

## ***What is a Healthy Church Member***

### **Mark 7 Study Guide**

A Healthy Church Member is a Growing Disciple

1. Remind yourself of the content of Hebrews 11 by looking over that chapter briefly. Then read Hebrews 12:1-11.

a) Note that there is an athletic image in the background throughout this passage, not only in the first two verses. The word for an athletic contest translated “race” in verse 1 is the root of the verb translated “struggle” in verse 4; the word translated “discipline” can mean “training”; and the word translated “trained” in verse 11 is a word used primarily for athletic training. So reread the passage, replacing the occurrences of “discipline” words with “training.” With that in mind, what is the goal of the race? What is hindering your running that race? How does the training make you feel initially? How important is the training in helping you run the race and reach the goal?

b) The other image the author uses here is of a father training and disciplining his children. Think of the passage now in these terms, and ask similar questions: What is the father’s goal in childrearing? What hinders that goal? How do various forms of training and discipline initially make the child feel? How important are training and discipline in reaching the goals of parenting?

c) What is the attitude of the coach towards his athletes? What is the attitude of the parent to the child? How does this relate to Christian discipline and training?

d) Look at the occurrences of “endure” and “endurance” in the passage (there are four). What did Jesus have to endure? What do we have to endure? What is the opposite of endurance in this passage? What is the role of discipline?

e) Think broadly about how we come to be disciplined and trained in the Christian life, enduring to the end. What are some of the roles of the local church, of the body of Christ in that process?

2. Now read *What is a Healthy Church Member* chapter 7.

a) Explain the difference between formative and corrective discipline (p. 75-76). Which is most prominent in the church? How would you restate some of your answers in question 1 using these terms?

b) Thabiti points out that one important aspect of seeking discipline joyfully is receiving the Word of God with meekness. Consider the questions he asks on p. 77-78. Is correction and adjustment necessary for you in these areas? How can we encourage this attitude toward God's Word in this small group?

c) Here are some selections from our church covenant, which are similar to those quoted by Thabiti:

We will exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness for each other.

We will submit to the church's discipline upon ourselves and lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church.

We will strive by God's grace and power to live as Christ in the world; denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we will seek to lead holy lives, being honest in our dealings and faithful to our responsibilities and commitments.

Given these commitments and Thabiti's discussion, describe in your own words our responsibilities both as *recipients* and as *givers* of discipline in the local church.

d) What can we do as a small group and as a church to improve the training and discipline of each other?