



Produced by Faith: Enjoy Real Success without Losing Your True Self

By DeVon Franklin

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Hollywood executive DeVon Franklin shows readers how to live and work their faith from nine to five, not just after quitting time.

STRAIGHT FROM HOLLYWOOD comes a dynamic business model for building a thriving career without compromising your faith. DeVon Franklin, vice president of production for Columbia Pictures, shares how being bold about his Christian faith while being driven and ambitious has actually worked in his favor to help him excel in a high-profile, fast-paced, competitive industry.

You are the movie. *Produced by Faith* parallels each step of the Hollywood filmmaking process with the faith-making process God uses to turn your career into a success. You will discover that it is possible to be both wildly successful and completely committed to God—and that you will be even more successful when you place your faith at the center of your career. You can unleash the power of your faith as your greatest professional advantage and use the compass of God's Word to guide you to your true passion and purpose in life. In this informative, inspiring book, DeVon reveals the secrets to maintaining your faith while advancing in your career. Here he shows you:

- * How to discover The Big Idea for your life
- * How to take your career to the next level
- * How to recognize the signs God sends you that indicate when it's time to move in a new direction
- * How to stand firm on your Christian principles without compromise
- * How to work with people who don't understand your beliefs
- * How to choose a profession, industry, or company that is in tune with your purpose

DeVon says, “I know from my own experiences that if you will put your career in God’s hands and trust Him, you can’t account for all the ways He will bless you. When you step out in faith, He will open doors and bring you opportunities that will surpass even your wildest expectations. . . . If I have learned anything, it’s this: *To get where you want to go, you’ve first got to become the person God wants you to be.*”

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Editorial Review

Review

"In the fifteen years I've known DeVon, he's lived his life the same way he makes his movies: with commitment, humility, and a work ethic that demands respect. I'm honored to have been a part of his journey from stellar intern to studio vice president--his story is one to be shared with anyone chasing a dream."--Will Smith

"DeVon Franklin is a remarkable man of infectious enthusiasm and a sterling example that one can navigate through the complexities of life, even the verisimilitude of Hollywood, with clarity, purpose, and integrity."--Angela Bassett

"Holding on to one's faith while pursuing a dream, especially in the entertainment business, is no small feat. DeVon demonstrates this possibility beautifully and without compromise. The themes of DeVon's book are great examples of how to pursue any career, not just within the movie business, and stay true to God."--Tyler Perry

"After reading DeVon Franklin's book, "Produced by Faith", I thought it would have been a great guide for my early life, but it's never too late for a book like this. "Produced by" Faith is a wonderful gift from an insightful, inspiring man."--Antwone Fisher

"It takes faith to step out from obscurity into the glaring lights of Hollywood particularly as a man of faith. Not only does DeVon Franklin detail his astonishing ascension to the top of his craft, he shares how he did it to the glory of God and to the delight of blockbuster audiences around the globe. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to strike that quintessential balance between faith and function. Hollywood, like life, is a walk of faith."--Bishop T. D. Jakes

"His book is designed to show readers how to honor their faith and still succeed in their careers. Franklin is doing just that in Hollywood."--Mike Fleming, Deadline Hollywood

About the Author

DeVon Franklin was recently promoted to vice president of production for Columbia Pictures, a division of Sony Pictures Entertainment, making him one of the youngest individuals in that position in the industry. In addition to his entertainment industry pursuits, DeVon is also a Christian minister and motivational speaker. He travels from Los Angeles to Oakland at least one weekend each month to preach at Wings of Love Maranatha Ministries, where he is an ordained elder.

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PREFACE

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.*
—Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV

I was deep in the heart of Beijing, People's Republic of China, in the summer of 2009. For the first time in my career, I was the lead studio executive on a feature film—the remake of *The Karate Kid*, starring Jackie Chan and Jaden Smith, son of actor Will Smith.

It's important to understand that Beijing—the ancient capital of China—is *huge*. The urban area alone contains about 13 million residents; that's four cities of Los Angeles. Beijing is also complex on a Byzantine scale, and with the producers, entire crew, and cast there, we had ventured far into some of the oldest parts of the city, into ancient neighborhoods called *hutongs* where the living style was more communal and we could find the character and feel we were looking for.

Getting cast, crew, and equipment there was a major undertaking, the shots were taking a long, long time to set up and complete, and as I stood there, we were running out of daylight.

