

CRAIG CASTER

PARENTING
IS A MINISTRY
LEADER'S GUIDE

Family Discipleship Ministries
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Dear Parents and Leaders,

As a father of three children, a former youth pastor and a family counselor, I am absolutely convinced that God's Word is a complete manual for raising children. I have witnessed within my own family and hundreds of others how God's Word brings direction and understanding to both parents and their children.

Parenting Is A Ministry will open your eyes to parenting principles and biblical truths that you may never have considered, give you clarity to God's will and purpose in parenting *His* children, and a clear game plan to raise your children to maturity.

I encourage you to seek the Lord and ask Him to open your heart to receive from Him. Be willing to accept His loving correction, be challenged to make changes in areas that He reveals and, above all, be comforted that God loves you and your children and has the power to transform your home. I know that God will bless you as you believe and follow His Word.

Your Fellow Servant,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Caster", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Craig Caster
Founder/Director

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13





About the Author

Pastor Craig Caster is the Founder and Director of Family Discipleship Ministries. In early 1992 Craig began to experience a burden for families from the Lord. At this point in his life Craig was the Vice President of a large developing company in San Diego, California and had spent 8 years as a lay minister leading a marriage ministry as well as a youth ministry. During that year the Lord began to reveal the vision for this ministry and in January 1993, Craig left his career for full-time ministry. In 1994 Family Discipleship Ministries became a non-profit ministry in San Diego, California.

Craig has gained a reputation among many evangelical churches as a trusted resource for family counseling, seminars, and family ministry resources. He has developed biblically based parenting and marriage tools and taught thousands through seminars hosted in churches around the country and abroad. These biblical seminars have been embraced by the county of San Diego, and meet the requirement for parents under court order to attend parenting classes. Craig has served on several school and community based organizations. In 1997 Craig was asked by the San Diego City Attorney's Office to help design their *Parenting Project*, an early intervention program for troubled teens, also providing support, and resources for parents, in collaboration with the police department, juvenile probation, and the county courts.

In addition, under Craig's leadership, Family Discipleship Ministries developed and implemented a youth mentoring ministry for children from single-parent families, foster care, and group homes with over 400 graduates between 1994 and 2000. Over the past 20 years Craig has worked with both children and parents as a youth pastor, marriage counselor, teacher, and speaker.

Craig has been married since 1980. He and his wife are the parents of three children, Nicholas, Justin, and Katelyn.

About Family Discipleship Ministries

Family Discipleship Ministries is a non-profit ministry that was established in 1994, under the Founder and Director Pastor Craig Caster. The main purpose of this ministry is to support, educate, and train the body of Christ to more effectively minister to families. To accomplish this goal we offer family counseling, teaching seminars on parenting and marriage, spiritual discipleship, church leadership training, and counseling training. Family Discipleship Ministries also offers numerous materials in video and audio format, workbooks, paperback, and online resources in English as well as several other languages.

The vision of Family Discipleship Ministries is to reach out to Christian churches, enabling them to disciple their congregations in marriage and parenting. To date thousands of parents throughout the US and abroad have completed our biblical parenting and marriage classes hosted in churches as well as through our free online marriage and parenting classes.



LEADER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

I want to thank you for responding to the call of making disciples (Matthew 28:19). This leader's guide is designed to help you use the *Parenting is a Ministry* video series in the process of discipling others. This is a powerful, no-nonsense, inspiring message that has helped thousands of men and women in America and internationally to know God's will for them in fulfilling their role as parents. This series on parenting will benefit traditional families, blended families, single-parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren, and foster families.

The *Parenting Is a Ministry* video series provides you with the tools necessary to successfully disciple others who may be planning to have children or may already have children. Throughout the video series, I will do most of the teaching, but your part is very important. When you follow this leader's guide you will be able to bring understanding to those that are struggling and help them to know what God has called them to do as a parent no matter how long they have been walking apart from God's will.

There are many types of small groups. One type is a church small group. This group is primarily for reaching people within your own body or existing Sunday school classes. Neighborhood small groups are another type of small group where you have invited neighbors, friends, family members, your child's schoolmate's parents, or your child's sports teammate's parents. Other select small groups may be a women's or men's small group, a discipleship group or home bible study group. This series can also be used for one-on-one discipleship with someone God has put in your life. This training will help you in all of these settings and will prove beneficial for any discipler.

Remember, it is critical for you to know and apply God's principles for parenting in your own home before you can disciple someone else (see 1Timothy 3:5). It is not waiting until you are perfect and flawless, but that you are walking in the right direction with some real faith and maturity. If you have not yet watched the complete video series and implemented God's principles in your own home, I suggest you do this before trying to lead a class. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@parentingministry.org.

May the Lord Jesus bless you and your family and may He use you to disciple many others in this area.

Your brother in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Caster".

