

Perspectives - Part 4

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I. Introduction to convictions.

A. Each of us has two sets of convictions.

1. The one by which we list of priorities.
2. The one by which we function.

B. Convictions defined.

1. A principle which I cherish or prize highly enough that I practice it in my life.
2. There is a vast difference between your belief system and your convictional system.
 - a. You will argue for your belief system.
 - b. You will die for your conviction system.
 - 1) We need to periodically ask ourselves what we would die for.
 - 2) They are highly prized.

II. How to develop convictions.

A. The major problems in this culture that are barriers to the development of personal convictions.

1. We are ignoring the fact that it is a process from dependency to interdependency.
 - a. Obedience + Time = Growth.
 - b. There is no such thing as telescoping maturity—it takes time.
2. The prevailing problem of passivity.
 - a. Leaders are not passive, but Christians are producing passive disciples because it is believed that conformity is the ideal.
 - b. We are teaching people to take notes but not action.
 - c. There are a lot of people trusting the Lord for the product, but not the process.
3. Lack of clear cut standards or objectives.
 - a. A great question to ask: what do you want in life? It is very hard to find someone who can give you an answer.

- b. Objectives always determine outcomes.
- c. Our objectives are unclear because we are primarily negative—we focus on what we do not want to be rather than what we should want to be.

4. Inconsistency.

- a. Your convictions are different from your contemporary society.
 - a) How much are you poured into the mold of your society?
 - b) The contemporary American is not determined by ideas; he is determined by the media.
 - 1) Our culture has become infatuated with the products of Christianity instead of the object of it.
 - 2) We are developing too many people that are so much like the world that nobody knows the difference, including them.
- b. The average Christian takes his cue on how to live from the Christian community rather than Christ.
 - 1) The task is to develop disciples who are focused on Christ as their model, not the community that wavers.
- c. The realization that your convictions are different from your future convictions—it is a process.
 - 1) You are free to choose your convictions, but you are not free to escape the consequence of your convictions.
 - 2) Some of the things that are trivial will become important to you and some of the things that are important to you will become trivial.
 - 3) Getting a new perspective is what growth is all about.
- d. The realization that your standards are frequently different from your parents.
 - 1) There is an inherent danger in evaluating your parents' performance of your training: there is a tendency to focus on the negative.

5. Confusing the convictions of Christians with Christian convictions.

- a. The convictions of Christians are most frequently cultural.
 - 1) The way one wears his or her hair has become an issue.
- b. The Christian convictions are timeless.

6. The problem of making the decisions of our disciples.

a. There is no growth without tension.

- 1) Christ learned obedience by the things that he suffered.
- 2) We constantly are trying to keep our disciples from suffering.
 - a) Too much tranquility produces apathy.
 - b) Too much suffering produces tension.
- 3) We grow through suffering.
 - a) Personal examples: death of children.

B. A Biblical model as to how to develop convictions. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

1. Essentials to Growth:

a. Incarnation.

- 1) Too many disciple makers are trying to depart what they do not possess.
- 2) Your disciples, unfortunately, remind you of yourself.

b. Instructional. (verse 7)

- 1) Structured and spontaneous learning are needed.
- 2) The word is believable when you instruct it because it is fleshed out in your life.

c. Internalization process. (verses 8-9)

- a) Test of disciple making; how many self-starters are you producing?
 - 1) The word is to control all of your actions.
 - 2) The word is to control everything that you think about.
 - 3) The word is to control the intimate areas of your life.
 - 4) The word is to control the corporate areas of your life.

2. Setting

a. Reality.

- 1) You cannot disciple across a chasm.
- 2) Your disciples must see you for real.
- 3) Authenticity matters.

b. Relational.

c. Reproductional.

III. How to communicate your convictions in such a way that they become the personal property of your disciples.

A. Sharpen your own personal convictions.

1. Presupposes that you have identified your own convictions.
2. Determine what you want to develop before you develop what you have not determined.

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

1. Christ was always clear with his objectives.
2. Personal example: speaker's group assessed their own priorities in light of their objectives.

Application Questions

1. What are your convictions? Devise a list of your three most important convictions, those beliefs, as the speaker says, that you would die for.

2. Why should making objectives be so important to you personally? How can you pass this on to your present or potential disciples?

3. What areas of your life are you succeeding at being Incarnational? In what areas are you failing? What values are you passing on that are cultural? What values are you passing on that are timeless? Explain.
