

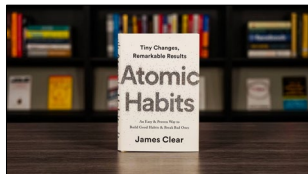
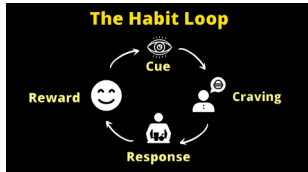
Atomic Faith

Part II: Make It Obvious

July 20, 2025



Today we're learning how to make our faith **unavoidable**. Cuz if something *isn't* at the center of our *attention*, it is getting moved to the *back* of our *brain* – and when *life* gets loud, our focus on *faith* can get *hijacked* by *whatever's* in *front* of our *face*. Which means *faith* often fails *not* because it was *intentionally abandoned* but just because it was *accidentally forgotten*! And beyond *that*, it means if we *want* our faith to *have* bulletproof *consistency*, we have to *help* it become *unavoidably* easy-to-see. So, *here's* the question to consider *today*: **Is your faith obvious?**



Probably *not*. Unfortunately, **our faith is often hidden underneath layers of less pressing matters** that make us *believe* they deserve our urgent attention *just* because they're so annoyingly *noticeable*. It's the *soccer schedule*, the *shopping list*, the *bank account*, the *birthday party*, and the long list of other *distracting* duties that make up our *daily lives* – all these things *subtly steal* our attention *piece by piece* until *suddenly*, we can't see anything *else* – and we don't realize how *blind* we've *become*.

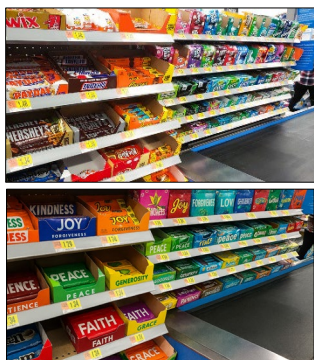
And that's a *big problem* when the stuff we *can't see* contains the secrets to *staying alive*! Cuz **letting life steal focus from faith is like letting cooking steal focus from eating!** It's *stupidly self-defeating*! The whole *purpose* of *cooking* is to *eat* the same way the whole *purpose* of *life* is to *have faith*!

So, we need a way to *keep* our attention *aimed* at the *right* thing; that is, **we need to control our cues** – cuz as we talked about last week, our *habits* drive our *identity* through a *loop* of *cues*, *cravings*, *responses*, and *rewards* – and if we keep a habit *consistent*, each little *loop* becomes a tiny *step* that *compounds* over time, to become *one gigantic jump*. So, no wonder *God's* recommended making *obvious* reminders *since the start*:

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates [Why? Cuz you need to]... be careful that you do not forget the LORD – Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 11-12 NIV

Does He know humans *or what*?! God's saying **"You need to see Me constantly if you want to stay close to Me consistently"** cuz He knows how *easily* distracted we are. Like we just talked about a few *weeks* ago: life is *filled* with non-stop *noise* that can completely *derail* our *devotion*! Which means **to make our faith unforgettable, we have to make it unavoidable!**

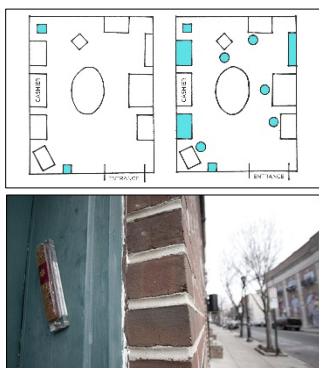
So *today*, we're going *return* to James Clear's principles of *change* from the book *Atomic Habits* and nail down 7 *more key ideas* to make our faith *so obvious* that it becomes an *inescapable* part of *each* and *every day*! And just like last week – we're *already* into our *first* key:



1. What You See Is What You Seek Why do grocery stores put *candy* at the checkout? So you'll *buy* it – not cuz you *came* for it – but because you *saw* it. Cuz *that's* all it takes for your *brain* to say, “Oooh, *me want that!*” It's called an impulse item – and we love 'em! Cuz *they're* the cues that *remind* us of a *reward* that we can *crave*. And since *cues command* our *actions*, **visibility drives spirituality**. Cuz the *body* was built for the *Spirit*,

[And] Your eye is the lamp of your *body*. When your eyes are healthy, your whole *body* also is full of *light*. But when they are *unhealthy*, your *body* also is full of *darkness*. – Luke 11:34 NIV

Now, our *eyes* may *decide* what the rest of us *does* by *reminding* us of the *rewards* we want – but, *how* they see heavily *depends* on what they see; so if faith ain't our field of *vision*, it *won't* be part of our daily *decisions*. But, that's actually *good* news cuz **we can pick impulse items to put on our path**. That is, we can *choose* the cues to *guide* our eyes thanks to key **2. What You Design Is What You Do**.



