

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 28)

THE AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE (CONTINUED). The church cannot function without leaders with vested authority. In fact, without authority there can be no church. Can those authorities require anything of the church's members? The answer is yes! "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose faith follow..." (Hebrews 13:7). This command is followed by a verse that is frequently quoted to mean something other than the context justifies. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). That verse has nothing to do with Christ's continued power to work miracles. It is saying that Jesus has the same authority today as he had on earth, and in Heaven before that. The elders of a church rule under Christ's authority. They are delegated to rule over the flock that God has called them to. To rule means to "lead or guide" (W. E. Vine). In Hebrews 13:17 it is used again. "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive: for they watch out for your souls, as they that must give account..." Finally, in Hebrews 13:24: "Greet those who rule over you (lead you). MacDonald comments, "These men act as representatives of God in the assembly. Authority has been given to them, and believers should be submissive to this authority." If one wants to be a disciple of Jesus, he must place himself under the authority of a teacher. Discipleship requires the covering of a trainer who will reprove and correct as the disciple needs it. Anyone who is unwilling to submit to the authority of another does not want to be a disciple. The discipleship process involves obedience and submission by the disciple to the trainer. Nee says, "If men are to serve God submission to authority is an absolute necessity. Obedience transcends our work."