

## AUTHENTIC FAITH: BUILDING COMMUNITY

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I grew up reading a lot of epic fantasy: tales of unlikely heroes who answered a call, undertook a quest, overcame staggering odds, battled monsters, and ultimately made a huge difference in the world. In my real life, however, there have been few (okay, no) acts of dragon slaying, and more acts of just summoning the courage to make my introverted self call someone on the phone. The people I admire in the real world are not those with splashy one-and-done epic faith events, but those with a relentless authentic faith: men and women whose daily practices of faith last a lifetime and impact those around them.



What makes those acts of faith sustainable is that they flow from who and where the person is. Tabitha's faith did that. She was a woman connected to other women who had a gift for making clothing. She was so integral to the life of the community that when she died, her fellow women sent word to Peter. Bold move, women! By raising her from the dead, God showed the value he placed on authentic faith and restored her to the community where she became a living testament to God's power (and, one assumes, made more clothes)!

I am struck by how Tabitha's authentic faith impacted the community. In today's verse Paul is pleading with the church to respect each other: those who are working hard, leaders, and people who are weak or marginalized. We live out authentic faith with and for the benefit of others.

However, we often overlook daily practices of faith. We need to be intentional about pointing them out so that we all benefit from their example.

1. Share with children the role models of faith in your own life. Share your own testimony with your children and point out the people of faith who were there for you along the way.
2. Tell stories of friends and family that make a difference in your community. Who are the members of your church who might be a Tabitha? Many of these folks would be happy to share their faith stories.
3. Point out the "helpers" as Mr. Rogers would say as you find them in your lives or learn about stories from the news. Find stories of good people who do good things.
4. Actively seek out a mentor with similar interests as your child. Maybe someone can give one-on-one lessons: piano lessons, small engine repair, sewing, computer skills, cooking, and many others. What skills or activities can a grandparent, older church member, or neighbor share with your family?
5. Find a family service project that your church is sponsoring and work together with other church members. Afterward, your children will know these other adults and will continue to be encouraged by them in church.

And, hey, maybe be transparent about the "small" acts of faith in your own life. I make sure to let my kids know that my real effort to call someone or show up to an event is never wasted in God's hands. If my small faithful acts inspire them to connect to others, God's love continues to spread. I may not be slaying a dragon, but I am still part of God's epic story.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Crossing Barriers and Learning to Love My Neighbor](#)

