

Integration of Faith and Life in the Contemporary Society

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Abstract

Faith in God is the foundation of the Christian life and requires fully trusting in God as the promise-keeper. When faith is not an integral part of a person's life, this leads to sacred-secular divide. When Christians live dichotomized lives, they end up ruining their witness and become a stumbling block to unbelievers. Faith and normal living cannot be separated because faith ought to permeate every aspect of life. A lifestyle of worship requires intentionality and seeking to honor and glorify God in word and deed. This article will help you understand what integrating faith and life entails and discusses the hindrances to such integration and how to overcome them.

Keywords - Christianity, Faith and life, Integrating faith and life, Sacred secular divide

I. INTRODUCTION

Faith is believing in something without having supporting evidence and at times believing even when available evidence is against the belief (Buchak, 2012). However, it is not just about believing, but being able and committed to take actions that align with the faith one has, whether or not there is evidence and even when counter-evidence comes up. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as a substance of our hopes and expectations and as an evidence of the things we are yet to see. This shows that faith requires great trust in God and in His character as a promise-keeper. For a Christian, faith is the foundation upon which life is built.

The life of a Christian is a walk of faith. According to 2 Corinthians 5:7, we are to walk by faith instead of by sight. This means having unwavering trust and obedience to God even when facing life's challenges and uncertainties. Gleghorn (2022) views the Christian faith as being the very foundation of life and cannot be viewed as merely addition. When people view faith as merely an addition to life, they end up separating their jobs, hobbies and other activities of daily living from their Christian faith. This means that their faith does not influence other aspects of their lives, leading to a secular-sacred divide.

The topic of integrating faith and life is therefore timely, especially in the contemporary society where there is need for Christians who truly walk the faith in word and deed to serve as the light and salt to the decaying society. There is a loss of virtue in the society, not only socially, politically, and economically, but also in the church

(Aladegbami, n.d.). There is an integrity crisis among Christians, which reveals falling short of living in a Christ-like manner in word and deed. When Christians live dichotomized lives, they end up ruining their witness and become a stumbling block to unbelievers.

II. WHAT INTEGRATING FAITH AND LIFE ENTAILS

A. Faith and Life are Inseparable

Faith and life are cannot be separated; it is difficult to separate a person's faith from their everyday life. A study done by Sites et al. (2009) revealed that faith in Christ is an essence of being, is inseparable from everyday work and life, and is at the center of everything. Integration of faith and life is reflected in how a person speaks, what they do, and how they interact with people in their daily lives; that is, living out their faith everyday and every moment of their lives. It is involving God in all activities of life, whether in private or public, whether in church, work, school, business, and other areas of life, and whether it is on a Sunday or a weekday.

Faith and normal living cannot be separated because faith permeates every aspect of life. Living out faith is a lifestyle that permeates our thoughts, words, actions, and everyday activities (Global Disciples, 2024). A lifestyle of worship requires intentionality and seeking to honor and glorify God in word and deed. 1 Corinthians 10:31-33 is a reminder to us to glorify God in everything, whether we eat, drink, and in all other things that we do. This shows that even activities we consider

minor, such as eating and drinking should glorify God. God desires to be involved in every area of our lives.

Faith is a like compass and affects our value systems, family life, social, cultural, political, and economical life. According to Ventura and Magnoni (2014), faith helps to legitimize values in the society, influences people's way of life, promotes ethical practice at work and in business, helps to fight against corruption, and helps to resolve conflicts and promote peace. This means we are to practice out our faith in all domains of life and not compartmentalize it or limit it to the church only.

Integrating faith and life means making faith part of our identity. Faith helps a person define themselves from the inside out instead of by the things they do with the understanding that they are image bearers as they are created in the image of God (Sites et al., 2009). This means people stop defining themselves by their jobs, achievements, or external appearances but rather find a deeper meaning and an understanding of their identity in God. Through faith in Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit, people are renewed and regenerated into the image of God. Those in Christ become new creation according to 2 Corinthians 5:17.

B. The Problem with Sacred-Secular Divide

Sacred-secular divide is a threat and hinders the integration of faith and life. Such a divide prevents people from being salt and light to the world and from being a positive influence to the culture and people around them (Whelchel, 2019). This means that people end up viewing work as just a means to earn money and not as something that God uses to flourish His creation. Working is a divine call given to human kind in Genesis 1:28 and therefore we cannot separate work from God.

The divide leads to people missing out on opportunities to serve God and live a purposeful life. People spend an average of 90,000 hours in their lifetime at work and without a biblical understanding of work, may end up viewing it as a necessary evil instead of viewing it as worship (Colbert, 2022). This means such a huge amount of time ends up being wasted yet it could have been used to advance God's kingdom. It is important to be ambassadors of Christ in accordance with 2

Corinthians 5:20 and live purposeful lives, taking up every opportunity we have for the sake of promoting the kingdom of God.