Craig Caster



Announcing the Class

Beginning approximately 4 weeks in advance of the first class, you should begin to promote the class. If your group is derived from your church, we suggest that you begin to advertise the class in your weekly bulletin, on posters and flyers. If possible, have your pastor exhort the congregation to invest in being disciplined in this area and to play the promotional video during the announcements. Be prepared to take sign-ups whenever possible. This will help you plan many other facets of the class. To receive a promotional package from ***Family Discipleship Ministries***, contact us at info@parentingministry.org.

If at all possible try to provide childcare for the class. The lack of childcare may prevent some from participating at this time.

You may consider serving some refreshments after the class. Hospitality will promote unity and fellowship within the group. The couples can share bringing treats.

Changes from the Original Version

This version of the leader's guide and the accompanying video series study workbook were developed after the original video tape series was made from one of our teaching seminars. In order to re-format the workbook to better suit a small group discipleship style format or counseling format, we changed some of the layout of the workbook. This was necessary to better accommodate a step by step process of having a leader walk through the material with the attendants of the small group or in counseling. We expanded the workbook from what was originally eight sessions to 10 sessions. **These changes took place in June of 2008.**

We have added additional handouts and homework to help the attendant's better review and apply the biblical principles contained in the teachings.

Therefore, it is important to review the leader's guide carefully before you begin, in order to make sure you understand the flow of the material. If you have any questions, please contact us via email at info@parentingministry.org.



Goals and Responsibilities for Group Leaders

The goal of these lessons is to teach and encourage parents in:

- God's design for the family.
- God's purposes for parents.
- The importance of unity in the parents' marriage relationship.
- The roles of the mother and father in the training up process of their children.
- How to train & raise their children to maturity including; disciplining their children.
- How to incorporate these changes and start over.

The Leader's Responsibilities:

- Oversee and conduct ten parenting classes and one follow-up meeting to be scheduled for approximately one month after the final parenting class
- Assist parents in understanding material using the information contained in the Leader's Guide.
- Schedule classes as described in the Leader's Guide.
- Lead discussion.
- Begin and end the class on time.
- Keep the conversation on track.
- Encourage the introverts and control the extroverts.
- Refer parents to pastoral counsel if necessary.

The Leader Should Not:

- Counsel parents and solve problems (unless a pastor or has pastoral approval).
- Dominate class time discussing his own family.
- Discussing any information obtained from other parents in the class with others outside the class.
- Using class time to promote or teach his personal views that may be contrary to God's Word.

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY CLASS MASTER PLAN

<i>God's Purposes for Parents</i>	Session One (1 ½ hours)	→	INTRODUCTION – 35 MINUTES DVD 1 – 35 MINUTES DISCUSS HOMEWORK – 20 MINUTES
<i>A Strong Foundation</i>	Session Two (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 20 MINUTES DVD 1 – 55 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 15 MINUTES
<i>Loving Communication</i>	Session Three (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 10 MINUTES DVD 2 – 60 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 20 MINUTES
<i>Loving Communication</i>	Session Four (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 25 MINUTES DVD 2 – 40 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 25 MINUTES
<i>God's Management Style</i>	Session Five (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 25 MINUTES DVD 3 – 38 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 27 MINUTES
<i>Disciplining Your Children</i>	Session Six (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 20 MINUTES DVD 3 – 43 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 27 MINUTES
<i>Disciplining Your Children</i>	Session Seven (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 11 MINUTES DVD 4 - 68 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 11 MINUTES
<i>Disciplining Your Children</i>	Session Eight (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 25 MINUTES DVD 4 – 46 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 19 MINUTES
<i>Discipline Box</i>	Session Nine (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 20 MINUTES DVD 5 – 34 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 36 MINUTES
<i>Starting Over</i>	Session Ten (1 ½ hours)	→	REVIEW HOMEWORK – 30 MINUTES DVD 5 – 28 MINUTES DISCUSS VIDEO & INTRODUCE NEW HOMEWORK – 32 MINUTES

GETTING STARTED

Introduction - 35 minutes.

1. Each session is broken up into three segments:

1. **Review Homework**. **Note:** On session one you will be reviewing *Getting Started* shown below.
2. **Video**, which includes a brief introduction to each video. **NOTE:** At the top of each Leader's Schedule it tells you which DVD you should be watching & its time frame.
3. **Discuss the video and explain the homework**.

Note: In order to meet the time schedule each night, especially the first night, the leader needs to be fully prepared and organized in advance of the night's meeting. The time allotted for each segment is clearly stated.

2. The Leader introduces himself (if married, he introduces his wife, gives names and ages of his children), welcomes the parents, and opens in prayer. He then shares the goal of the *Parenting Is a Ministry* classes, a brief introduction of Pastor Craig Caster (see *About the Author*) and the ministry of FDM (see *About FDM*).
3. It is vital that the Leader communicates to the parents that they are asked to **not** give their opinions or counsel to other parents in response to problems that will be discussed. In addition, if problems arise between couples, the Leader should refer the parent to their pastor for counsel and not let them discuss their problems in the class.
4. Ask parents to introduce themselves, tell if they are married, single, or blended family, and give the names and ages of their children. If the class is large these introductions should be excluded.
 - Give each parent two to three minutes to share why they are attending the class and what they hope to gain. If the class is large select 2 or 3 individuals to share.
 - The Leader must firmly, yet gently hold each person to the two to three-minute limit. You may want to purchase a kitchen timer to use when each parent begins (for those *long-winded* parents in the group).

