

# Rick Warren – Master of Marketing



## Rick Warren – Master of Marketing Strategy

Rick Warren sent an email out today, to pastors who are members of his Pastors.com website, explaining why it's good idea to preach sermons in a topical series instead of one sermon per topic.

You might think this idea arose out of a desire to find better ways to convey sound Biblical teachings to his listeners in a way that would help them remember. But he makes no mention of any such concerns. Instead his concerns revolve around **marketing the church** and saving time.

Warren believes that preaching a series of sermons on a single topic is a great *marketing strategy* for increasing the size of the church and, with the added benefit of saving a pastor's very valuable time. He wants all the pastors who follow him to know about it this great new marketing tool. Instead of having a pastoral concern over the best way to disciple and teach believers, the concern he prioritizes in this email is how to best use a sermon series to entice people to come back.

Instead of focusing on developing sermons that touch believers with sound Biblical doctrine and leaving church growth up to the Holy Spirit, Warren sees his sermons as a marketing tool to grow the church through human effort and enticements.

Here are his top reasons for recommending preaching in a series:

1. **It builds momentum.** It keeps your church going in a positive direction. (You gotta love his specificity).
2. **It creates word-of-mouth advertising.** It's the best advertising a pastor has, Warren says.

3. **It saves study time!** Yes, one of his top three reasons for preaching in a series is that it saves the pastor's time in study! Warren says that when you preach in a series it takes less time to study for four sermons than it would take to study for four sermons on different topics.
4. Warren recommends **announcing a new series on high-traffic days** like Easter and Christmas so that infrequent attenders will be enticed to come back.
5. Warren says the **ideal length for a series is 4-8 weeks**. He worries that anything more than eight weeks might cause the congregation to wonder if you know about anything else.

In other words, the pastor's reputation would be at stake! Forget whether it might be necessary to use more than eight weeks to, say, go through the book of Hebrews. Forget whether a series on the book of Hebrews might benefit your congregation spiritually. Just make sure you cut it off after eight weeks so they won't begin to have doubts about you.

So to re-cap Warren's reasons for advocating a series of sermons on the same topic, we have:

1. It saves the pastor's time (i.e. he doesn't have to spend so much time studying the Word each week)
2. It's great advertising
3. It builds momentum (whatever that means)
4. It relies completely on human effort to grow the church (no more messing around with God who might have decided your church has grown quite enough already)

A screenshot of Warren's message:

## 3 Reasons I Preach in a Series

By Bill Brown

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I rarely preach one-and-done sermons—very rarely. Come to any service at 11:15 and you'll catch us either at the beginning, middle or end of a series. Why do I do this?

> **It builds momentum.** Momentum matters in ministry. If's what keeps your church going in the same positive direction. It isn't easy moving people in a direction they often don't want to go. In a series each message builds on each other. Your congregation begins to anticipate the next sermon.

> **It creates word-of-mouth advertising.** Preaching in a series can be the best advertising you have. Preach on a topic that touches the lives of your congregation, they'll talk the words.

> **It saves study time.** Every time I preach I study more than I can possibly use. Most of course like that. Often each sermon ends in a series. Plus, it takes less time to study for four sermons on a similar topic than sermons on four different topics.

I always announce a new series or days we expect a lot of visitors, like Easter. It creates a hook that brings many first-time visitors back for just two the next week. I think the best length for a series is four to eight weeks. Anything longer than eight weeks causes your congregation to lose interest. They begin to wonder if you know about anything else.

If you're not preaching in series, start now. IT builds momentum, creates its own advertising and saves you a dime.