A sacred-secular divide promotes moral decay and people living double lives. This means some people end up professing to be Christians on Sundays but on other days they live out like people of the world, engaging in all types of sin. While such people may think they are flourishing in what they are doing, they end up falling into rebellion against God and self-deception, which attracts God's judgment (Gray, 2023). In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira thought they could deceive God by keeping back part of the money they had got from selling their property. However, their act of deception led to the judgment of death.

A person whose faith is not integrated with their life ends up having divided and competing affection between things of the world and God, which eventually hinders their relationship with God (Cornerstone, 2020). Such double-mindedness is rooted in pride, fear of what people will say, shame, living passive lives, and a lack of accountability or transparency. This leads to self-deceit, a seared conscience, separation from God and from other people, and eventually spiritual death. We need to remember that God is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14).

C. Advantages of Integrating Faith and Life

Faith and religion gives one a sense of purpose. According to Culver and Lundquist Denton (2017), religion gives a sense of purpose, which is linked to a positive perception of God. People who feel that they have an attachment to God tend to feel more positive and with a sense of direction in life. When people incorporate their religious faith into everyday life, they are able to live purposeful lives. Purpose gives people the will to live, gives them direction, and helps them endure short-time discomfort (Nakamura et al., 2022).

Faith gives people a firm foundation for their lives. Matthew 7:24-27 tells us that those who hear and do according to the sayings of Jesus are like a wise man who built their house on a rock. This shows that integrating faith and life helps one to overcome life's challenges, no matter how big the challenges are, because the foundation of their lives are secure in God. In the book of Job, we see

him as a man who had great faith in God, that even in the midst of great suffering, he did not give up but continued trusting in God. Eventually, Job overcame and was greatly blessed by God.

A person who integrates faith with life becomes fruitful in all they do, whether it is in family life, at work, in business, and in other areas of life. Kolb (2014) notes that faith precedes good works, and that good works come out from a person who trusts in Jesus Christ and who lives a life that pleases God. In addition, it is the Holy Spirit who creates faith, and the faith in turn bears much fruit such as love for one another, acts of service, and giving. Good fruit is manifested by people living their lives according to God's word, in purity and without compromise. It is only by abiding in Christ that we can bear fruit (John 15:4-8).

Integrating faith and life in the family unit leads to unity and models a Christ-like faith-filled environment. It helps to teach children the importance of prayer, shows the importance of shared activities like meals, enforces virtues like kindness, compassion, love, and forgiveness, and helps the family to make better decisions by incorporating faith and prayer into the decision-making process (Enos, 2025). When the couple in the family incorporates faith into their marriage, they are able to love and submit to each other in accordance with Ephesians 5:21-33, which fosters marital unity, love, and respect and provides a good example to the children regarding how marriage should be.

At the work place, integrating faith with work would help to decrease the bifurcation between work and faith. According to Miller (2007), many people experience a Sunday-Monday gap because their Sunday worship usually has little or no relevance to their experiences in the workplace. This is especially because many pastors do not address work-related spiritual and ethical challenges. This shows a need to equip people with practical ways of integrating their Sunday experience with work experience. An integration of faith and work would help people handle challenges at work ethically and in a way that pleases and honors God.

The integration of faith and work would also help to increase productivity, facilitate promotion, and help one to be a good witness to

other people in the workplace. It allows the Christian to be a good steward and provides one with the opportunity to exercise their gifts, calling, purpose, and model servant-leadership (Roberts, 2016). Servant-leadership in the workplace helps one balance between achieving the work mission, morality, and promoting the best interest of other employees, the clients, and the community in general. This in effect helps one to influence the culture of the workplace in a Christ-like way, and helps other people to be drawn to God when they observe the good works of the servant-leader. This is a way of fulfilling the great commission given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20.

In business, a faith-based approach helps one apply God's principles and make critical ethical decisions in faith, do the right thing, and be ready to suffer negative consequences if that may be for the sake of following Christ (Julian, 2014). This requires courage and an understanding that one can follow Biblical principles and be successful at the same time. Such an integration of faith and business helps one to use their talents, gifts, and skills and achieve success in the world without conforming to the world; by prioritizing integrity over profit. Romans 12:2 warns against conforming to the patterns of the world.

Grudem (2003) notes that many people do not view business as morally good, view it as morally neutral, and have neglected it as a way to honor God. While business has a huge potential to be misused, it is a good way to honor God. Business helps us to reflect God's character in terms of excellence, creativity, and solving business problems and challenges ethically. Integrating faith and business gives one a chance to own property through the right means, to be productive and serve other people, provide opportunities for employment, buy and sell goods and services, and make profit. All these aspects of business glorify God when they follow Biblical principles.