Review with the Class

- A. The group will meet for ten sessions and one follow-up class to be scheduled for approximately one month after the final class. Check your calendar for any up-coming holidays that may conflict with the class.
- B. **Note:** It is essential that parents attend all ten classes. If there is a possibility that they will not be able to finish the course, they should be encouraged to postpone starting for a more convenient time. Encourage the parents to consider purchasing their own set of DVD's or CD's if they know they will have to miss a class and/or go to the FDM website and complete that class online.
- C. Announce the date of the follow-up meeting as soon as possible.
- D. Each parent should receive a workbook to follow along with the videos and to take notes. Some spouses are not accustomed to note taking, therefore may need to be encouraged of the importance.
- E. Each session will have a homework assignment for the parents to complete prior to the next meeting. Encourage them to complete this assignment within two days following the class.
- F. Parents should be encouraged to pay special attention to the Scriptures in the workbook, which are included because these biblical truths are the basis for the parenting principles emphasized in the session.

5. Pass out 3x5 cards for parents to write out their name and the names and ages of their children (married couples do only one card). Collect the cards. Upon leaving the class, each couple or single-parent will take a card (make sure they do not get their own card) and commit to pray for that family for the duration of the class.
6. Note: Copies of the workbook with homework are included in the Leader's Guide for reference and discussion.
7. The Leader should share some closing words of encouragement with the group and always close in prayer.

Additional considerations – Many parents will not be able to attend the parenting class unless some arrangements are made to provide childcare. Also, in order to encourage and embrace single parents, consider providing special assistance (i.e. babysitting, transportation).

You may want to serve light refreshments (water, coffee, and cookies). Hospitality will promote fellowship and unity in your group.

Be sensitive to the fact that most people are private about what goes on inside their homes. Whenever possible, alleviate potential tension with encouraging statements. For example, you may want to post these so all can see them.

- We don't belittle our spouses here.

-We are all here to learn.

-God has a big job on His hands, but He is faithful.

-God did not make a mistake when He gave us our children.

-God knows what He is doing. We have to trust Him to tell us!

-It's okay that you didn't know this before. God knows you are ready to receive now.

-We have a powerful God. He can redeem our failures and mistakes.

-God has given our kid's a free will. Some may choose to go their own way.

-We only have to be obedient to do our part. God will be faithful to do His part.

In *all* discussion times keep comments to no more than two to three minutes. You will learn who the *talkers* are in your group. If allowed, some individuals will consume the conversation. A gentle and humorous reminder at the beginning of the class, as well as getting the group accustomed to the kitchen timer is a good solution to this potential distracting problem.

Remember that you are called to *lead* the group. Don't feel you have to be a counselor, pastor, Bible scholar, best friend, or God-appointed problem solver!

As a leader, it is crucial that you are abiding in Christ, spending time daily in the Word and prayer. You are an example. Make sure your own home and your relationship with your spouse and family is in order before God. Be ready for the battles that will come and be *prayed up* daily as a family.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 1 Session One

1. Introduction → 35 minutes

- You introduce yourself & have parents introduce themselves.
- *Review with the Class* section on **Getting Started** (pts. 1 through 7 on previous pages).
- Pray

2. Video → 35 minutes

- Introduce the first video: *God's Purposes for Parents*.
This first video will help the parents to see their role as ministers for God, fulfilling His will in raising their children. It will also reveal what God's Purposes for Parenting are. Encourage them to take notes to both help them in their retention but also in completing their homework.
- Show Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 20 minutes

- Video Discussion Questions:
- **Note:** *Copies of the workbook with homework are included in the Leader's Guide for reference and discussion.*

1) Review Page 1 in the workbook, "*Parenting is a Ministry*".

Q: What did you learn about the ministry of parenting?

Q: How does this change your viewpoint as a parent?

- We should not take our children's mistakes and/or their rebellion personally.
- If we are doing God's will and following His plan it will take the pressure off us and it places responsibility onto the Lord.
- It's not about getting our way but doing God's will.

2) What are the "Purposes of Parenting?" Turn to pages 2 and 3 for help with your answer.

1. **Our Transformation** → Trials both reveal our weaknesses and our selfishness.

Q: Did you ever consider this?

Q: How should this change the way we look at and respond to the trials we face in raising our children? (*It is good, as the group leader, to share some of the things God has "squeezed" out of you in the raising of your children. Ex: anger, resentment, selfishness*).

2. **God's Glorification** → We and others will see His power and His mercy in and through our trials.

