

Developing Convictions

Howard Hendricks

I. Each of us has two sets of convictions.

- A. One is the set that we would write down on paper.
- B. The second is the one by which you function in life.

II. A conviction is a principle that I cherish or prize highly enough that I practice it in my life.

- A. There is a vast difference between your belief system and your convictional system.
 - 1. Your belief system is something you will argue for.
 - 2. Your convictional system is something you will die for.
- B. Many of us don't have friends that are good enough friends to rebuke us.

III. How do you develop convictions?

A. What in my judgment are the major problems in this culture at this time are the barriers of the development of your personal convictions.

- 1. Until we know what we are up against we are just perpetuating the failures of the past.
- 2. You better know what you are up against because you are deeply a part of this problem.

B. We are ignoring the fact that developing convictions is a process.

- 1. Process of taking a person from dependency to interdependency.
- 2. The problem is not knowledge it is obedience.
- 3. There is no mature Christian two years into the process, would you believe ten years.

C. The problem of the prevailing attitude of passivity.

- 1. We are producing passive dependence
- 2. We know leaders are not passive or dependent yet we produce them in our churches and Christian school.
- 3. This person has good intentions but no plan of action.

D. Lack of clear cut objectives, standards.

- 1. What is it that will give you satisfaction at the end of your life?

2. You achieve that for which you aim.
3. We don't have clear cut objectives because we are primarily negatively oriented.

E. The problem of inconsistency

1. The realization that your convictions are different than our contemporary society.
2. The realization that your convictions, if they are biblical, will be different from the Christian community.
3. The realization that your convictions are different from your future convictions.
4. The realization that your convictions are different from your parents.

F. Confusing the convictions of Christians with Christian convictions.

1. Convictions of Christians are most frequently cultural, Christian convictions are always biblical.
2. We want convictions on the part of our disciples so badly that we attempt to coerce them and you always get an illegitimate product.

G. Making all of the decisions for our disciples.

1. There is no growth without tension.
2. Tranquility and tension must remain in balance.

IV. Biblical model of how to develop your convictions. (Deuteronomy 6:4-following)

A. Three essentials for growth.

1. Incarnation – The Words shall be upon you, It holds you.
2. Instructional – Teach them and talk about them.
3. Internalization Process – They should control all you do, everything you think about, your most intimate personal areas of your life, and your business life.

B. The Setting

1. If you want to communicate truth you must communicate it in a reality setting.
 - a) We are to far removed from the people we are trying to disciple.
2. If you want to communicate truth you must communicate it in a relational setting.
 - a) The Key is questions.

b) You are answering to many questions rather than questioning more answers.

3. It takes place in a reproductive setting

a) So that the person can function in private and public.

IV. How do I communicate my convictions?

A. Sharpen your own personal convictions.

1. This presupposes that you have identified them.

2. If you only had three things to pass on to your kids what would they be?

B. Help your disciples devise a clear set of personal objectives and priorities.

1. We make the mistake of giving ours rather than helping others develop theirs.

2. If your schedule does not allow you to match your objectives they are not really your objectives.

3. You are just as spiritual as you want to be, as you choose to be.

4. The process is more important than the product.

C. Relationships always precede requisites.

1. If you have a maximum of rules it's because you have a minimum of relationship.

2. People tend to accept your ideals and philosophy because they accept you, and they tend to reject your ideals and philosophy because they reject you.

3. Would anybody ever ask you to teach them because of what you have demonstrated?

D. Explain your convictions to your disciples.

1. The idiocy is: If just live the Christian life so qualitatively I will never have to tell anybody about it.

2. You have to take some time for instruction.

3. We think they have to understand everything we tell them today, not true. They will get it later.

E. Feed your disciples responsibility.

1. You've got to give your disciples enough developmental rope so that he can grow.

2. If you keep things too tight there will be no growth. There will be rebellion.

F. Create a desire on the part of your disciples to relate to Christ and His will, not primarily to you.

1. The most sincere disciple makers produce the greatest perverts.
2. A pervert is a person who is too attached to you.
3. A Christian is a person who follows Christ, not you, not me.
4. If what I teach you does not resonate with what Jesus Christ is telling you to do on the basis of His word, you follow Him.