

# 7 Key Convictions to Shape Your Leadership

Dan Reiland

What are the primary messages your leadership communicates? Your style of leadership, personal background, developmental journey, and faith heritage influence a certain pattern of convictions you carry. Your convictions as a leader shape your decisions, form your relationships, and influence your vision. Your level of faith, in turn, increases the strength of your convictions.

Some of those convictions are likely unique and personal to you, but there are convictions that reach across a wide range of leaders and are more universal. I'm sure you could add a few but let me offer you seven leadership convictions as a great starting place to compare the messages you are sending to the messages you want to send.

That's a key point. The speed and pressure of ministry can cause you to communicate inconsistent messages with your convictions. What messages are you sending? These convictions are not a checklist to perform but life values that must come deep within you. The very nature of the word conviction declares they are not options. (That would suggest the list should not be very long.)

Lack of conviction can allow a leader to be sidetracked, lack decisiveness, and lose personal momentum.

## 7 Key Convictions...

### 1) There is always hope.

The experience of doubt in the life of a leader is common these days, but hope must always be kept alive. Hope is the currency of leadership. When it's gone, you have little to offer. Your faith in the promises of God creates the foundation of your hope in the future, and your vision communicates that hope.

Your lack of ability to predict the future doesn't diminish hope; it increases faith. There are several ways you can increase your faith:

- Remember what God *has* done.
- Meditate on and live out God's Word.
- Get time with those who have greater faith than you.

## **2) A solution can be found.**

A positive-minded search for a solution to a problem demonstrates faith and hope in action. Putting the solution into action translates hope to tangible progress, which in turn increases momentum.

We can see this conviction from three perspectives:

- One leader doesn't see the problem. (Or by the time they do, it's nearly too late.)
- One leader sees the problem but assumes or hopes someone else knows what to do and will do it.
- One leader sees the problem, finds a solution, and takes action.

Anticipating a problem is not a negative mindset; it's a strategic focus. Progress is never made without solving problems, so we must do our best to get in front of them. How well do you stay out in front?

## **3) Every person carries value.**

On the positive side, we all have natural biases. Human chemistry is real, and we, therefore, can't connect with everyone quickly and easily. On the negative side, sometimes prejudices come into play, even if unknown or unintentional.

From both the positive and negative aspects, the practical application is that valuing all persons never happens accidentally or merely out of the goodness of one's heart; it must be intentional.

Whether it's a two-minute encounter with a stranger in a grocery store or a three-hour board meeting, we have to intentionally seek to value each individual. It begins with how you *see* the person. This is not meant to sound like a project; in fact, it can be as simple as being freed up internally from your own concerns to pay attention to the needs of others.

Valuing someone means to see them, listen, and care. It doesn't mean you must take responsibility for every situation, but in the moment, you give your heart and purposefully look for and see their value.

## **4) Prayer impacts the outcomes.**

The convictional belief in the power of prayer is truly one of the most life-giving realities any leader can embrace and practice. We are responsible for stewarding our God-given gifts to become the best leaders we can, but we quickly discover where our gifts fall short, and that prayer is the real power.

In fact, our leadership effectiveness starts with the power of prayer. Your connection to the Holy Spirit is what makes the difference between short-lived earthly outcomes and eternal impact.

## **5) Unity brings strength and momentum.**

In these days of elevated distrust and division, the need for unity has become acute. The importance of unity in the early church is made clear in Scripture, but the significance of that power may have escaped us over time. The current chaos of division has made the beauty and power of unity abundantly evident.

Unity begins with shared vision and values between two people and grows from there. Unity can move quickly through your church, but most often starts with a few, gets deep in the hearts of staff, then your key leaders, and travels from there. You can't short-circuit the process to gain true unity, and once you have it, the power it brings to momentum is palpable.

## **6) Change is necessary.**

Leaders bring about change; that's how progress is made. The status quo never realized a vision. Change for the sake of change is not the idea; it's about better, not merely different. What change are you leading? Why does it matter?

What changes is your church making that improves your ministry and will help you reach more people for Jesus? Change is resisted by most people, and surprisingly even by many leaders. I get it; it's not that you don't want change, but you have so little margin to make change. What change is needed to realize your vision?

## **7) God is in control.**

We know God is sovereign, but it doesn't always feel that way, and it's hard to see. There is great comfort in knowing that God is in control, but when what we pray for isn't happening as we hoped, it's easy to take over. Or to try to...

It's like the moments when you are the passenger in a car, and you want to grab the wheel when you see something coming at you. Or you want to put your foot on the gas because you're not going fast enough.

You want to take control. Even though God is fully trustworthy, it's not easy to fully trust when you are under pressure, and things aren't going well. When the conviction that God is in control is fully embraced, it allows you to have peace under pressure and lead from a position of strength and confidence.

When I slow down to think and pray, I connect again with the truth that God is in control. How about you?