



PROFESSORS

Mark Dever (Ph.D., Cambridge)
Jonathan Leeman (Ph.D., Wales)

medever@gmail.com
jonathan@9Marks.org

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to couple the biblical and theological study of the local church with observing a healthy local church in action. It begins with lectures on the biblical and theological framework of the local church. The course then transitions to watching how this framework is pastorally implemented in one local church. Students sit through a long weekend of both closed-door and public meetings for the church as well as additional lectures by church leaders in a variety of ministry areas.

COURSE FORMAT

This Washington, DC-based, 3 credit hour course consists of

- two full (8 hour) days of lecture (Wednesday - Thursday);
- a show-and-tell style conference at the Capitol Hill Baptist Church (Thursday night to Monday morning)—the “9Marks Weekender” conference;
- and a final morning of discussion and analysis (Monday morning).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The lectures include the following objectives:

1. Consider the Western and post-Christendom context, with its unique challenges and temptations for church leaders. Particular attention to be paid to pragmatism, individualism, and the influence of Romanticism and how these impact the life and leadership of local churches.
2. Establish the nature of institutional authority and how to read the Bible with an institutional hermeneutic. What is a divine institution and what is a human institution, and how do we establish the line between matters of principle and matters of prudence? For the gathered church, what is required and what is permitted?
3. Establish the covenantal and kingdom basis of the local church, which will help us to view the local church, in its institutional essence, as God’s eschatological embassy on earth whose purpose is to represent the gospel. Particular attention will be given to the keys of the kingdom and their role in membership and discipline, as well as their connection to the Lord’s Supper and baptism.
4. Explore the nature of congregational authority, elder authority, and their relationship with one another. It will be argued that congregationalism best connects faith and order, the gospel and church government. But then the

question will be asked, how does congregationalism work in the context of pastoral or elder leadership? Answering this necessitates a better understanding of the nature and limits of elder authority.

5. Articulate a philosophy of ministry that rests on the conviction of Scripture's sufficiency. Emphasis to be given to the mutual work of Word and Spirit through the public and private proclamation of God's Word.
6. Describe the nature and responsibilities of the church member. What does daily life look like for the individual Christian in relationship to his or her local church?
7. Explore the ways in which biblical principles can be fleshed out in differing cultural contexts. Must the church look the same everywhere?

The goal of attending the 9Marks Weekender conference after two days of lecture is to witness and evaluate how the various biblical and theological principles are pastorally implemented in the life and ministry of a church. Specifically, students will attend an elders meeting, a members' meeting, new members courses, all the Sunday gatherings, a staff service review, as well as lectures on the history of the church's reform, church discipline, church polity case-studies, missions, elder training, church history, church marketing, and expositional preaching.

CONFESSIONAL CONTEXT

Your professors hold without reservation to the doctrinal commitments of the *Abstract of Principles* (1859) and the *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000) as accurately representing biblical truth. The professors' understanding of the nature of Scripture is summarized in these confessional documents and in the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (1978).

REQUIRED READINGS AND RESOURCES

The following texts are required:

Dever, Mark. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012.

———. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, expanded ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.

Dever, Mark and Paul Alexander. *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.

Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

———. *Church Discipline: How the Church Protects the Name of Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

———. *Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus*. Wheaton,

IL: Crossway, 2012

A Local Church Reader, which includes the following chapters or articles:

- Bannerman, James, “Divine Appointment of a Form of Church Government,” from *Church of Christ*, 201-214.
- Duncan, Ligon, “Does God Care How We Worship” and “Foundations for Biblically Directed Worship,” from *Give Praise to God*, 17-73.
- Jamieson, Bobby, “As In All the Churches of the Saints,” 1-30.
- Leeman, Jonathan, “Regulative Like Jazz”
- Leeman, Jonathan, “The Politics of the Kingdom” from *Political Church* (dissertation).
- Leeman, Jonathan, “A Theological Critique of Multi-site Churches.”

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reading assignments and short essays (70 points):** Each student is expected to complete all readings as indicated in the syllabus. A 600 word essay (give or take 50 words) must be written on each book, broken down as follows: one-third summary and two-thirds critical engagement with the reading. A good summary doesn’t simply recite the table of content, but summarizes the point and scope of the book, and places it in a cultural context. E.g. “Mark Dever’s *Nine Marks* was written in response to the proliferation of pragmatic ‘how to’ programmatic books which have flooded the market and captivated pastors for decades. He employs a “how to” sounding title, but subverts the genre by pointing readers to Scripture again and again. There aren’t new ideas here, just old ones, biblical ones.”

2. **Weekender journal (10 points):** Each student must write a summary and evaluation of every element in the Weekender conference (total of 800 words, give or take 50). Entries should include at least one “take away” lesson, reflection, or point of comparison/contrast with one’s own church.

3. Final Exam (20 points)

Each student must write 750 words (give or take 50 words) in answering each of the following four questions (total of 3000 words):

- What is the local church?
- Why is carefully practicing church membership and discipline critical to the growth of the saints and the evangelism of the church?
- What is the relationship between congregational authority and the elders’ authority?
- What are several of the most important things a pastor must give attention to and why?

GRADING SCALE

A	4.0	93-100	B	3.0	83-86	C	2.0	73-76	D	1.0	63-66
A-	3.7	90-92	B-	2.7	80-82	C-	1.7	70-72	D-	0.7	60-62

B+	3.3 87-89	C+	2.3 77-79	D+	1.3 67-69	F	0.0 0-59
WP	Withdraw Pass						
WF	Withdraw Fail						
I	Incomplete (no grades of incomplete will be issued for this course except in an extreme circumstance as determined by the professor)						

Assignments are due _____

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend the entirety of the lectures, the conference, and the final discussion. No exceptions.

STYLE

Please place all assignments into one Word document or PDF to be emailed to Jonathan Leeman upon completion. New Times Roman, 11 or 12 point font. Begin each assignment on a new page. One title page for the entire document is sufficient. Indent new paragraphs. No spaces between paragraphs. Single or single and a half space. Include both page numbers and your name in the header, so that it appears on every page.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of someone else without giving appropriate credit. Students are expected always to credit sources appropriately. Students who plagiarize will be reported to the Dean of Students, resulting in disciplinary action up to and including failing the course and academic dismissal.