And there's a great *story* about how Dr. Anne Thornedike put *this idea* to the *test*! Cuz after *she* and her *colleagues* became *frustrated* by the *unhealthy habits* at their hospital's *cafeteria* – they decided to try and *motivate* change by *quietly* rearranging *where* the *water* was. That's it. No *signs*. No *speeches*. Just *visibility*. And guess what? *Soda* sales dropped 11.4% while *water* shot up over 25! *Why*? Cuz **obvious options steal our attention to change our intention**. I mean, it's *right there* – so *why not*? As Clear puts it, **“Environment is the invisible hand that shapes human behavior.”** In fact, the words ‘*habit*’ and ‘*habitat*’ share the *same* Latin root cuz both relate to their *impact* on our *identity*!

So *here's* the takeaway: **Design beats discipline**. And rather than *relying* on our weak *willpower*, we can *set up* our *surroundings* for *spiritual success*. That's why we were told to *literally* **“Write [God's commands] on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates”** Ever heard of a *mezuzah*? It's a small scroll of *Scripture* that Jewish homes *literally attach* to their doorframes to *touch* or *kiss* when they *enter* or *exit* – so that they'd be *routinely* reminded of God's *presence* and *commands*. Because, God *wasn't* kidding: **earthly environments can shape spiritual habits**.

And since *visual* cues carry the *biggest* influence on our *behavior*, a *small change* in what we see can create to a *big change* in what we *do*. Which is *more* good news when we realize what God was getting at: **You don't have to be the victim of your environment; you can be its architect**. So, forget the *water* – *imagine* what would happen if *you made* opportunities for *faith* more visible!

[Like Scripture says:] Let love and faithfulness *never leave you*; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart ... *do not* let wisdom and understanding *out of your sight*, [cuz that's how we can] *preserve* sound judgment and discretion – Proverbs 3:3,21 NIV

You *don't* need to be *hyper-disciplined*, you just need to **design your space to support your spirit**. So put a *Bible* in your *bathroom*; wear a *sweater* with a *Scripture*, or *set aside* a *specific* prayer space. That's **environmental discipleship** – and it just means *making* the cues for your faith *hard to miss*! Which bings us to key **3. Use What You Got!**



Remember, **atomic faith is built on small, sustainable changes, not monumental moves** – so we’re *not* trying to change *everything*, we’re trying to change *one* thing; our *identity*. You can *still* have the same *job*, the same *Stabucks routine*, and the same *hobbies* – we’re just encouraging our *new* identity to slowly *influence* our *old* life by stacking *new reminders* onto our *existing* everyday *rhythm*. It’s what Clear calls “habit stacking” but *he* didn’t invent it – *God did!* And *He* called it *circumcision*. That’s the *original* stack – one *little* change and *tons* of *old* routines became *new cues*! Taking a *bath*, using the *restroom*, making a *baby*, or seeing the *doctor* all triggered *one* reminder, **“I belong to God.”**

[So,] *Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, [find a way to remind yourself to] do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus* – Colossians 3:17 NIV

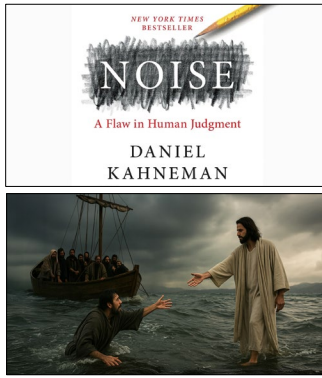
Seriously! You can still take a *hike*, take out the *trash*, and take a *vacation* – just **take your faith everywhere you already go!** Have you noticed how we have Scripture always playing in our *bathrooms* and verses written on the wall? *That’s the idea!* And I know it works cuz between his *car stereo*, *bathroom radio*, *yardwork headphones*, and *hot tub speaker* – I’ve watched *Bruce* slowly saturate every routine with a way to read the Bible! It’s really quite a *sickness...* but that’s for *another* sermon. All I’m asking *us* to do, is find one routine *task*, regular *walk*, or pre-existing *practice* and *add* your *holy* habit to it; cuz **faith spreads fastest when it’s grafted into what we’re already growing.** And to make *sure* your faith *finds* that *fertile soil*, we need key **4. Call Your Shot.**