Sunset is usually panic time for a film crew. Unless you're shooting night scenes, you try to work in every last shot you can, using reflectors to capture every last bit of natural light. The crew was working as quickly as they could to maximize what was a very expensive day of production. But I had other concerns. I glanced at my watch, shot a look at the disappearing sun, and knew that even though I was the sole representative for Columbia Pictures on set, I had to leave.

I had no choice. That is, I didn't *give myself* a choice.

Fortunately, the producers knew that I would be making my way back to the hotel. It wasn't a surprise to anybody. I pulled one of the production assistants aside, told him I would be catching a taxi, left the production in the capable hands of the producers and director, and disappeared into the streets of Beijing. It was an act that might have been ridiculed if I hadn't set a precedent years before and remained committed to it. Leaving set on the first movie you're running—shooting halfway around the world—isn't advisable if you want a long prosperous career in Hollywood.

But I didn't lose my job.

In fact, my departure didn't make a ripple in the day's shoot. I was able to attend to something infinitely more important: keeping a promise to God that I made many years before.

I was born thirty-two years ago and raised as a Seventh-day Adventist. Among other things, that means I celebrate the Sabbath. So from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, I unplug from my hectic life as a Columbia film executive. No work. I don't check e-mail or roll calls. I break the fourth commandment of the movie business—*Thou shalt never turn off thy BlackBerry*—and turn off my BlackBerry.

The Sabbath is my time with the Lord, my time to unwind from the pressures of work, heal, and reflect on the many blessings in my life and the career path that has led me here. On Friday nights I study my Bible, pray, spend quiet hours in communion with God, and make plans with family for church and fellowship on Saturday.

Unless I happen to be in Beijing. In that case, I'll read Scripture, watch the incredible metropolis slowly come to life, and pray that the dailies look good. Normally I would go to church, but in China most of the Christian churches are underground and I had no idea how to go about finding them. So I settled for reading the Bible and spending time in private communion with God—my own personal church in the midst of one of the world's busiest cities.

The next morning, I decided that didn't want to spend the entire Sabbath in my hotel room. I ended up going to a park right outside the Olympic Village where I could sit under God's sky, watch the birds, listen to gospel music, and read the Word. As I was going through Romans, the idea came to me for this book. Just like that, clear as day.

* * *

YOU MAY FIND IT impossible that a Hollywood studio executive is also a devout Christian. But it's not a contradiction. In reality, my business is not very different from your own. There are opportunities, politics, unspoken expectations, and a set of rules for advancement that are very different from the Lord's rules. No matter what line of work you find yourself in, you may feel that being a Christian is holding you back. You may feel caught between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, if you don't toe the company line and put your career first, can you still call yourself a company man or woman? On the other, if you ignore the Word and set aside the precepts of your faith when it's convenient, can you still call yourself a Christian? Sometimes, it feels like we're walking on a tightrope and below us there's no net, just a big, dark abyss.

I've got great news. I've found that it is possible to put Christ first and have a thriving career. In fact, I believe it's necessary. My favorite scripture is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." God is our strength; his love, demonstrated through us, can move mountains and change hearts. Being a Christian is actually a *competitive edge*... provided that you place your faith first above even your professional aspirations. Even if in the past you've compromised and slid partway down that slippery slope, it's still possible to find your way back. If I have learned anything, it's this:

To get where you want to go, you first have to become the person God wants you to be.

I know writing this book is definitely part of my journey to become who God wants me to be. Some would probably say I'm crazy. The common practice when you're in business is that you write a book after you've either reached your goal and accumulated some power and prominence or left your industry altogether. I'm in neither place. I'm just like most of the people reading this book: still climbing the corporate ladder and/or right in the middle of my career pursuit. Yet I believe God has called me right now to share my unique experiences and this urgent message with you, so I must be obedient to his will.

The message? During my time in the film industry, I have put my faith front and center for everyone to see. It's my experience that people handle the intersection of faith and career in one of two ways. Some conceal their beliefs at the workplace, dumping their Christian principles on the kitchen table like a spare set of keys when they leave the house in the morning. Others refuse the command to be "in the world but not of the world" and work only in environments run by and for other Christians.

Both approaches are problematic. If we lock our faith in the closet from nine to five because we're afraid of ridicule or questions about our loyalty, what governs our choices in climbing the career ladder? Will we lie, cheat others, or stab people in the back, then go home at the end of the day and put on our "I'm a Christian" clothes again? Plenty of people do exactly that because they fear that if they go public with their faith at work, they will be perceived as weak, divisive, or unwilling to do whatever it takes to succeed. But if we make such a choice, what does that say about our faith?

