

8 Steps to Energize Your Faith

Joe Paprocki

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8 Steps to Energize Your Faith is a lighthearted spiritual self-help book that mixes pop cultural and biblical references into its recommendations for engaging in fulfilling Christian practices.

Joe Paprocki's uplifting self-help book *8 Steps to Energize Your Faith* shares practical tips for connecting to God in one's everyday life.

Arguing that everybody reflects the glory of God and can manifest some of God's blessings in their lives, this book shares eight strategies for doing that work. These techniques include embracing creativity and developing a simple lifestyle. Each exploratory chapter includes guided questions to help in the development of its spiritual themes. Anecdotes are also used to support each chapter and bit of advice: in asserting that God acts to repair what's broken, the book also uses examples of people exemplifying the same drive and notes an increase in home-related projects during COVID-19.

The book's sections are brief, and its language is conversational. Pop cultural references—as to George Bailey's angelic wake-up call in *It's a Wonderful Life*—complement its encouragements for people to dig deeper every day. Its suggestions that people nurture their creative ambitions, and even muse on their understandings of Christmas, reinforce its sense of the simplicity and accessibility of spiritual growth. At the same time, it argues that people should prioritize emulating God if they wish to revitalize their faith, building on eight key characteristics, each of which is supported with biblical passages and the words of popes and saints. The lives of the latter are also held up as examples: Saint Francis developed a practice of simple living, just as the audience is prompted to do.

While some of the book's advice is familiar fare, intriguing theological explorations also arise. Paprocki argues that God is creative, and that his “first act is to create all of reality.” This is used as evidence that people, too, should be creative in spirit, through either their work or their hobbies. But this encouraging work closes with a call to repentance, deviating from the preceding help with energizing faith to convince audiences of a Christian message. What was a spiritual self-help book seems to be, following this evangelism, more of a tract.

Drawing on and amplifying Catholic teachings, *8 Steps to Energize Your Faith* is a lighthearted and heartfelt spiritual self-help book that mixes pop cultural and biblical references into its recommendations for engaging in fulfilling Christian practice.

JEREMIAH ROOD (November 22, 2022)

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