Q: How should this truth affect the way we communicate to our children?

3. Love our children → *we'll get more clarity on this purpose as we go on.*

4. Train our children → *we'll get more clarity on this purpose as we go on.*

If there are any blended families, grandparents raising children, or single parents – take a minute and encourage them with what they heard at the end of the video (see page 3).

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

HOMework for SESSION ONE

1. Review the homework, *God's Purposes for Parents*, on page 4.
2. Encourage the parents to answer these questions individually and try and do this as soon as possible. Then, if married, ask them to schedule a time to sit down and discuss their answers with one another.
3. Explain to them that this is not a time to point out each others faults but to share what the Lord has shown them personally about themselves.
4. Encourage them to begin to pray together each day over these things God has chosen to show them at this time.
5. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
Is A
Ministry*

SESSION ONE
WORKBOOK & HOMEWORK

God's Purposes for Parents

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Session One

God's Purposes for Parents

God Created The Family

Genesis 1:28; 2:18,24

Parenting Is A Ministry

Psalm 145:17

Parents are ministers over their children.

Minister (Webster's Dictionary)

- *One who acts under the orders of another or who is employed by another to execute his purposes.*
- *To adjust, regulate, or set in order.*

Genesis 18:19 *"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."*

- Command his children.
- Teach with intention – to be very intentional about our ways.

Jesus Christ set the example.

Matthew 20:28 *"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

A minister is a _____.

As ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ our disposition must be to _____ His will and purposes in all things through our life.

A minister's desire is to obey his master's wishes and look to Him for all his strength and affirmations.

God's Purposes For Parents

- **Purpose** – *An intended or desired result, a goal.*

God's purpose _____ us.

God's purpose _____ us.

1. Our Transformation

1 John 2:5 *"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."*

- **Perfect** – *To make complete, a process, transformation.*

Isaiah 29:16 (NLT) *"How stupid can you be? He is the Potter, and He is certainly greater than you. You are only the jars He makes! Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "He didn't make us"? Does a jar ever say, "The potter who made me is stupid?"*

- **Our children are God's fingers to reshape us.**
- **God has a purpose for us in the trials we face.**

2. God's Glorification

1 Corinthians 6:20 *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

Matthew 5:16 *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

Remember Moses - Numbers 20:8-13

3. To Love Our Children

Psalms 127:3 (NAU) *"Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward."*

- Our children's value is based upon God's Word.

4. To Train Our Children

Ephesians 6:4 *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

- **Bring them up** - *To raise them to maturity, to train and educate.*

God’s instructions do not change for blended or single-parent families.

Psalm 68:5 *“A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation.”*

- **Widow** – Greek *“chera”* is derived from the word *“chasma”* meaning a *“deficiency or a vacancy.”*

James 1:27 *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”*

Matthew 11:28 *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

Psalm 10:14 *“...The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless.”*

Parenting is a Ministry
God's Purposes for Parents
Homework

1. Write out in your own words how seeing your role as a minister changes your perspective as a parent (see page 1).

2. How does being a minister affect you as a father and mother (if married) when it comes to how to handle the raising of your children (see page 1)?

3. What are God's purposes for parents? Turn to page 2 for help with your answer.

- 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

4. Make a list of non-glorifying behaviors that God is revealing in you through the trials and/or difficulties in raising your children. Example: impatience, resentment, etc.

If married, discuss these things as a couple, then together take them to the Lord. Ask for His forgiveness and for the ability to take responsibility every time these things are manifested through you. Ask for the faith to trust *His* way in bringing about your transformation. **Remember:** there is no growth or transformation taking place if you do not ask for forgiveness...every time.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 1 Session Two

1. Review Session 1 Homework → 20 minutes

Q: Ask if anyone would like to share how their time together discussing the homework went.

Q: Have they been faithful in praying together over these truths?

Q: Have they noticed any changes in themselves in how they deal with the trials that have come up in their home over the last week?

Q: Any changes in the way they communicate to their children?

Q: Would anyone like to share a time they had to ask for forgiveness from their child in the last week?

2. Video → 55 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *A Strong Foundation*

➤ In this video we are going to learn how to be strengthened by God to do this difficult job. God does not expect us to do anything for Him in our own wisdom or strength but by His Word and the power of His Holy Spirit. This video will help us understand how to receive this power from God and how to build a strong spiritual foundation to build our family upon.

➤ Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 15 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

1) Did you know after one generation the children of Israel, after entering the promise land, their children walked away from the Lord? Why? The parents did not put God first in their life. The Bible is the best history book that we can learn from what not to do so we don't repeat the same mistakes.

2) On page 6 in the workbook, what are those three ingredients of a Strong Foundation that we learned in Luke 6:46-49?

✓ **Comes to Me** – Receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Q: Have you done this? Not just being born in a Christian family or just believing Jesus is God but a time when you confessed your sins and asked Him to forgive you and be your Lord and Savior.

