

# THE UNWAVERING PASTOR

## Discussion Guide

### Chapter 1: Divided Times

1. What's your reaction to Paul looking to the church for help in divided times?
2. How can your church be a source of refreshment for you? How can you best communicate that to them?
3. In what ways have you experienced God's friendship? How does this change your leadership approach?
4. Is praying for individuals in your church part of your routine? How can you incorporate that if not?
5. Which of these do you feel the need for most in this season: affirmation, exhortation, or fanning the flame? How might you pursue growth in one of these areas?

### Chapter 2: Questioning Christianity?

1. What kinds of questions are you hearing in your church that ultimately come down to "is Christianity good?"
2. What is your natural response to thorny questions or issues? How does your tone, attitude, and approach reflect or not reflect the character of Christ?
3. Kind, patient, gentle, humble. Which of these words describes you as a leader? Which don't?
4. What sufferings do you need to reframe as slave of Christ, rather than as prisoner of the world?
5. Are there any situations in which taking a long view of the people you serve might help you navigate tricky issues?

### Chapter 3: Redeeming Pain

1. Are there any hurts or wounds from ministry and those you serve that you need to acknowledge?
2. What would it look like for you to “honor the broken pieces” in your life?
3. What about knowing that Christ suffered and warned us we would too is actually helpful or hopeful to you?
4. How can you cultivate enjoyment of God’s gifts?
5. How does union with Jesus affect your ministry? What reward do you look forward to most?

### Chapter 4: Divisive Words

1. Can you think of examples of word-fighting your church is facing or might soon face?
2. How does keeping the broader spiritual war in mind help you to pray and address controversy?
3. Listen, affirm, filter, clarify, stay close to Jesus. Which of these areas are you strongest in? Which are you weakest in?
4. How does God’s Word shape the way you lead, particularly in response to controversy?
5. How does the gospel anchor you in ministry? What does endurance in Christ look like for you?

### Chapter 5: Age of the Self

1. What signs do you see that we are in the last days? What modern strains of “self-love” do you see?
2. Can you think of examples of emotivism in your church? What “pet causes” are currently or are most likely to seep into your congregation?
3. Listen, emphasize and retell. In which of these areas do you need to grow? How can you grow?
4. What biblical examples of Christ loving the church most help you as you seek to lead people in being lovers of God?
5. How would you summarize the truth that needs to be told and told again?

## Chapter 6: Preach the Word

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1. What steps do you take to hear the Word as you prepare to preach it?
2. How does congregational listening fit into your preaching? What patterns are you seeing in your people?
3. What sources of authority might be in a position to subvert or replace God's Word in your church?
4. Can you give an example of each of the following subversive authorities: philosophical, cultural a personal?
5. Are there any philosophies you need to affirm, redeem, or confront within your church?
6. How might you encourage your church to direct their desires toward the caring Father, justifying Redeemer, and the Spirit of peace?

## Chapter 7: Continue in the Faith

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1. How would you summarize simply the call of a pastor? The call of all Christians?
2. What helps you stay close to God and clear the clutter?
3. Are there times when you are inclined to see God as your employer instead of your Father? What would help change that?
4. How does the truth that "Christ is the anti-Satan" help you endure hardship and suffering in leadership?
5. Are you more tempted to over-focus on your church or on outreach? How can you balance the two?

## Chapter 8: Grace to All

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1. Are there life-giving people you need to make an effort to see? Write down their names and setting up a time to meet with them.
2. Are there people who have hurt you, particularly in ministry, you need to forgive? Write down their names and pray about setting up a time to meet with them.
3. Are there ways you need to be weak with your church in order to reveal God's sufficiency? What are they?