D. Practical Steps to Integrate Faith and Life

A home, steps to integrate faith and life would involve setting time for family devotions, engaging in bible study, having prayer time, volunteering in the community as a family, incorporating faith into family celebrations and holidays, playing faith-based music at home,

attending church together, and being guided by biblical principles in their daily interactions (Goyer, 2024). Engaging in such activities would help to strengthen the faith of individual family members and the family as a whole, promotes family unity, and helps the family to live in a God-honoring way.

At work, practical steps to integrate faith and life would include praying for fellow coworkers for God to work in them, living in a Christ-like way, taking an interest in the lives of coworkers and asking if you could pray for their needs, offering a Christian worldview on current events and work-related matters, being humble, respectful, and always protecting your testimony (Nicholas, 2019). It is important to be wary not to fall into the trap of trying to fit in and acting in a worldly way at work, remaining mindful of God's presence even in the workplace. Psalm 139:7-12 is a reminder that God's presence is everywhere.

Socially, it is important to seek godly friendships and engage in activities that glorify God, such as visiting the sick and attending church together. On social media, one needs to be careful of what they post or comment on. Online interactions should be guided by biblical principles. Colossians 3:12 is a good guide about the importance of remaining kind, humble, gentle, and patient as God's chosen people. It is important to be careful who one follows online, be graceful in online engagements, post thoughtfully and guard one's tongue, and for one to guard their time and invest it wisely (Ericksen, 2023).

In business, one should remember that the foundation of a good business is the word of God, should operate on biblical principles and values and on a godly mission, and should be focused on advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ (McGuire, 2022). One needs to seek God for wisdom when doing business and be guided by biblical principles such as honesty, integrity, respect, upholding ethical standards, and service to others. In addition, it is important to remain professional, be accountable, and view business as a way to glorify God.

Politically, it is important to choose God-fearing leaders. God-fearing leaders do what is right in the eyes of God, are trustworthy, courageous, and are people of integrity (Global Reachout, 2021). The only way to fight corruption

and poor governance is in making better choices at the leaders we choose. In addition, the church should be actively engaged in politics and call out injustices and corrupt practices perpetrated by leaders. As citizens, we also need to play our part by being subject to governing authority in accordance with Romans 13:1-4. Integrating faith and life in this case would mean obeying the laws of the land, upholding justice and fairness, and contributing positively to the society.

E. Hindrances to Integrating Faith and Life and How to Overcome Them

Some of the things that can hinder one from effectively integrating faith and life include fear and a lack of faith in God, lack of a prayer life, worldly desires, passivity, pride, a desire to fit in, clashing societal norms, and sometimes legal challenges. Other hindrances include bible illiteracy, compartmentalization and separation of faith from other aspects of life, and a lack of total allegiance to Christ (McCracken, 2016). When one compartmentalizes their faith life from everyday life, they end up living a double life and being double-minded, making them unstable people according to James 1:8.

Overcoming these challenges requires a commitment for one to live out every aspect of their lives for the honor and glory of God. One needs to be committed to prayer, studying and meditating on the word of God, engaging in worship with a community of believers, and being a doer of the word of God according to James 1:22-25. It is important not to give in to fear, whether it is fear of missing out or fear of what people will say, but instead walk by faith and fix eyes on Jesus Christ as instructed in Hebrews 12:2. Integration of faith and life requires spiritual depth at a personal level leading to a natural outflow of the spiritual essence, a relationship with God, and intentionality (Sites et al., 2009).

III. CONCLUSION

It is important for a Christian to learn how to live an integrated life. Faith and life cannot be separated because faith permeates every aspect of human life, that is, socially, politically, economically, and culturally. Compartmentalization of faith and limiting it to the church only leads to a person living a double life,

which hinders their testimony as a Christian. One cannot afford to be just a Sunday Christian, while living like the world other days of the week. It is not God's will for Christians to live double lives, as that makes them lukewarm and ineffective in advancing the kingdom of God on earth. God tells the lukewarm that He will vomit them out of His mouth in Revelation 3:15-16.

God's will is for us to be the light of the world and salt of the earth according to Matthew 5:13-16. That can only happen when we fully integrate our faith in Jesus Christ with everyday living. An integrated life lived without compromise and without conforming to the patterns of the world helps to draw other people to Christ. As people watch how we live our lives, not as hypocrites but as people who are totally sold out to Christ, they get inspired to draw closer to God, which is one of the most effective forms of evangelism.

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