✓ **Hears my sayings** – Abiding in Him; the importance of us maintaining a daily devotional time to be with the Lord in prayer; reading His Word; meditating and even journaling our thoughts. Like any relationship, if you want to be close and know each other, you have to spend consistent time alone with each other.

✓ **Does them** – Doing the will of God. Remember what gives us the ability to do God's will is His grace (power) and we receive this grace by abiding in Him each day. In order to do His will, we need to know His will. Over the next few weeks you are going to learn God's will in raising children. He will bless you for investing this time to learn. God wants us to look to His Word to tend to everything He has called us to do and oversee: our relationship to Him; our marriage; raising our children; finances; etc.

3) How did you do on grading your personal spiritual foundation?

Q: Anyone want to share?

Q: How many of you have room for improvement?

- When you think about it these are things we, as Christians, need to be very concerned about, yet how easy is it for our lives to get so busy and full that we don't consider these things nor prioritize them in our lives. It is no wonder so many Christians are not experiencing God's blessings in their lives.
- How we need God's grace each day to accept and embrace His ways in transforming us. Remember: the storms are not to destroy us but strengthen and transform us.

The integrity of the foundation we raise our children on is directly related to the strength of our relationship with Jesus Christ and our daily dependence on Him.

HOMEWORK for SESSION TWO

Review the homework.

1. Page 9 → 7 simple steps to help develop a daily devotional life. A personal relationship with Jesus that is close. **Note:** other devotionals at the bottom of the page are helpful tools but they do not and are not to replace being in the Word daily.
2. Page 10 → Write out your prayerful commitment to the Lord to draw near to Him. Also, if you are not sure you are a Christian, review these 4 points and/or come and see me after the class. Remember: this is the first ingredient to having a strong foundation.
3. Page 11 → If you did not get a chance to grade your spiritual foundation, take some time, and finish this exercise. It's helpful to examine those areas that need to be improved.
4. Page 12 → Take some time to visit some of these things you have learned. It's important to make them personal. By answering these questions, not only will it help you remember, but it will also help you take ownership. Then come together as a husband and wife and discuss your answers. Try to do this within the next 2 days or you will forget what you have heard. *Encourage the men to take the initiative and get theirs done first and pursue their wives on a time to meet.*
5. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
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Session Two
WORKBOOK & HOMEWORK

A Strong Foundation

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Our Strong Foundation

Matthew 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

- **As ministers, our first priority must be to fulfill God’s will. We accomplish this by daily putting everything in perspective and prioritizing our life according to what God says is important in order to fulfill His purpose in and through us. We must look to Him daily for strength to accomplish this task.**

Deuteronomy 6:1-6 *"Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess,*

that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you--' a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart."

- **‘Hear O Israel’ is repeated, indicating that what follows is not incidental, but absolutely essential for the survival of Israel as a nation.**

How to Develop Intimacy with God Through Daily Devotions

HOMEWORK

- **Intimacy** – *Marked by very close association, contact, or friendship developing through long association; very familiar; suggesting informal warmth or privacy; of a very personal nature.*
1. Choose the best time of day (morning or evening) to commit to setting aside devotional time. Don't set yourself up for discouragement by setting a goal that you will not be able to keep. Start small, and then add time as you grow. Begin with 15 minutes.
 2. Choose a book of the Bible. Read one chapter, or less if it is a long chapter or verses that you want to ponder. In addition, you may also want to read a daily devotional. See suggestions listed below.
 3. Pray. Specifically pray over the truths you have read, asking God to speak to you about how you can obey; what you should do or what you should change in your life in order to obey.
 4. Spend a few minutes in quiet listening. This may be uncomfortable for you at first. Living in a noise-filled world, most of us are not accustomed to sitting quietly. Persevere and God will be faithful to speak to you. Remember that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in your heart and mind and can minister to you in your thoughts!
 5. Journal. Write out what these verses mean to you.
- **Journal** – *A record of experiences, ideas, or reflections kept regularly for private use.*
6. Pray. Use the following to help you pray effectively:

Adoration – Worship and praise God
Confession – Confess and repent of any known sins
Thanksgiving – Expressing gratitude for God's blessings in your life
Supplication – Humbly make requests for your needs and the needs of others
 7. Pray that God will help you to know and acknowledge His presence throughout your day.

Suggested Devotionals

Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation, by Craig Caster
Daily Experience with God, by Andrew Murray
Drawing Near: Daily Readings for a Deeper Faith, by John F. MacArthur
Every Day with Jesus: First Steps with New Believers, by Greg Laurie
Experiencing God, by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King
Meet the Bible: A Panorama of God's Word..., by Philip Yancey and Brenda Quinn
My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers
On the Other Side of the Garden, by Virginia Ruth Fugate (married women)
Streams in the Desert, by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman
The One Year Book of Psalms, by William J. Peterson and Randy Petersen
The Power of a Praying Wife, by Stormie Omartian (married women)

Parent's Commitment To Put Jesus Christ First In Your Life HOMEWORK

Perhaps you have struggled in some areas of parenting and have come to realize that your struggles are a result of a weak or inconsistent spiritual life. God promises to bless, encourage, and strengthen us as we submit to His lordship in our life.

