

Do Your Values and Transparency Match Your Self-Proclaimed Faith?

Christians have long dealt with controversy and threats of persecution, but today the cultural and spiritual contexts present serious challenges to faith, values and authenticity—all three of which remain essential to religious beliefs and practices. Without the interdependence and interaction of faith, values and authenticity, a professed believer's moral principles, stated opinions and behavior may come into question. The believer's life may prove ineffective.

The term "faith" implies complete trust or confidence in someone or something; as regards religion, the term implies an acceptance of the operation of God's spirit. It involves spiritual apprehension even if physical proof doesn't exist. The essence of faith involves the assent to the existence and availability of God. For Christians, "faith" can be defined as "belief in Christ and His teachings."

Faith and grace remain inseparable, and grace enables faith. Christians understand that God spontaneously offers grace to aid the development of faith as an operation of His Spirit. Faith enables believers to receive grace, which, in turn, helps the further growth of faith.

Faith helps produce faithfulness or loyalty and steadfastness. It encourages strong religious beliefs and practices and implies a healthy relationship. Christians and Christ remain faithful to each other as their ultimate priority and duty.

The word "value" focuses on an individual's principles or standards of behavior and what she/he considers important in life. Values motivate people and guide their behavior. They also influence the way people live and serve as a significant

force in decision-making.

Desirable common values include loyalty, humility, compassion, honesty, kindness and selflessness; several of the common values are viewed as core values. Spiritual values, however, differ from core values and comport with spirituality and faith. Those values include a sincere search for meaning, altruistic love, visioning, an acknowledgment of the happy work of Christ and authenticity. A believer will, at times, experience guilt and feel the need for reconciliation with God and His Son Jesus, but each one possesses the hope of eternal life.

Believers often subordinate the core values to the spiritual, not because they see the former as unimportant but because spiritual values serve as an umbrella for the development of core and common values. They do not necessarily relate to worldly laws and values but to the relationship between the believer and God and the believer's understanding of that relationship. Spiritual values determine believers' moral responsibilities.

"Authenticity" serves as a core value and infers adherence to both common and spiritual values regardless of adverse pressure. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines authenticity as "the quality of being real"; authentic Christians know who they are and don't succumb to what society wants them to become or do.

Authentic Christians stop—at least to the level they can—living and acting like the world. They acknowledge and honor Jesus Christ in every facet of their lives. They seek to follow Jesus's instruction quoted in John 8:31-32: "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Faith, value and authenticity remain essential to the evolution and maintenance of spirituality and the biblical

growth of the believer. Faith in God and the death and Resurrection of His son Jesus serve as the foundation of each Christian's belief in and faithfulness to Christianity.

Those who possess spiritual values seek meaning in life and display altruistic love. They seek and exhibit authenticity congruent with their relationship with Christ and the people around them. {eoa}

Franklin T. Burroughs was awarded a Nishan-e-Homayoun by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi for his work in the Iranian Ministry of Court and has received certificates of recognition from the California Senate and State Assembly. He is a member of the adjunct faculty of John F. Kennedy University and has served as president of Armstrong University and interim dean of the School of Business at Notre Dame de Namur University. He has taught at the University of California at Berkeley. He has been the managing director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Iran and has served as consultant to the Ford Foundation, UNESCO, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the government of Iran. He has also been visiting scientist at the U.S. Department of Energy. He serves as an English language officer (contractor) with the U.S. Department of State. Dr. Burroughs serves as an international consultant in education, Middle East affairs and cultural diplomacy.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.