FAITH THAT SHOWS

Living It Out, In Every Room of Life

Ayo Fatubarin

Chapter 1

Your Faith Goes With You Everywhere

The shift. You may think of faith as something you carry to church on Sunday. I hold that it goes with you wherever you go. If it stays behind at the church door, it is not yet the faith this book describes.

This book is written from the Christian faith, for Christians and for anyone curious about what that faith looks like in daily life. Its Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

Picture a believer on a Monday morning: at the office, in the classroom, in the meeting hall. Faith does not remain behind when a Christian goes out into the world. It shows in the smallest of things, long before anyone asks them to account for it. Let us begin with the most basic question: who is a Christian, really?

Who is a Christian, really?

The word itself gives the first clue, for it comes from "Christ." A Christian is a follower of Christ, someone who can be identified with Him. But we must be honest that not everyone who bears the name lives up to it. Many nominal Christians attend church, carry the name and even claim to have done great things in Christ's name. Yet the Lord Himself warns of a day when such people will be turned away: "And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew

you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'" (Matthew 7:23 KJV). May this not be our lot, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The true Christian is the genuine one, known and approved before God. Such a person takes after Christ in their personality, their words, their deeds and their thoughts. They share something of His simplicity, gentleness and easygoing nature, and something of His godliness and holiness. Scripture gives them many names: followers of Christ, worshippers of Christ, ambassadors of Christ, Christ-like people. Jesus Himself called His followers the salt and the light of the world, and said of them, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14 KJV).

A true Christian is also, in a quiet way, the conscience and the mirror of the community. People read their life like a book, and what they read tells them what Christ is like and what the Christian faith asks of people. Such a person, through prayer and attention to Scripture, learns to listen for the voice of God, and so can point others the right way. They stand in the gap for others, praying for the particular troubles of families, groups and the community at large. Because their joy, hope and love come from God, others are drawn to give Him glory.

A believer's life also shows in what lasts. What a believer builds with honesty and patience tends to stand, and people recognise it as genuine. Where there is real achievement, it is God's goodness at work, and it calls not for pride but for gratitude. Success is not the measure of faith, and a believer who struggles is no less loved by God.

Set apart on purpose

Why did God make you a human being and not another creature? Why did He make you male or female, give you your education, or entrust some of us with leadership? Why did He give you your abilities, and why do some of us live with limitations? I believe that every life carries a purpose, and that no limitation makes a person worth less. You are His special creation, equipped for something on earth. That purpose may be as close as your own life, to show the grace of God in it. It may reach your neighbourhood, your church, your village, town or city, your country and even the wider world.

Your wealth serves that purpose. So does the learning that earned you recognition, your gift for making things work, your power to persuade people and wake them from their slumber, and your ability to win souls for Him. How are you using your abilities, and how am I using mine, to fish for men in the ocean of this world?

God also gives a Christian the character to go with the calling. There are the family virtues: a good name, home training, gentle speech, sound morals, meekness, kindness, humility and a respect for sound education. There are the personal virtues: discipline, integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, hard work, perseverance, self-control, openness and accountability, focus, determination, emotional stability, dependable followership, responsible leadership and vision. God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew from the start what assignments He had for each of us, and He equipped

us accordingly. A believer adds to all of these gifts a positive attitude to life, so as to do well in both the secular and the spiritual. These values are discussed in greater detail in companion books, such as "Time-Honoured Values."

What Christ expects of every Christian

Christians owe their name to the first followers of Christ, so following Him means more than belonging to a church. Do not be deceived: a Christian will face challenges in life. Jesus faced His, and He overcame them by calling on God, in honour of God's power and ever-abiding grace upon Him.

What, then, does He expect of us? He expects us to show our belief in God through holiness and righteousness, to know Christ and accept Him into our lives, and so to turn away from the gods that human beings have made. He expects us to obey His commandments and the whole Bible, and to speak with God regularly in prayer. The Bible is to be our compass, our rudder and our shining light. And He expects us to touch other people's lives, through giving, mercy, love, faith and hope.

Out of all this, four things should come: doing good, winning souls for the Lord, changing the world for good, and restoring hope to the hopeless. These are the marks of a life that takes after His own, and by His grace we grow into them.

Your turn. If a stranger watched you for a week, what would they say you believe? Ask one person who knows you well to describe how your faith shows. Listen without defending yourself, and thank them.

