



In, But Not of: A Guide to Christian Ambition

Hugh Hewitt

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Hugh Hewitt has worked for and with people in some of the most powerful and influential positions in the country. He knows what is required to reach and thrive in such positions, and in this book he shares some of that valuable, hard-won knowledge.

"In, But Not Of" provides readers with valuable insights, wisdom, personal experiences, and advice on how to rise in the world and achieve the kind of radical success that honors God.

In, But Not of: A Guide to Christian Ambition Details

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From Reader Review In, But Not of: A Guide to Christian Ambition for online ebook

Randy Elrod says

A must read that contains more must reads.

Brent Barnard says

My land, I thought this was going to be a book bashing Christian ambition, in light of the condemnation of selfish ambition in James 3. But no, this is how to be ambitious (for God, of course) by gaining ever greater power for yourself. Disturbing.

Michael says

There's some practical advice here, to be sure. Don't go into credit card debt, don't get a visible tattoo if you want to be President someday, learn some history, etc. But since the book seems to be directed at young people on the verge of applying to elite universities, is this not redundant information in all but the rarest of cases?

Regardless, there's some questionable advice in here, all running along the lines of "Figure out what's important to those in a position to advance you materially, and make those same interests, priorities and habits your own." That aspect of the book struck me as rather anti-Christian. Maybe that's really what it takes to become a White House staffer or a radio talk show host; I can't honestly say.

There are plenty of teachings of Christ that urge us not to pursue the recognition of other people as a first priority (and additionally, that if we do as Christ insists, we may find that we receive the recognition anyway and won't have sold our souls to get it).

This may be a great book about personal advancement, but I'm at a loss to see what is decidedly Christian about it.

Linsey says

Overall, I really enjoyed this book. Hewitt isn't afraid to pull punches and tells readers things they should and shouldn't be doing and character traits they may have that he would recommend they just put down the book, as it isn't for them.

He efficiently lays out a lot of good advice relating to jobs, conversations, work environments, money, and a host of other things with a viewpoint of trying to influence the world for Christianity. A lot of the advice seems standard and obvious, such as "Unless you own the company, you can be replaced," but much of it bears repeating, such as don't say negative things about coworkers behind their backs. He identifies the type

of person who can get in and influence the three distinct centers of thought in America: Los Angeles for culture, New York for business, and Washington, D.C. for politics. Starting with college and where you choose to go, he gives advice and pointers for all of your career decisions until you are old enough to be a mentor.

I like the style, the efficient writing, the short chapters. His advice from credit cards to conversation tips is all good. If I have kids, I consider giving them this book while they are still young enough to start from the beginning and telling them to pick a path.

It's not a book on things permissible to Christians, things not permissible to Christians, how to find a job you love. It is completely about gaining influence in the three areas. So while tattoos and dreadlocks might not be a sin, he points out that looking out of place and doing something out of the ordinary like that will often sabotage your efforts to be taken seriously in a serious world.

However, he is an interventionist when it comes to foreign policy. He basically says that as a free country founded on Christian beliefs, we need to battle evil overseas to give them the same freedoms we have and that in turn will make it easier for us to spread the Gospel. I think his view on war seems a little naive. Evil isn't always a clear definition and as often as not, good isn't either. Take Syria. I was falling for the "poor rebels, they're just fighting against their oppressive government" view and someone told me that things aren't always that black and white. And sure enough, it turns out the rebels are using chemical weapons and associated with terrorist organizations, and care about killing civilians about as much as the government is said to. Neither side is good. So should we have gone into a war over it? I don't think so. Also, the idea that we can just go in and remove evil just like that is simplistic. Whenever we go in, civilians die. A conflict of war, maybe. But if we invited ourselves in, then not only are we going where we aren't wanted, but causing the same pain and suffering we were supposed to be freeing them from and creating animosity along the way. Just because we think that democracy and freedom of religion is the best doesn't mean they think it is the best... and maybe you can remove their "evil" head of government and force them to democratically elect another one... but if the people don't believe in democracy, and the people in power don't believe in democracy, how will it last? And if you "free" a strongly religious nation, who's to say that they will grant religious freedom? Or just turn around and make their religion the only allowed religion? And in some cases, like Egypt, they had a democratically elected leader, who was then ousted by the military.

I think he has it backward on cause and effect. Yes, I'm sure freedom of religion would be helpful when it comes to spreading the Gospel. But this country was founded as a Christian nation with that as one of its values. You can't simply march into another country and expect them to value the same things. And unless you change their values, what good will it be to use the military to change their leadership?

