

Westminster Confession of Faith: Session Thirty-One

WCF 30 – Of Church Censures

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV).

I. Introduction

- a. Three Marks of a True Church

- b. Where is Church Discipline Today?

II. WCF Chapter XXVI

- a. *Paragraph 1: Church Government*
There *Is* Church Government

Church Government Established by *Christ*, Not Men

Church Government Distinct from the Civil Magistrate

- b. *Paragraph 2: The Keys of the Kingdom*
Matthew 16:18-19

The Keys of the Kingdom
What They Are

Their Purposes
Retaining and Remitting Sins

Shutting the Kingdom

Opening the Kingdom

Impenitence and Penitence

- c. *Paragraph 3: The Purposes of Church Censures*
Reclamation of the Offender

Deterrence of Like Offences

Purity of the Church

Vindication of Christ and the Gospel

Preventing God's Wrath

- d. *Paragraph 4: Types of Church Censures*
Admonition

Rebuke

Suspension

Excommunication

III. Conclusion

Helpful Resources

Hodge, Archibald Alexander. *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1869; pp. 496-504.

Sproul, R. C. *Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Revised Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019; pp. 630-634.

Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014; pp. 401-407.