and justice for those whom are crushed by racialized systems everyday. May turning your eyes away from the suffering of others not be seen among you.