It seems short-sided and simplistic, ignoring most of the ill effects of war for the stated ideals to battle evil around the world. But currently, it seems everywhere we are "battling evil" is hardly grateful for the help and just grows more frustrated and upset with America for interfering.

Other than that though, which is really just a few sentences in his book, I thought his advice was good.

Jay Medenwaldt says

This was a surprisingly wonderful book. I was expecting it to be more about being in the world, but not of it in terms of being a Christian in America. It was about that, but more focused on rising to influential

positions. I was also skeptical that a public figure would have anything meaningful to say about being a genuine Christian...I was wrong!

The author is very thoughtful in many areas that pertain to gaining influence. It's nice to hear someone who has thought so thoroughly and broadly about so many factors. He perhaps skips a few steps in his reasoning for the sake of brevity, but his conclusions are mostly spot on. He discusses tattoos, finances, friendships, etc., and how they can help or hurt your ability to gain influence. Not only does he discuss these topics in a practical sense that can be appreciated by non-Christians, but he also encourages behaviors usually only associated with committed Christians such as joining a small group, regular church attendance, consistent giving, and constant evangelism. It's not a watered-down message.

While the author tells pastors or those who do not seek power to put the book down, I disagree. All Christians should be seeking influence in some way, whether it is in the local town, with family members, or a community where you are doing mission work. These principles will generally apply to all those levels, albeit with slight modifications. This is a book that all Christians should read.

Sam says

Hugh Hewitt lays it out straight up front: "This book is for Christians resolved to seek power, influence and authority." And then he goes on to say, if that's not you, then don't waste your time.

Part Emily Post book of etiquette, part how-to-take-over-the-world like Pinky & The Brain, part East coast high culture, and part Jesus and his Kingdom. This book really throws a brick into your face and says, "Wake up!", especially if you are a Christian.

This would be good to get into the hands of 15 and 16-year-olds who are both mature enough and have enough of a head start to implement some of these ideas, like from Chapter 5, "Assemble the Right Credentials". Basically, go to an Ivy League school if you want to do any damage for the Kingdom.

Now, keep in mind that Hewitt comes from a law and policy sort of background so a lot (but not all) of the book is bent that way.

It took me a while to warm up to the book, to get past what I thought was either mildly offensive, shallow, out-of-my-league, or just plain over-my-head. But by the end I got to appreciate where he was coming from...that influence, power, and authority can be used as instruments for the Kingdom of God.

Jeff Noble says

In, But Not Of : A Guide to Christian Ambition by Hugh Hewitt (?)

Ivan says

While I'm uncomfortable with some parts of Hugh Hewitt's view here of power, influence, and ambition, there is still a level of street-level wisdom that rings true, at least to me. Joe Carter recommended this book

and I picked it up on Kindle. Immensely helpful and full of applied wisdom.

Wade says

This book is meant for graduates (high school, or college). In general, its theme: Go out and be ministers in the world, in politics and in corporations - is a great thesis. I think some of the book is too focused on the career above all else without having enough focus on community, and really becoming a part of a community and city; but overall it's not a bad book.

Nick Woodall says

A little preachy for my taste. He purports to dole out advice to young people about what to do in life and how to succeed without staining oneself with the world. Not sure I agree with all his conclusions and advice.

Tom says

Great little book with great lessons. Great gift for graduates.

One of my favorite chapters ... NO TATTOOS!

A tiny, powerful, pithy read!

Hugh Hewitt is an insightful, articulate, wise writer and commentator. His POV is unabashedly orthodox Christian. Thank God!

Lena Denman says

I have read, re-read and highlighted this book. I came across it in community college and it encouraged me through grad school.

Josh Beckman says

This book is incredible and inspirational. I just bought two more copies to give out to friends. Come on Christians. Wake up!

Good guidance on helping you to move up and forward in life to become influential and share the truth.

Brenden says

In, But Not Of: A Guide to Christian Ambition by Hugh Hewitt (2003)

Tosh Demsey says

A very practical guide to gaining power and influence in the world while maintaining your integrity and commitment to following Christ and His example. This book is full of wisdom and one that I wish I had been able to read while a student in high school or college. Here are a couple of my favorite passages: "There are serious things to accomplish, and they are set before each human being. You choose to do them, or you choose to do other things. A love of adventures is a choice to do things for yourself. It is almost always a poor choice that cannot be reversed because of the expenditure of time that is involved. Those who would influence the world cannot afford wasted time. Skip the cliff swinging, and concentrate on the real challenges." "Ask questions in every conversation and with every sort of person. And listen carefully to the answers. This practice will set you apart from a vast mass of people too absorbed in themselves to notice the world around them."
