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Don't Just Talk About Faith—Live It

Written by Bill Perkins

One summer while in high school, I attended a two-week conference in the mountains of Colorado. For ten hours a day, we listened to lecture after lecture about topics relating to our faith. From a Christian perspective, we heard about the Bible, apologetics, comparative religions, cultural issues, politics, and science.

During those two weeks, we rarely left the conference compound.

One afternoon, we went to a nearby park and argued about theological topics like the morality of vehicular speeding. Another afternoon, we picketed against a business we weren't supposed to like.

At the time, I enjoyed the experience, living among those who agreed with me on the fundamentals of life and learning about my faith. But now, nearly 20 years later, I wonder if those two weeks could have been better spent.

There's nothing wrong with learning, until it keeps us from living

We're raised to believe there's a hard divide between learning and living. We go to school for years all in an effort to prepare for life—to enter the "real world." Before we graduate from college and begin our career, we're merely students.

It's no surprise we treat faith similarly. I know I did.

For years I immersed myself in apologetics and debating friends. Yet I never did much to live out my faith—other than maintain a strict moral code. Even where my faith affected my behavior, I didn't think much about it. I wasn't doing it intentionally or with purpose.

I was doing the necessary prep work to one day live out my faith.

The truth is, learning and living are supposed to coexist. They go hand in hand. Yet too often, we immerse ourselves in learning to avoid living.

Living our faith isn't easy, but it's our calling

There's nothing harder than putting our beliefs into practice. It requires setting aside theological divides, accepting an element of uncertainty, stepping into the world, and engaging with people. Not superficially, but substantively. And not for the sole purpose of converting.

Living our faith means loving others, because God first loved us. Not after we cleaned up our act, but long before we had anything to offer.

This is our calling—to love those around us, especially those unlike us.

Loving isn’t arguing. It’s not necessarily talking. It’s doing. It’s showing up day after day after day. It’s forming friendships and sharing experiences. It’s having fun and living life together.

There’s a time and place for learning about our faith. There's a time and place for talking and even debating. But there’s also a time and place for living our faith. And that time is now.

Thomas Wells writes about living an intentional and authentic life of faith.