

# Developing Christian Convictions

Summer Bible Study

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(Rom 14:5b) Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

## I. What is a conviction?

- A conviction is a strongly held view which I am convinced is scripturally correct and which regulates my behavior.
- Convictions are not just opinions that we have formed, but truths that God has revealed to us. Developing a conviction involves faith, and is based on revelation.
- In the final analysis it is developing Christ like character. (Php 2:5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

The true determination of my convictions is not to analyze what I claim to believe, but rather how I act.

I can be convinced that something is true without it being a conviction. Being well taught is not enough; To be a conviction it must affect my life. (James 2:26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Joseph in Potifar's house resisting moral evil with only God as his witness is a good example of behavior based on conviction. (Gen 39:9) .. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

My convictions will affect:

- My world view (Am I going to live for the temporal or the eternal? Is God's will really best?)
- What I will do
- Where I will go
- How I dress
- What career I choose
- Where I will fellowship

## II. Why are convictions important?

Ephesians 4:1-18 is a self contained and reasonably complete list of reasons to have scriptural convictions.

(Ephesians 4:1-2) I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called .. (live by convictions),

- **Unity** (Of the body of Christ, and the Assembly)  
(3-6) Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body*, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

(11-13) And He (The risen Christ) gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

- **Maturity and Stability**  
(14-15) That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:
- **Effectiveness**  
(16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying (building up, strengthening) of itself in love.
- **Transformation (Christ likeness)**  
(17-18) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

### III. How do we develop convictions?

- **Personal study of the Word**
  - ◇ Memorize and Meditate  
(Psalm 119:11) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
  - ◇ Look for the principles of God's will  
(Rom 12:2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
  - ◇ Look at the details  
(2Tim 2:15) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
  - ◇ Read the whole Bible  
(2Tim 3:16-17) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable .. That the man of God may be perfect (matured), throughly furnished unto all good works.
- **Instruction in the Assembly**  
Do I listen in Ministry meetings and Bible readings? Do I think about what I learn?  
(2Tim 1:13-14) Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.
- **Other Believers**  
Ask Questions. Find out why people do what they do. Do I talk about what I learn?  
(Pr 27:17) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.  
(Col.3:16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- **Watching the lives of others**
  - ◇ Parents  
Timothy (mother, grandmother) (2Timothy 1:5) When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.
  - ◇ Mentors

1. Paul to Corinthians  
(1 Cor 11:1) Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.
2. Paul to Timothy  
(2 Timothy 2:1) Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

◇ Elders

(Heb 13:7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* way of life.

◇ We can learn from good examples by imitating them.

◇ We can learn from bad examples by witnessing ruined lives and learning from the mistakes of others. (Luke 17:32-33) Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

• **Life Experiences**

Some convictions are only gained in the heat of the furnace of trial. Romans 5:3-4 ..We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Peter before he denied the Lord

(Luke 22:31-34) And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Peter after he us restored speaks out of conviction and loyalty to Christ

(1 Peter 3:14-17) But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

Do we learn from our failures, or do we repeat them?

**IV. Questions:**

- Can convictions change?

Yes. As you mature in your Christian experience you will modify your views on some things. Were you wrong in your original conviction? No, just immature. The example in Romans 14 is a man that was saved out of a pagan background having a conscience against eating meat offered to idols. Paul had no conscience against it, but abstained so as not to stumble the immature brother.

- Can I lose or violate my convictions?

David became vulnerable at a time of self gratification.

Elijah became vulnerable (wanted to die) during a time of self pity.

(1Co 10:12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

- Should I insist / expect that other believers have the same convictions as me?  
(Rom 14:5b) Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

This is not license for 'Every man doing what is right in his own eyes' , because there are issues of authority that will balance this. For example, I may not hold the same convictions that others do, but I must remember to submit to the authority God has put over me.

For context: (Rom 14:1-13)

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.