"The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace." Psalm 29:11

Write a prayer to the Lord, committing to put Him first in your life and asking Him to help you parent the *gifts* (children) He has given you.

Perhaps you have never surrendered your life to Christ. Know that God loves you and has provided the way for you to have a relationship with Him. You must simply,

1. Recognize and admit you are a sinner.

Romans 3:23 *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

2. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and that He is the only way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to God.

John 14:6 *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

Acts 4:12 *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

3. Confess your sins to Jesus and repent (be sorry), asking Him to forgive you.

Acts 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*

Romans 10:9 *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

4. Ask Jesus to come into your heart and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

John 1:12 *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."*

Repeat the following prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sin. Thank you for dying on the cross for me and paying the price for my sin. Please come into my heart. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to be your disciple. Thank you for forgiving me and coming into my life. Thank you that I am now a child of God and will one day follow you to heaven." Amen

A Personal Inspection of Your Foundation

HOMEWORK

Luke 6:46-49

(Grade yourself, A, B, C, D, or F)

1. **“...comes to Me...”** – To receive Christ

Have you come to Him and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?

Yes No

If you have not received Christ, but would like to, the Parent’s Commitment worksheet will assist you in making your commitment.

2. **“...hears My sayings...”** – To abide in Christ

My prayer and devotional life - A B C D F

How is your prayer life? Is it growing and a daily part of your life? Do words like intimate, worship, listening, or relationship describe your prayer life? Do you, as a husband and wife, pray together daily? Do you pray with your children daily?

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6

How often do you spend time reading the Word of God? Do you spend time meditating over what you read in your devotional time?

“...when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” Mark 4:34

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

3. **“...does them...”** – To obey Christ

My finances - A B C D F

Do you trust God with your finances? Do you give tithes regularly?

“Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase. So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9-10

My priorities - A B C D F

How are your priorities with God, spouse, children, work, church, leisure time, and fellowship? Are they in the proper order and does your family agree?

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 14:40

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13. How does God prioritize your family in these Scriptures?

My practices - A B C D F

Are you practicing godly principles daily in your own home? Are you glorifying Jesus Christ before your children and family? Is His fruit evident in your life?

“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

Parenting is a Ministry
A Strong Foundation
Homework

1. On pages 5 and 6 “*A Strong Foundation*” we reviewed Deuteronomy 6:1-6 and Luke 6:46-49. In your own words, briefly summarize what these verses mean.

Deuteronomy 6:1-6

Luke 6:46-49

2. What are the ingredients of a strong foundation? See page 6 for your answers.

1) _____ - _____

2) _____ - _____

3) _____ - _____

3. Review the Scriptures on page 8 that discuss why suffering is part of our journey as a parent: 1 Peter 4:16, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Psalm 127:1, and 2 Peter 1:1-4. Write out your prayer to the Lord and ask Him to help you to accept His plan in these difficult times. Also write out your commitment to look to Him daily for the grace to love and serve your children according to His will.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 2 Session Three

1. Review Session 2 Homework → 10 minutes

- Q:** How did everyone do with their personal devotional time this week? Anyone want to share?
- Q:** Did you all get a chance to write out your prayerful commitment to the Lord to draw near to Him? Anybody notice any changes in how you are parenting the gifts He's given you since making that commitment?
- Q:** How did it go with sharing and discussing your answers with one another?

2. Video → 60 minutes

- Introduce the video: *Loving Communication*
- This video will help us learn what God's Word says about loving communication and it will also help us examine ourselves. We all love our children but sometimes we can develop unloving practices toward our children that hurt them and misrepresent Jesus Christ in our lives. We'll also learn to glorify God to our children.
- Be ready to take notes in your workbook.
- Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 20 minutes

- Video Discussion Questions:
 - Q:** Did you hear that LOVE is the greatest motivator for our children to yield to our authority and receive our training; not pain, fear, or punishment.
 - * We, as parents, need to remind ourselves of this often.

 - Q:** What did we learn about the difference between reacting to our children and responding to our children?
 - ◆ Reacting is the flesh and usually sinful.
 - ◆ Responding in love means we are using God's Word as our guide, not our emotions.

Isn't it great that God gave us a clear understanding of what loving someone means?

Remember: This lesson is not to condemn us but to show us the way and bring conviction in those areas we need to change.

HOMEWORK for SESSION THREE

Explain the homework.