Getting equipped for the diverse roles

A Christian is like a Scout: always prepared. So was Jesus Christ, our Mentor, whose life showed an ever-ready nature. He was always spiritually prepared and never lacking in grace, and He called on God whenever a situation required it. We need that readiness because the world around us is often far from well, and even capable leaders do not always have the solution. What can a true believer do in times like this, in a small community? God's answer has always been to equip His people for the task they are given.

God does not send His ambassador on an assignment without equipping them for it. He had an assignment for Moses and asked him a simple question: "What is that in thine hand?" Moses answered, "A rod" (Exodus 4:2 KJV). It became the "Rod of Moses", the rod of the miracles you and I proudly recount whenever we glorify God for His power. The same God has equipped you for your part, in the community and beyond.

A Christian is therefore called to a number of roles. There is the role to oneself and to one's family. There is the role to the neighbourhood and community, to one's place of worship, to other groups and to one's town, region or country. Then there are the roles in positions of trust and

in times of need. Each of these is taken up in the pages that follow.

Your turn. List the roles you will hold this week: at home, at work, at church and among friends. In which one are you least prepared? Pray about that role today, and decide one thing you will do differently in it.

The duty you owe yourself

Many will wonder what role a person should play in their own life, whether they are a Christian or not. Everyone has one, and a believer has many, if only to glorify God. A Christian must love themselves and take good care of themselves. That care covers the body and its surroundings: wholesome food, a clean environment and clean habits.

It covers the spirit too. A Christian must not leave themselves out of their own prayers. They may aspire to greater heights, but never at the expense of another person or the quality of the work they deliver. They must abstain, with God's help, from whatever destroys body, soul and spirit, and steer clear of sinners' company, of every temptation, and of the things that glitter but are not of God.

Doing honest work, even when no one's watching

Paid employment is not easy to secure in many places. If you have a job, receive it with thanks as a favour from God. This is no small matter, for a place at work is a seat that many would love to have, and those still looking for one deserve our prayers and practical help. It is a favour that

children of God must repay with their best: a full day's effort. It is also a testing ground, where your resilience, grace and resistance to temptation are proved, and where your prayers, your leadership and your example can make a difference.

That is why the job is a means of serving God fully, so that non-believers may glorify His holy name. Perhaps you are there for a purpose: to show Christ through your prayers, your actions and your responses to whatever comes. You may be there to show values such as godliness, prayer, the Bible as a guide, and a refusal of every form of evil, among people who need such values if their communities are to flourish.

If the job is in the public service, your conscience comes into play. Some young people think of it as "nobody's job", one on which they can cheat without consequence. But conscience and God are there. He sees the secret and rewards accordingly, sometimes in ways you least expect. A job is a job, and cheating on any job betrays the trust that gave rise to it. For the same reason, do not fake sickness to obtain a doctor's note.

Your turn. Would your employer or your teacher say you give a full day's effort even when nobody is checking? Choose one task you have been doing halfway, and do it fully this week.

When the sanctuary becomes your workplace

A Christian must work out their role in the place of worship and fulfil it in a way that pleases God. That begins

with cooperation, and with the regular prayers that glorify His name: prayers for yourself and others, and steady intercession for every unit and section of the church. It means giving service to the church as far as it lies within your power.

Such a place of service deserves a shining light. Stand in the gap, do ordinary things with uncommon care and keep your heart open to what God can do. Bring with you the values of character, integrity, firmness and hard work. Bring the family values too: a good family name, and behaviour that justifies the confidence of your parents. Bring also the habits of a person who shuns whatever is filthy and takes personal responsibility. In the church, as everywhere else, there are people who need someone to guide them, and you may be that person.

Showing up for every group you belong to

You may belong to clubs, societies, associations, professional bodies, service clubs, alumni groups, the Parent-Teacher Association or a circle of old colleagues. A Christian must recognise that they are different in such a group, and stay alert for chances to serve as they arise. That means making time to support and mentor others, including the younger ones who try to copy you in everything. Be a role model there, rising gallantly to every challenge and showing excellence in all things.

What does such service look like? It looks like care for the good behaviour of members, and for their families: the business of the parents, the education of the children, and

the journeys of spouses, friends and neighbours, including their spiritual lives. It is helping to restore hope to members who need it, and providing for the needs of others where you can.

The neighbours watching how you live

To many people, the community is simply the neighbourhood. Your neighbours are the people nearest to you, and they notice your ways, your movements, your habits and more. What does a Christian owe them? First of all, prayer. Every neighbour, whatever they believe, can be helped by prayer. Some are struggling in ways we cannot see, and they may be glad of someone who intercedes for them.

