

I Corinthians 5; Lord's Day 31

THE KEY POWER OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

- I. The activity.
 - A. The objects of Christian discipline are those who hold practices or doctrines contrary to the name "Christian."
 - B. The activity of the key is by the institute (elders) when the sin is public or when individuals have completed their activity first.
 - 1. It is an activity of love out of genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of the unrepentant one.
 - 2. The elders act only when the professing believer will not repent and persists in his sin (17).
 - 3. Positively, the key power is exercised to save (sanctify) those who are truly citizens of the kingdom.
- II. Christ, the Head of the church institute, exercises the key of Christian discipline through its elders.
 - A. The Lord Jesus holds the key of Christian discipline (Matt. 16:18b; Rev. 3:7).
 - 1. The Lord Jesus gave this authority to the elders - those whom He called (John 20:22,23).
 - 2. Jesus declares that He is "in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).
 - 3. Further Jesus says their work is meaningful and effective in heaven, though it may be flaunted on earth.
 - B. Why do elders have the right to discipline?
 - 1. First, Jesus commands His church to do so, lest they be guilty of not alerting and warning (Ezek. 33:2-6; I Cor. 9:16).
 - 2. Second, discipline is for the spiritual well-being of the church because of corporate responsibility.
 - C. Thus, the elders, as Christ's representatives, are the ones to whom we vow submission to their care.
- III. Discipline's purpose and fruit.
 - A. The purpose is the glory of God and the edification of the Church.
 - B. There is positive fruit for everyone.
 - C. Finally, the elders receive the joy of the Lord, not for earthly success, but for faithfulness.