1. Page 18 to 20 → Effective Listening Self-Evaluation.
 - Do this on your own. What makes this exercise so powerful is that it helps us to identify those areas we need to work on. If married, come together after you've completed it and discuss what you have learned. Ask your spouse if they agree with your findings.
2. Page 21 → Write out your specific areas that the Lord has revealed to you that need to be changed (encourage them to prayerfully consider steps 1 through 4 at the bottom of the page).
3. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
Is A
Ministry*

Session Three
Workbook & Homework

Loving Communication

HOMEWORK

EFFECTIVE LISTENING SELF-EVALUATION

Complete the *Effective Listening Self-Evaluation* to help you become more aware of your listening habits. Answer each question thoughtfully and honestly.

Communicating Knowledge and Attitudes

#	Do You...	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
1	...tune-out your child when you don't agree with them or don't want to hear?				
2	...concentrate on what is being said even if you are not really interested?				
3	...assume you know what your child is going to say and stop listening?				
4	...repeat in your own words what your child has just said?				
5	...listen to your child's viewpoint, even if it differs from yours?				
6	...remain open to learning something from them, even if it seems insignificant?				
7	...find out what words mean when they are used in ways not familiar to you?				
8	...form a rebuttal in your head while your child is still talking?				
9	...give the appearance of listening when you are not?				
10	...daydream while your child is talking?				
11	...listen for main ideas, not just facts?				
12	...recognize that words don't always mean the same thing to different people?				
13	...listen to only what you want to hear, blotting out your child's whole message?				
14	...look at your child when they are speaking?				
15	...concentrate on your child's meaning rather than how he or she looks?				
16	...know which words and phrases you tend to respond to emotionally?				
17	...think about what you want to accomplish with your communication?				

Communicating Knowledge and Attitudes

#	Do You...	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
18	...plan the best time to say what you want to say?				
19	...think about how the other person might react to what you say?				
20	...consider the best way to communicate (written, spoken, and/or the timing)?				
21	...always care about your child's emotional condition when speaking to them (if they are stressed, sad, worried, hostile, disinterested, rushed, angry, etc.)?				
22	...adjust your communication to each child's personality?				
23	...think, " <i>I assumed he or she would know that?</i> " Assuming that your child knows and understands what you are communicating and/or communicated to them?				
24	...allow your child to respectfully vent negative feelings toward you without becoming defensive?				
25	...regularly make efforts to increase your listening efficiency?				
26	...take notes when necessary to help you remember?				
27	...listen closely without being distracted by surroundings?				
28	...listen to your child without judging or criticizing?				
29	...restate instructions and messages to be sure you understand correctly?				
30	...come in with a statement about what you believe your child is feeling?				

HOMEWORK

Effective Listening Self-Evaluation Scoring Index

Circle the number that represents the category you checked on each item of the
Effective Listening Self-Evaluation.

#	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
1	1	2	3	4
2	4	3	2	1
3	1	2	3	4
4	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
6	4	3	2	1
7	4	3	2	1
8	1	2	3	4
9	1	2	3	4
10	1	2	3	4
11	4	3	2	1
12	4	3	2	1
13	1	2	3	4
14	4	3	2	1
15	4	3	2	1
16	4	3	2	1
17	4	3	2	1
18	4	3	2	1
19	4	3	2	1
20	4	3	2	1
21	4	3	2	1
22	4	3	2	1
23	1	2	3	4
24	4	3	2	1
25	4	3	2	1
26	4	3	2	1
27	4	3	2	1
28	4	3	2	1
29	4	3	2	1
30	4	3	2	1
Total				

GRAND TOTAL _____

110-120: Excellent Listener _____

99-109: Above Average Listener _____

88-98: Average Listener _____

77-87: Fair Listener _____

<77: Poor to Very Poor Listener _____

HOMEWORK

Improve Your Loving Communication Habits

(If married, review and discuss as a couple)

After completing the *Effective Listening Self-Evaluation* and totaling your score, write out the areas you need to change. Review and discuss as a couple, if married. Then review *What Love Is and Is Not* from pages 14-17 of your workbook and write out, by priority, any unbiblical communication habits you have been practicing in your home that you need God's strength to change.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

If you believe that you have not been demonstrating loving communication to your children (or a particular child), I strongly recommend that you follow the steps below to reconciliation.

- 1) Confess this to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you for not communicating love to *His* child/children.

1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

- 2) Ask God to fill your heart with renewed love for your child/children.

Romans 5:5 *"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

- 3) Go to your child/children and make an age-appropriate confession. For example, *"I love you, but I know that I have not been showing you that love with my words. I have been very impatient (unkind, etc.) and I need to apologize. Please forgive me. I love you and I am so glad to be your mom/dad."*

- 4) Pray with your child.

Write out a prayer of commitment to seek the Lord to empower you to change in these areas and to become the parent to your child that God desires you to be.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 2 Session Four

1. Review Session 3 Homework → 25 minutes

Q: Does anyone want to share their results from their *Effective Listening* Homework?

Q: Were there any surprises? Did you get a better score than you thought you would or a worse score?

Q: When you discussed it with your spouse, were there any more revelations?

Q: Did any of you interview your children using these questions to get their take on how you are doing?