That has always been a Christian role. Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit, and when He came, they did great exploits for God and expanded His Kingdom on earth. All true believers enjoy the benefits of that expansion today, so each of us must play our own part well in whatever community we find ourselves.

A community is a group of people living in the same place, and it mixes all kinds. There are the young and the old, the rich and the poor, people of different faiths and none, people of the majority community and of minority ones. It holds wise people and foolish ones, good leadership and bad, sound values and compromised ones. It also reflects the moral state of the land, with its tensions and sometimes its violence, so that every community is a small picture of the wider society. This diversity is why a

Christian must appreciate how different people are, and find every fitting way to fit in meaningfully.

When believers work together, the community enjoys many benefits: cooperation, shared gifts, easier governance, care for the needy, cleanliness, protection, and a common benefit from good values. So a Christian is called to leadership, to service above self, and to dependable followership when that is what is needed. They help others in whatever way is possible, through prayer, practical planning, rescue or material and financial support.

The name you carry home

A Christian is never alone. They come through a family, and they bear its name. They guard that good name jealously, and let nothing dent it. They also care for the family's health, sleep and eating habits, and for the peace between the family and its neighbours.

Parents and elders are the first teachers in the home, and children learn peace, courtesy and conduct from them before they learn it anywhere else. They shape speech, behaviour and character, and they teach what children should learn, not only by instruction but by being worth copying. They also pray for the family, for the health, habits and well-being of every member.

Your turn. What do people say about your family when they mention your name? What would you want them to say? Name one habit at home that would strengthen your family's good name, and pray for your family by name tonight.

Where young minds are shaped

A school, college or university is a place for every Christian to show the virtues of Jesus and to lead through service, bringing peace to the wider community. A believer there, whether staff or student, is known for care and thoroughness in teaching and in administration, so that leaders point to them as an example. They reach their goals with excellence.

Temptation abounds in such places, especially for the young, and examination cheating is chief among them. A believer keeps away from every such disgraceful and demeaning habit. Instead, they pray for the whole community at the start of term, at its close and during examinations. They give freely to students, whether asked or not. And whenever they are elected to lead, they lead to everyone's satisfaction.

What power reveals about character

When a Christian lives in a community, they are not there as just any other person. They are looked up to, and they can do many things that others cannot. So it is not surprising that they are entrusted with positions of trust. Such a position may mean leading a national assembly, the judiciary, or men, women, materials and policies in a ministry. Whether it comes by election or appointment, it is high, and much is expected.

A believer accepts such a position without undue apology and rises to the occasion. It is a chance to glorify God and show leadership. But keep in mind the saying we hold dear:

"No Cross, No Crown!" Challenges will come, announced or unannounced, and they are no strange thing, and only a person who is spiritually ready can overcome them. Communities also expect those with learning and influence to speak up for them on matters of their rights, and a believer in that place can do so with grace.

Jesus gave us the picture of such service in the story of the Good Samaritan. He told of a man attacked by robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, left in dire need of help. Only the merciful and willing stopped, and when Jesus asked who had been a neighbour to the man, the answer came: "He that shewed mercy on him." Then Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37 KJV). That is the example Jesus wants every believer to be.

Notice that the Samaritan was ready. He had what the moment required, and he did not wait to be asked. How prepared are you and I? A Christian must always be ready to play the part only Christians can play, to God's satisfaction and the glory of His name.

What are the tools for that? One cannot afford to be an empty barrel. In anticipation of the unexpected, you must be spiritually loaded: a worshipper of Christ who values holiness and righteousness, without which no one can please God. Above all, be prayerful all the time, not just when need arises. If you pray only when it is convenient, how can you expect God's help when the need is greatest?

For anyone in a position of trust, then, certain things matter most: godly values, a life of prayer, a refusal of sin, a

practical Christian life, care for your own name and your family's, and an impact that glorifies God. Show non-believers the way to God, and teach leadership by example. All of this shows that you take after Christ, and it makes people turn to God, so that they too may receive the grace to do great things.

Standing firm when everything falls apart

Anyone who spares a thought for the state of things around them will see how much is going wrong. Economies are struggling, long-held moral norms are being eroded in many societies, and in many countries people face poor leadership, corruption, unfulfilled promises and dashed hopes. In places these have brought joblessness, hunger, decaying infrastructure, strained social services, violence and insecurity of life. Such situations call for the kind of intervention only God can give, the kind that makes ordinary people do extraordinary things.