On the other hand, as believers we sometimes shun the secular world and limit our job prospects to a select group of potential employers or industries that we believe will be Christian friendly. But by doing so, we can lock ourselves in an echo chamber of ideas and beliefs just like our own, so we never really stretch or grow.

Sometimes, we come to regard the world outside our bubble as the enemy.

When some Christians learn that I've worked in entertainment for over ten years, I can feel them take a mental step backward, as if they feel I'm sleeping with the enemy. I'm not offended; to many Christians, Hollywood is a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah. This business is probably the last place most people expect to find a young Christian visibly and vocally expressing his faith while progressing in his career. But the truth is that not only has relying on my faith not harmed my career prospects, it has actually enhanced them.

Thrilling opportunities to work with the most dynamic people in the world have come my way precisely *because* I have been uncompromising about my Christian principles and making service to God the centerpiece of my work. Over the course of my career I have developed a set of guiding principles that I live by:

Note

- God's will has priority over mine.
- Commit to the process of success that God has planned for me, no matter how long it takes.
- God has the authority to put my ambition in check.
- Strive to let the love of Christ be apparent in everything I do.
- Do not allow sin to reside in any area of my life. If I allow it, I understand it will limit my ability to receive God's full blessings.
- Do everything in my power to bring God's purpose for my life to fruition (faith without works is dead).
- Don't take shortcuts; if I want to be true to my beliefs, then shortcuts do not exist.
- Remember on the down days to never give up on myself and the dreams God has given me.

I base every career decision, big and small, on these precepts. That's not an easy thing to do. There is a lot of temptation in every business from finance to academia to take the quick and easy path to success—to violate our values for promotion or because no one will ever know. I've felt pressure on numerous occasions to abandon my commitment to Christ, but then I remember the words of Jesus when he asked, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?"

I can truly say there is nothing in this world worth giving up what I believe in.

I'm amazed at the number of people of all faiths I've met who don't understand that their faith is not an obstacle to fulfilling their dreams but the path *to* them. They don't understand the power that a total commitment to God grants them.

I spent a great deal of time not long ago with a young aspiring actor who talked about his career struggles: going to auditions, trying to get in to see casting directors, exhausting himself, not knowing what to do, going to church to try to hook up with this or that individual. I listened for a while and then said, "Where do you think God is in all of this? Have you prayed and looked for where he is leading you in your aspiration?"

He hadn't.

He was a Christian, but it never occurred to him that God had a place in his career pursuits.

I know from many of my own experiences that if you put your career in God's hands and trust him, you can't account for all the ways he will bless you. But you have to take that leap of faith, and even if you consider yourself a believer, that can be the hardest part. God's love is unconditional, but we need the faith to silence our own voice and listen to his. Then we can really hear what he's been trying to tell us about our careers all along.

I've written *Produced by Faith* to help you make that leap of faith. By sharing my story and my testimony of how my faith has actually been the greatest asset in my advancement, I hope to inspire you to take a new view of God's role in your career. At the end of the day, you don't have to choose between your faith and your work. Faith and works are two sides of the same coin.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Judith Rayl:

Reading a book can be one of a lot of activity that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book thus. There are a lot of reasons why people like it. First reading a guide will give you a lot of new details. When you read a publication you will get new information mainly because book is one of several ways to share the information or maybe their idea. Second, studying a book will make you more imaginative. When you examining a book especially hype book the author will bring you to imagine the story how the figures do it anything. Third, you could share your knowledge to other people. When you read this *Produced by Faith: Enjoy Real Success without Losing Your True Self*, you are able to tells your family, friends in addition to soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire others, make them reading a e-book.

Lisa Walker:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the whole day to reading a publication. The book *Produced by Faith: Enjoy Real Success without Losing Your True Self* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book has high quality.

Michelle Jarvis:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with close friends is thing

that usually you will have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Produced by Faith: Enjoy Real Success without Losing Your True Self, it is possible to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Kenneth Connolly:

As a pupil exactly feel bored in order to reading. If their teacher expected them to go to the library or to make summary for some book, they are complained. Just tiny students that has reading's heart or real their interest. They just do what the instructor want, like asked to the library. They go to presently there but nothing reading significantly. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring in addition to can't see colorful pics on there. Yeah, it is to be complicated. Book is very important for you. As we know that on this era, many ways to get whatever we wish. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this Produced by Faith: Enjoy Real Success without Losing Your True Self can make you really feel more interested to read.

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