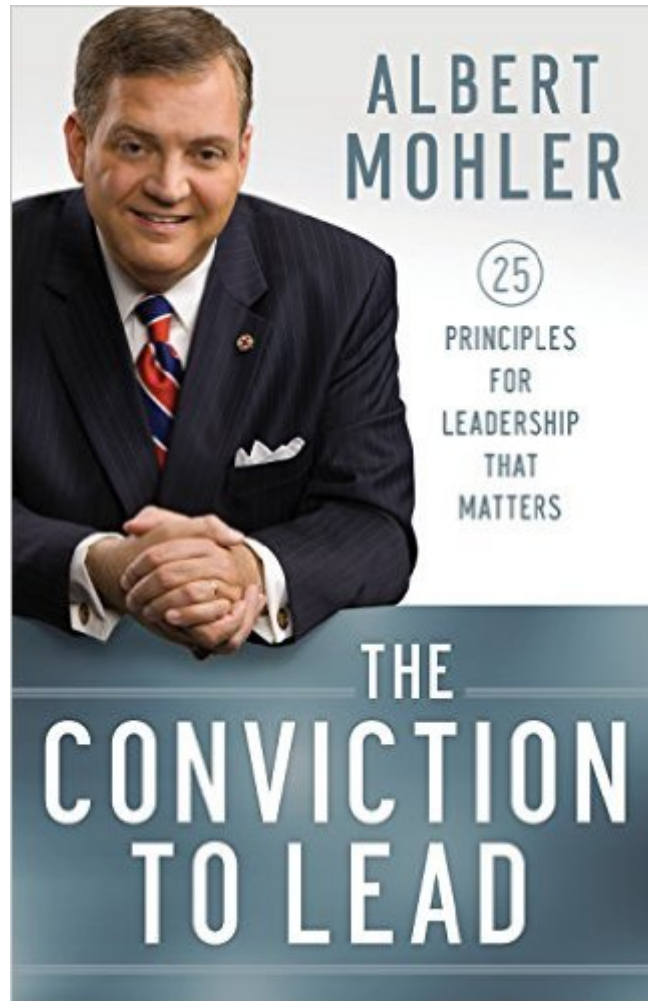


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The Conviction To Lead: 25 Principles For Leadership That Matters



Synopsis

Leadership Principles from a Renowned Agent of Change Cultures and organizations do not change without strong leadership. While many leadership books focus on management or administration, the central focus of *The Conviction to Lead* is on changing minds. Dr. Mohler was the driving force behind the transformation of Southern Seminary from a liberal institution of waning influence to a thriving evangelical seminary at the heart of the Southern Baptist Convention. Since then he has been one of the most prominent voices in evangelicalism, fighting for Christian principles and challenging secular culture. Using his own experiences and examples from history, Dr. Mohler demonstrates that real leadership is a transferring of conviction to others, affecting their actions, motivations, intuition, and commitment. This practical guide walks the reader through what a leader needs to know, do, and be in order to affect change.

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Customer Reviews

We are definitely not facing a shortage of books on leadership. These titles have sections all their own in the big bookstores, they line the airport bookstalls, and they appear on the bestseller lists with predictable regularity. Much like books on prayer or books on parenting and a select handful of other topics, it appears that there simply cannot be too many of them. Every leader wants to lead better just as every prayer wants to pray better. Readers could be forgiven if they feel skeptical that there is anything much left to say about leadership. And yet, as Albert Mohler proves in *The Conviction to Lead*, not every trail has been pursued to its end. He begins this book with a warning