A Christian is equipped to see beyond problems to solutions, because they can seek God's intervention in every problem. They can speak with boldness and stand in the gap for their community. They also have the patience to wait on God for guidance before acting, and are not prone to acting on impulse. While others turn to human theories and economic schemes, the believer turns first to the Lord.

Your turn. When bad news arrives, what is your first move: worry, complaint or prayer? Write down one situation that is troubling you now, and ask God for guidance before you act on it.

Standing firm is a skill, and I learned much of it from a man of God. First, be patient, waiting on God alone, without hurry and without asking why this has to be, or why you. Second, avoid entanglements that disturb the will of God, and run from sin, which not only entangles but leads to danger (see Genesis 19:16–17 and Romans 6:1–2). Third, depend on God alone. As Hebrews says, we are to be:

> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2 KJV)

Isaiah speaks in the same spirit of the Servant:

> For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (Isaiah 50:7 KJV)

Fourth, endure and persevere. The Servant also said, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6 KJV). Paul wrote:

> Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying:

> For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us. (2 Timothy 2:10–12 KJV)

And Jesus promised, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13 KJV). Each day brings its own happenings, so a Christian must keep watch.

Fifth, keep watching and praying, and depend on the grace of God, asking for His power always. When Paul pleaded for relief, the Lord answered:

> And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

Finally, know a test of faith when it comes. Even Jesus was tested: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1 KJV). The tempter began, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3 KJV). So pray not to fail the test, and take caution, for "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made" (Genesis 3:1 KJV). Take heart, too: "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry," and "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:15, 19 KJV). Commune with God regularly, and let trials teach you:

> And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3–5 KJV)

Checking how you are standing

The Bible tells us to be alert and not doze off. That warning goes beyond staying awake: it asks us to see how far along we are. It applies to leaders, shepherds and ordinary worshippers alike. Dangers prowl like the devil, looking for someone to destroy, and only God's grace keeps us from giving in. So let us examine ourselves regularly, to know where we stand and to adjust as needed. Ask yourself:

- How firmly do I accept God and believe in Him?
- How much do I live in righteousness and holiness?
- How faithfully do I pray, for myself and for others?
- How much of the Word do I use in daily life?
- How well do I meet what Jesus expects of a Christian?
- What difference do I make in my community and my country?
- If the Lord called for me today, would He find me ready?

What the world is waiting to see from you

All people are beautifully and wonderfully made in the image of God, but only true Christians are true followers

of Christ. They are His ambassadors: the light of the world, the salt of the world and the book others read. To be assured of salvation is no small gift, and every true Christian must repay God's goodness by playing their part wherever they live.

What does that mean in practice? It means remaining steadfast in reflecting Christ and living a life worth copying. It means interceding for those in authority and for the nations of the world, as Jesus does for all Christians, and restoring hope to the hopeless by helping those in need. It means mentoring others and leading as our Lord led. And it means speaking out when that is wise, and opposing ungodly actions, always in a way that calms a situation rather than inflaming it.

The Church cannot fold her arms while young women and children are trafficked, while people die on dangerous journeys abroad in search of a better life, and while the earth we were told to look after is abused. Time is not on our side. It may be that God, a patient God and a loving Father, is waiting for hearts to change and for people to turn back to Him and correct things. A stitch in time saves nine, and Christians should be at the head of that change.

Let us be more prayerful in these perilous times, for ourselves, our families and neighbourhoods, and for those wherever they may be. Our countries need this collective action, and we may ask the Lord to look kindly on them and make them prosper. They are dear to God, and only by staying together do we all gain. If you are safe at a distance from places of crisis, what about your relations who are

not? Can we afford to watch the labour and prayers of those who came before us go to waste? We must also hold to what is good and right. Standards do not change with the times; the times change, and the standards stay the same.

Your turn. Where in your week does your faith not go with you? Choose one place, a workplace, a classroom, or a home, and decide how it will show there.

Faith that stays in the pew

Picture a believer who prays loudly in church and keeps silent when a colleague is treated unfairly. His faith stays in the pew. Living out the marks of a true Christian, interceding for others, embodying virtue and radiating the joy and hope that come from God, is not something believers manage on their own strength. It begins with, and is sustained by, a heart that praises God at all times. We now turn to this discipline of praise. Faith lived out on Monday is the proof of faith professed on Sunday.

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

Faith That Shows

by Prof. Ayodele Rotimi Fatubarin

To read on, visit **keynoteslegacy.com** and look for this book.
You can also take the free scorecard there.

Keynotes Legacy Group Inc. You are welcome to share this sample.