

1/6-12#4 The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building Up of the Church CP1II The building up of the church depends on the shutting up of the gates of Hades through the exercise of three keys. **A** We need to learn to exercise the key of denying the self: [Matt. 16:24](#) Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. **B** The self is the soul declaring independence from God. **C** We should depend not only on God but also on the Body, on the brothers and sisters. **d** The Lord and the Body are one; hence, if we are dependent on the Body, we are also dependent on the Lord, and if we are independent of the Body, we are spontaneously independent of the Lord.

Whenever we are independent of the brothers and sisters, we are in the self, in the independent soul. For us today, being independent of the Body is equal to being independent of God...If you check with your experience, you will realize that when you were independent of the brothers and sisters, you had the sense that you were also independent of God...You do not have the Lord's presence, because you are isolated from the Body, because you are not properly related to the members of the Body. Endeavor to be built up and to be right with the Body. If you are right with the Body and are built up in the Body, you will surely sense the Lord's presence.

**CP2IIA5** If we exercise the key of denying the self to lock up the self, it is impossible for us to be offended; blessed are those who are not offended: [Luke 23:34](#) And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing... **a** If we can be offended, it is proof that we are full of self. **6** We need to learn to exercise the key of denying the self to lock up the self in every situation: **b** If the self is locked up, the church will be built up.

When certain things take place to touch us, the self is open. Because we are open to Hades, something from Hades—Satan—comes out. How we need to use the key of self-denial to lock the self! The way to keep from being offended by others is to lock up yourself by denying yourself. Blessed are those who are not offended...When the Lord Jesus comes and sets up His judgment seat, He will tell us to settle our account with Him. He may ask us why we were offended in certain places. But if we make excuses for ourselves, the Lord will not accept them. The

problem is not the offense—it is the self. Certain viruses are very contagious. However, no virus can cause a table to be sick. If you can be offended, it is a proof that you are full of self.

**Testimony 1** As a Japanese, I have a strong tendency to avoid conflict with others, so my relationships are often tenuous and I don't want to get too deeply involved with others. This year, however, brothers and sisters from Beitou came to Kobe for the blending, and I saw their natural and close-knit church life. It was only for a few days, but seeing how they blended and blended well in their lives, not just on the surface, enlightened me that there is no progress in church life if we remain in superficial relationships. When we are deeply involved with others, offending others and being offended may be inevitable, but I appreciate the opportunity to use this as a key to close the gates of Hades when we deny self. I am so full of self that I can easily be offended, but I want to train and be the one who locks up self and builds the church.

**Testimony 2** I testify that if I do not exercise the key of denying the self, I will be offended by trivial matters and will not be able to live the church life. I started living in Brothers House (BH) in the fall of my first year of college. I started living together with two senior brothers and one brother of the same grade. As we began to live together, I was often offended by their casual words. For example, at BH we used to cook meals in a rotating duty system, and when I cooked, I got mad at them for their critiques. In BH's life, I have come to see that I am not a simple, but a complex person, with a temper that is easily offended. Furthermore, I had a complaint about the responsible brothers for the church. In this situation, I realized that my heart was dark, fallen, and full of anger, and I felt that I could not move forward in this way. Then I remembered the history of the Israelites in the Old Testament, where they fell again and again. When I first read this fallen history, I was outraged against them. But I have come to see that I myself am just like them, or even more evil than they are. I have come to believe that if I get even slightly careless and leave the Lord, interrupting my continual trust in Him, I will not be able to follow Him. Later, little by little, I began to experience exercising the key of denying the self, closing the gate to Hades and rejecting things from Satan. Until I denied self, I

was never built with any other person and always had problems with distrust and anger toward others. But after I began to use the key of depending on the Lord and denying the self, I began to open to my brothers and sisters who are the Body of Christ and to be built up with one another. Since I began serving in this way, my inner self has been at peace and free from haste. At the same time, I no longer react nervously to the words and actions of others at work. To deny the self may sound like a difficult thing to do. However, I have learned through revelation and experience that self and Satan are connected, and if I do not deny the self, I will fall into Satan's schemes and be filled with anger, pride, jealousy, etc., which are from Satan, and this can be a terrible thing. It is for me to be built with others. Hallelujah, if I exercise the key to deny the self, Satan cannot come out, and the church will be built. **Prayer** Oh Lord Jesus, being offended is proof that I am full of the self. If I exercise the key to deny the self to lock up the self, I will not be offended, and the church will be built.

**CP3IIB** We need to learn to exercise the key of taking up the cross: **2** Let him...take up his cross (Matt. 16:24) means that we are not forced to bear the cross but that we willingly take it up: **a** Our husband, wife, and children are God's will and are therefore our cross. **b** The one church is God's will, and every brother and sister in the church is God's will; thus, to bear the cross is to bear the church and to bear all the saints so that we would have the genuine oneness. **Eph. 4:3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: Notice, the Lord Jesus did not say, "Let him deny himself and be crucified." No, He said, "Let him...take up his cross" [Matt.16:24] ...However, certain brothers have said, "I have been crucified by my dear wife many times." Such brothers are not cross-bearers; they are criminals executed by their wives. If you say that your children are crucifying you, you are not a cross-bearer, but an executed criminal...Are you a criminal or a cross-bearer? We all need to say, "Praise the Lord, I am not a criminal. I am one who is willing to bear the cross. I have not been crucified by others; rather, I take up the cross and bear it."

**CP4IIC** We need to learn to exercise the key of

losing the soul-life: [Matt. 16:25](#) For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it. **1** To save the soul-life is to please the self by allowing the soul to have its enjoyment; to lose the soul-life is to lose the enjoyment of the soul: **c** If we save our soul-life in this age, we will lose it in the coming age, but if we lose our soul-life in this age, we will find it in the coming age. **2** If we are willing to lose all our present soulish enjoyment for the Lord's sake, for the sake of the church, and for the sake of all the saints, others will be nourished by us and will be built up through us; this is not a suffering but a joy. [Heb. 12:2](#) Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. Because Christ has been rejected, at present He has no joy on this earth. As His followers, we share His destiny. Our destiny as followers of the Lord Jesus is not to be welcomed by this world; instead, it is to be rejected. Therefore, this age is not the time for us to have enjoyment for our soul; it is the time for us to lose this enjoyment. When the Lord Jesus comes back, that will be the time for Him to enjoy the earth. Satan will be bound, Christ will recover the earth, and the entire earth will be under His reign. At that time Christ will enjoy the earth, and all His followers will participate in this enjoyment. This is the meaning of [Matthew 25:21](#) and [23](#), both of which say, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master." This will take place during the millennium when the Lord Jesus will reclaim the earth and enjoy it. By repossessing the earth, the Lord will have enjoyment. Then He will ask His followers, His partners, to enter into His joy. ...If a sister loses her soul by forgiving her husband, that will be a joy to her and to her family. It will issue in the building up of the proper family life. The same is true in principle with the building of the church. To lose our soulish enjoyment is a joy because as a result we see the building up of the church. If you are willing to lose your soul in a practical way, others will be nourished by you and built up through you.