

Wheelersburg Baptist Church Growth Groups
Discussion Guide: *Marks of a Healthy Church*
Sunday evening Sept 18 – Nov 13, 2011

Fall 2011 Growth Group Discussion Guide

Week #1 -- September 18

Marks of a Healthy Church: #1 *A Commitment to Expository preaching*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Sermon title: "*A Commitment to Expository Preaching*"

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning's message?
2. According to 2 Timothy 4:2, what place should the Scriptures have in our ministry as a church?
3. What challenges must be overcome to have a biblical ministry, according to verses 3-4?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever's book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Read pages 1-68, discussion will focus on pages 63-68

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. In your own words, what is expository preaching?
3. What do some churches do with the Bible that is *not* expository preaching?
4. What is the relationship between preaching and worship?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to expository preaching?

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Week #2 -- September 25

Marks of a Healthy Church: #2 *A Commitment to Biblical Theology (preaching the whole Bible)*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Acts 20:25-32

Sermon title: "*A Commitment to Ministering the Whole Bible*"

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning's message?
2. In verse 27 Paul said he proclaimed "the whole will (counsel) of God." What does it take to do that, for a preacher, for a congregation?
3. Based on Paul's exhortations in verses 28-31, what are some of the challenges that must be overcome if a church is to have a truly biblical ministry?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever's book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 69-74

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. What does it mean to be committed to "sound doctrine" in a church, and how do we demonstrate it (in the pulpit and in the pew)?
3. Some churches say that doctrine divides and consequently ignore certain subjects in the Bible. Why is that type of thinking dangerous?
4. How should we approach "controversial" doctrines? When we're teaching them? When we are hearing them?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to biblical theology?

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Week #3 – October 2

Marks of a Healthy Church: #3 *A Commitment to the Gospel*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Galatians 1:6-12

Sermon title: "*A Commitment to the Gospel*"

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning's message?
2. Why was Paul so upset when he wrote his letter to the church in Galatia?
3. What does it take for a church to turn to a different gospel, as the church in Galatia was doing?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever's book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 75-79

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. What are the essential ingredients of the gospel (see p. 76)?
3. What happens if we confuse the benefits of the gospel with the gospel itself (in our sermons, in our Sunday School lessons, in our interaction with lost people, etc)?
4. What do you think about George Truett's observation on page 77?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to keeping the gospel central?

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Week #4 – October 9

Marks of a Healthy Church: #4 *A Commitment to God-Centered Conversion*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Ephesians 2:1-10

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to God-Centered Conversion*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. It’s good to remember who we *were*. According to verses 1-3, what was true of us prior to conversion?
3. According to verses 4-10, what must happen in order for the conversion of a sinner to occur?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 80-88

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. Read Acts 11:18. What is the ultimate origin of repentance?
3. What happens in a church when it fails to emphasize God’s work in a sinner’s conversion?
4. What are some practical effects a biblical understanding of conversion will have on the ministries you are doing in our church?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to God-centered conversion?

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Week #5 – October 16

Marks of a Healthy Church: #5 *A Commitment to God-Centered Evangelism*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to God-Centered Evangelism*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. What are some of the things that Paul said he refused to do as he ministered to lost people?
3. What word picture does Paul use to describe the condition of lost people, and what does He say must happen to change that condition?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 89-92

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. What is the relationship between our understanding of conversion and the way we do evangelism?
3. What are some indications that a church’s evangelism is too man-centered?
4. On page 91 Dever says that evangelism is not doing works of charity, but requires speaking words. Why does he say this? Do you agree? What are some implications for how you interact with the lost this week?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to God-centered evangelism?

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Week #6 – October 23

Marks of a Healthy Church: #6 *A Commitment to Church Membership*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Hebrews 10:19-25

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to Church Membership*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. According to verses 19-22, what are the implications of Christ’s cross for our relationship with God?
3. According to verses 23-25, what are the implications of Christ’s cross for our relationships with each other?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 93-100

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. Is church membership in the Bible?
3. What are some of the benefits of being a member of a local church?
4. Dever says that biblical church membership means *taking responsibility*. What are some of the God-given responsibilities identified in the Bible (give a Bible reference)?
5. How does a high view of church membership make our witness to non-Christians clearer? How does it make it more difficult for weaker Christians to stray?

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Week #7 – October 30

Marks of a Healthy Church: #7 *A Commitment to Biblical Church Discipline*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Matthew 18:15-20

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to Biblical Church Discipline*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. Why is it important to consider the whole chapter of Matthew 18 when seeking to apply Jesus’ teaching about church discipline in verses 15-18?
3. What did Jesus say is the process and goal of church discipline?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 101-106

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. Dever says that the way many churches approach discipleship is like pouring water into leaking buckets. How so?
3. What does Dever mean when he says we should *guard carefully the front door and open the back door* of the church? What are the implications of this statement for our church?
4. What are some practical things we must each do if we’re going to practice church discipline in a way that pleases the Lord?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to biblical church discipline?

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Week #8 – November 6

Marks of a Healthy Church: #8 *A Commitment to Growing Disciples*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Ephesians 4:20-24

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to Growing Disciples*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. What does Paul’s instruction in Ephesians 4:20-24 teach us about how to make disciples.
3. According to this passage, what needs to happen if Christians are going to grow and mature?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 107-112

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. Why happens when a church isn’t thinking biblically about church growth?
3. Often when churches think of “growth,” they think of increasing attendance. This is only one kind of growth. What are some other evidences of growth that the Lord is interested in seeing in His church?
4. God’s kind of church is comprised, not of perfect people, but of saved sinners who are committed to growing. What are some characteristics of Christians who are serious about growing?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to growing disciples?

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Week #9 – November 13

Marks of a Healthy Church: #9 *A Commitment to Biblical Church Leadership*

Discussion of Sunday morning sermon

Sermon text: Titus 1:5-9

Sermon title: *“A Commitment to Biblical Church Leadership*

1. What point stood out most to you from this morning’s message?
2. According to Titus 1, why does a church need leaders?
3. Who is qualified to lead a church, and what should be expected of those individuals?
4. What questions did the message raise for you?

*Discussion of Mark Dever’s book, **What Is a Healthy Church?***

This week: Discussion of pages 113-127

1. What is the *most* important or thought provoking sentence you read in this section? Be prepared to discuss why you picked it.
2. What does the Bible teach about the role of elders? About the role of deacons? About the role of the congregation?
3. Baptist churches are congregationalists. What does that mean?
4. What should a congregation expect of its leadership? What should a church’s leadership expect of the congregation?
5. What are the long-term benefits of being a church that is committed to biblical leadership?