to the reader that is equally a challenge to himself as author: "My goal is to change the way you think about leadership. I do not aim merely to add one more voice to the conversation; I want to fundamentally change the way leadership is understood and practiced." No one can accuse him of aiming too low! Remarkably, at least in my assessment, he achieves what he sets out to do, making *The Conviction to Lead* a uniquely important book. In the opening pages Mohler surveys the vast leadership industry and points out that in all the useful things that have been said about leadership, the central problem "is a lack of attention to what leaders believe and why this is central." His burden is "to redefine Christian leadership so that it is inseparable from passionately held beliefs, and to motivate those who are deeply committed to truth to be ready for leadership. I want to see a generation arise that is simultaneously leading with conviction and driven by the conviction to lead. The generation that accomplishes this will set the world on fire." At the heart of the kind of leadership Mohler advocates is what he calls "convictional intelligence." This is not an innate kind of intelligence, but one that must be developed by diving deeply into the truth of the Bible and learning to think like a Christian. It is, in its essence, Christian maturity. "For the Christian leaders, those convictions must be drawn from the Bible and must take the shape of the gospel. Our ultimate conviction is that everything we do is dignified and magnified by the fact that we were created for the glory of God. We were made for his glory, and this means that each one of us has a divine purpose. The Christian leader finds passion in the great truths of the Christian faith, and especially in the gospel of Jesus Christ." The leader must be relentless in his pursuit of truth and the application of truth to his life and his organization. Through twenty-five short chapters Mohler describes the kind of character that ought to mark the leader and looks at specific skills, habits and intellectual exercises that can make all the difference between a mediocre leader and a great one. He writes about the importance of gaining and maintaining credibility, of developing the intellect, of making wise decisions, and even of facing the new realities of a digital world. One of the most compelling aspects of *The Conviction to Lead* is its semi-biographical nature, which is exactly as it ought to be. Mohler has faced great leadership challenges, the greatest of which was undoubtedly being called--while he was only in his young thirties--to lead one of America's most important seminaries. While he draws many examples from history, and especially British history, he also draws many lessons from his own successes and failures. But what I appreciate most is that Mohler takes the massive amount of scholarship and popular-level writing on leadership, extracts what is most valuable, and then sets it all in the context of Scripture. From the first page to the last, he is applying Scripture to leadership, crafting an understanding that is thoroughly and completely biblical. This book is truly gospel-centered; the gospel is not appended to the book, but at its heart. I have read all

of Mohler's books and I am convinced that this is his best. Each of his previous books has been helpful in its own way, but they have generally been repurposed sermons or blog posts and have carried the weight of mixed media. The Conviction to Lead has all the marks of an original work, oozing with wisdom and dripping with passion. This is Mohler in his most natural habitat, doing what he does best. If you are a pastor or elder, if you are an owner or CEO, if you are in any form of leadership, I am convinced that this book will transform the way you lead. I highly recommend that you read it.

Dr. Albert Mohler is qualified to speak authoritatively on many subjects, but there are perhaps few he is more qualified to address than leadership. For that reason when he writes a book on leadership it is safe to assume that your time will be well spent reading it. The Conviction to Lead is precisely that; a book on leadership written by Dr. Mohler. While it is a book on leadership its design is to be something other than one more volume to add to the mountainous pile of works dedicated to the perfection of leadership skills. "I want to fundamentally change the way leadership is understood and practiced," proclaims Dr. Mohler in the opening paragraph of this book. What this book then promises to be is a seasoned leader's attempt to change our understanding and application of leadership at a foundational level. One would assume that after all the books, lectures, interviews, and conferences aimed at perfecting the art of leadership that the demand for leadership resources would be dwindling, but in fact the exact opposite seems to be true. The experts keep writing books, and the would-be leaders keep buying them. Why haven't we all reached the peak of leadership refinement? What's the problem? "The problem is a lack of attention to what leaders believe and why this is central," Dr. Mohler concludes (*italics in original*). The contention of this book is that leaders are failing to lead because they have no passion about the fundamental beliefs of those they are seeking to lead, or as the title suggests, they lack conviction. What we are experiencing today in churches, universities, businesses, and broader movements is leaders who are not believers and believers who cannot lead. So, Mohler's hope for his book is to "redefine Christian leadership so that it is inseparable from passionately held beliefs, and to motivate those who are deeply committed to truth to be ready for leadership." This is a vital perspective on leadership especially for Christians looking to set themselves apart from the lemming like mentality of the broader culture. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that the church is facing unprecedented opposition, but it is no stretch to say that opposition to the historically held beliefs of the church is escalating rapidly. Those who lack conviction about the truth of God's Word will be swept away by the pressure of cultural conformity. At the same time those with conviction but no determination to

lead in the fight against the erosion of our beliefs will be of little consequence. If ever there was a time to sound the call for leaders to be fueled by conviction, and for true believers to be infused with the skills and determination to lead it is now. Mohler's book does that, and does it well. He is convincing in his argument that the great flaws of today's leader are a lack of conviction or a misplaced conviction. His call to identify ourselves in the story of God's unfolding plan of redemption and to do so with authenticity is compelling. Using death to set the importance of leading from our convictions in high relief is quite effective. Only when we drive our convictions deep into the heart of our organization or movement does our contribution live on after our death. However, the quality of this book's chapters varied widely from very good to almost completely useless. In general I believe the beginning and ending of the book to be the essential parts, specifically chapters 1-6 and 23-25. The rest in the middle read to me like a series of blog posts turned book chapters, which draw as their source material varying degrees of Scripture, Peter Drucker, and Dr. Mohler's personal experience. There are certainly helpful insights to be gleaned even from the middle portion of the book, but they were hardly unique and certainly would not "fundamentally change the way leadership is understood and practiced." I would recommend this book. The opening and closing sections are remarkable. However, I would not hype this book. The middle is much of the same old stuff when it comes to books on leadership.

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