Let’s be real **most of us don’t need more motivation – we need a plan.** And since we all *know* it, we’ve *studied* it a lot. And *one* study tried to nail down what actually *works* to get people to *increase* their *exercise* by dividing into *three* groups; *Group 1* just *tracked* when they worked out. *Group 2* got a motivational speech *about* working out. But *Group 3* simply filled in the blanks of *one simple sentence*: **“I will exercise at [time] on [day] at [place].”** And *that* group more than *doubled* the others in exercise with an *unheard* of *91% follow-through*! Why? Because **clarity creates consistency**; because a *real plan* with a *purpose* beats mere *intention* with *emotion* every time! And Proverbs *agrees*:

The plans of the *diligent* lead to *profit* as surely as *haste* leads to poverty. – Proverbs 21:5 NIV

It’s not about being *rigid* – it’s about being *realistic*. If we don’t *call our shot*, chances are we *won’t take it*. So we have to *set up* the *specifics*, or what Clear calls **“implementation intentions.”** And instead of *vague* goals *without* details, like, **“I’m gonna read my Bible tomorrow”** they sound like *this*: **“I will read the first chapter of Proverbs at 6:30 a.m. in the blue chair with coffee.”** Cuz the best way to *stack* a habit is to *schedule* a habit. We gotta *give* our faithful *habit* a real *habitat* where it can take root and *get growing*! So get a *journal*, grab some *habit trackers*, and lay out the specific *action*, *time*, and *place*, where you *intend* to *implement*. And again, the *size* isn’t important, it can be **“I will pray for my kids after brushing my teeth at night.”** or **“I will volunteer at the His Place Youth Group on Wednesday at 5:30.”** It just needs to be *realistic* and *specific* for it to stick, because **we don’t drift into devotion, we plan for it.** And part of *that* plan takes key **5. Kill the Clutter**



Cuz *bad influences* have a way of obstructing *good intentions*! And *faith* can struggle to *find* a foothold in our *routine* if it's being *drowned out* by other *recurring distractions*. But **distraction isn't always disobedience – sometimes it's just poor design**. My *daughter* and I have an *ongoing* argument about how to best do *homework* – and she *insists* that she works well in the *kitchen* while people are watching TV in the *living room*. Which is *why* I read the *research* that debunked multi-tasking like we talked about a few weeks back; but since *she* didn't listen to *that sermon* – let me *repeat* what science has *proven* time and again: **competing cues kill both clarity and consistency!**

[So, if we want our faith to flourish] Let us *throw off* everything that *hinders* ... [cuz that's the key that'll] let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, – Hebrews 12:1 NIV

If we want to *consistently* keep our *specific* strategies for spiritual growth *on track*, **it's important to clear the way of any anticipated obstacles!** So, for heaven's sake – *silence your phone* before any attempt to focus on your *faith*! Cuz sometimes **making faith obvious might just mean making other things less obvious!** Which brings us to another *environmental* key **6. Crowdsource Your Cues**



I don't think we can say it enough, **we're not trying to be more faithful, we trying to be a person who has faith**. And if our *environment* shapes the *cues* that consistently shape *you*, we need to *account* for the impact of all the people who are *part* of our *environment*! Because, like psychologist David McClelland famously *concluded*: **we become the average of our five closest friends**. Just like the *Bible* has *been saying*:

Bad company *corrupts* good character. – 1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV



So *what* can you *do*? **Redesign your social setting!** As Clear suggests: **"Join a culture where your desired behavior is normal behavior."** But gee, *where* could we *find* a group of *people* who help us put *faith* in *front* of our *eyes*...? If only there was a dedicated *community* whose *whole purpose* was sharing *Christian cues*! Wait a sec... *Hobby Lobby*! I mean *His Place*! The church environment was engineered *for spiritual support*!



And *fellowship* has always been a *focus* of *faith* cuz **faith isn't just taught, it's caught – and you catch what you're close to**. So *surround* yourself with *friends* who are aimed at the *same* holy habits that *remind* you of the identity *you're adopting*. Cuz *that's* how we carry out key **7. Trigger Yourself**. Listen, we can *redesign* our *space*, *stack* our *habits*, and *clear* the *clutter* – but **we won't start living with by faith until it's too obvious to ignore!** So, *here's* the challenge for *this* week:

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. – Colossians 3:2 NIV

Set up some *unavoidable triggers* to *remind* you of your *faithful routine*. Pick *one place* you already visit *everyday* and *use it* to make *one* holy habit *visible*. If it's *Scripture* reading – try the *Bible* in the *bathroom*; if it's *gratitude* – put *reminders* on the *refrigerator*! *Whatever* it is, just get it in your *eyesight* to trigger yourself for *6 more days* and then come back here so we can talk about how to become even *more proactive* – by making our faith *irresistibly attractive*!

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.