

Marks of a Healthy Church (1)

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Introduction: How does God view this church?

A. While it is true that God views us as individuals and will judge us as such, He also sits in judgment of churches.

1. Individuals must be first concerned with God's view of them.

(2 Cor 10:18; Rom 14:11-12)

2. The Lord knows what is going on in churches. They can be rejected by Him. **(Rev 1:11-13, 20; 2:5)**

B. Do we see a church as God does?

1. It depends upon our spirituality. **(2 Tim 1:13)**

2. How does God provide for a healthy (sound) church? **(2 Tim 4:3)**

Sound - *ὄψιαίνω* be healthy or *sound*; literally, of physical and mental soundness *be healthy, be well* (LU 7.10); figuratively, of doctrinal teaching *be correct, be accurate, be sound* (1T 1.10)

I. A Healthy Church is Characterized by a Determination to Please God.

A. We call ourselves a church of Christ, but are we? **(Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4)**

1. Where are our hearts? What do we expect from our work together?

2. Many churches have made men the center of their efforts.

3. When men quit over what men do they leave out the Lord.

B. Consider what men thought verses what God thought concerning the churches of Asia.

<u>Men</u>	<u>God</u>
1. Sardis - "It lives!"	---- "It is dead" (Rev 3:1)
2. Laodicea - "Everything's great!"	---- "It is miserable." (Rev 3:17)
3. Smyrna - "They are poor"	----- "They are rich" (Rev 2:8)

C. Have you ever considered what God thinks of the University church?

II. A Healthy Church is Characterized by a Concern for the Lost.

A. This is worded carefully. Notice what is not said.

1. A great personal work program with many baptisms.

2. A great building with a showy service.

3. A watered down gospel that attracts big crowds.

B. Our efforts must be based on a real deep concern for souls.

1. With that concern every person must be doing something.

2. Too often we want the appearance of activity. In this case we are just playing at it.

3. One who is concerned will prepare so that he will be able to teach.

(2 Tim 2:24-26)

4. Do we plan our work? That is find a prospect, work to study with them and bring them to a decision?
 5. There are several doing this. We need more workers!
- C. Consider the efforts of the early church.
1. These were concerned people. It involved everyone! **(Acts 8:3-4)**
 2. Notice the involvement of every member. **(Acts 11:19-23)**
 3. Ex. Henry Fickling - "Is that the man? --- If he has a soul, he is!"
 3. Again all of the church was concerned. Where do you stand?
(Acts 13:1-2)

III. A Healthy Church is Characterized by a Strong Stand for the Truth

- A. Standing for the truth involves preaching the truth, fighting error, calling people out of error into a stand for the truth, and paying a high price in the process.
1. Paul fought the Judaizing teachers. **(Gal 2:4-5, 14)**
 2. John fought the Gnostics. **(1 John 4:1; 2 John 9)**
 3. Those who fellowship error will reach no one, they have joined the other side.
- B. This stand will be done in God's way. **(2 Cor 10:3-5)**
1. Our goal will be to teach men God's word.
 2. Force, deception or pressure is not God's way. Let us teach!
- C. Be ready, there will be strong reactions.
1. On the one hand there will be those who view us favorably.
(Acts 2:47; 5:13, 26)
 - a. Our stand for truth will be appreciated by some!
 - b. We will never see all the good by the stand of a few!
 2. Our enemies will hate and misrepresent us. **(1 Peter 4:14)**
 3. God will be with us! **(Matt 28:20)**
- D. We must let people know where we stand.
1. We will call men out of denominationalism and liberalism. We will call them out of the world.
 2. Never forget that many are aware of what is going on here. Above all, God is aware. **(Heb 4:13)**
 3. Please do not be ashamed of God's truth. **(2 Tim 1:8, 12)**

Conclusion: Are we a church that pleases God?

- A. It starts with each of us. What do we want to achieve?
- B. God will provide for us when we seek to do His will.