Q: Have you committed these things to prayer?

Remember: The enemy does not want you to make these changes. He will use anything he can to stop you. He hates your children. He wants you to use the powerful influence God has given you to misrepresent God and not treat them as valuable gifts from Him whereby we hurt them and can even be pushing them into the arms of the enemy.

2. Video → 40 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *Loving Communication*

➤ This video will reveal more of what God's Word teaches us about loving communication. There is some great practical instruction that I know will help you in this area. Also, it'll show us how we can adapt to our children's unique personalities and emotional needs and why we most often fail to love our children.

➤ Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 25 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

Q: How many of you were surprised to learn that 55% of communication is visual? (pg.22)

Q: How about 38% is our tone of voice? Did you notice what Craig said, "If we have an angry or disappointed facial expression and are raising our voice, that's 93% sinful communication."

◆ We often begin to simply repeat the same practices our parents did with us. Many times it is because we just don't know what to do and out of our frustration we get in the flesh but that is no excuse.

◆ We learned how important our daily abiding relationship is in order to have our heart in the right place and receiving God's grace.

◆ It was good to learn (top of pg.23) that God is the one who gave our children their personality. The big question for us parents is: Do we accept it? If we are showing anger, resentment, and/or disappointment toward them, it could be motivated from a heart that is telling God that He made a mistake and/or you do not accept His perfect plan in the personality He gave your child. Each child can be very unique & different from one another. God wants us to adapt to those unique needs and be willing to lovingly fulfill them.

NOTE: You, as the leader, may want to give one or two examples with your own children to help them grasp this truth and be willing to make these changes.

- ◆ Encourage the group to go back over those 4 points of why we fail to love our children found on pages 23-24. This is a good place to remind them about God's first purpose for us parents: **Our Transformation**. Remember: We (parents) are not done yet. We all have failed and will fail but as we take responsibility, every time we do and repent to the Lord and our children, then we and our children will witness the power of God transforming us into God's image and the frequency of these sinful practices will soon come to an end.

HOMEWORK for SESSION FOUR

Explain the homework.

1. Page 25 (parent discussion) → is very helpful for you to examine yourself to make it very clear when unloving communication is manifesting itself. Exhort them to take these things to God in prayer.
2. Page 26 → Gives you practical ways to show your child you love them without using words. Pray about these items. Be willing, if necessary, to examine your work hours, your hobbies, or commitments outside the home that may be keeping you so busy that you don't have time for your children. Even ministry or serving at the church can be something that if not kept in check can affect your ability to spend time with your children.
3. Page 27-30 → Very important instructions on *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. These are principles that Christians need to truly understand and practice. They are significant to us so encourage them to study these things and practice them daily if needed.
4. Close in prayer.

Eliminating Inappropriate Entertainment

Parent Discussion Homework

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

1. Make a list of the music, videos, video games, magazines, posters, television programs, books, and other forms of entertainment that you and/or your children are currently enjoying that need to be eliminated. A simple question that will help you sort through this exercise is: *If Jesus visited your home today, do you believe He would approve of these materials?*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Do you need to make some changes in your home in this area? Yes No
3. Write out your commitment to make changes where needed and to diligently disciple your children on the subject of appropriate forms and content of entertainment.

Effecting Change

Parents should be careful ***not*** to act impulsively or like tyrants in an effort to make these changes. Parents should ***not*** go through their teen's bedroom with a vengeance, tearing posters off the walls and destroying music. Your children should be approached with love, humility, and without anger or arrogance.

If you have previously allowed inappropriate entertainment in your home, take the following steps:

- Pray and seek the LORD'S guidance and wisdom.
 - Discuss and agree as a couple on what items should be discarded.
 - If your child has purchased these items with their own money, with either your explicit or implied permission, you may, if applicable, offer to replace the inappropriate entertainment with reasonable appropriate entertainment of your child's choice.
4. Discuss together your plan of action on how, **together**, you are going to make these changes. Write out your plans.

*Parenting
Is A
Ministry*

Session Four
Workbook & Homework

Loving Communication

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Session Four

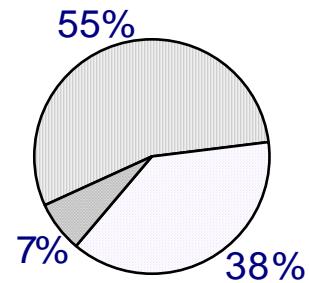
Loving Communication

What is communication?

- The act of exchanging information, interchange of thoughts, messages, information or opinions; to share or participate.
- Listening

How do we communicate?

- _____% Visual
- _____% Tone of voice
- _____% Verbal



The Ingredients of Loving Communication

1. Loving communication begins with the _____.

Matthew 15:18 "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man."

Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

2. Loving communication is based upon the _____ we place on another person.

Psalms 127:3 "Behold, children are a _____ from the Lord"

3. Loving communication is a _____ skill.

Proverbs 15:28 "The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil."

Proverbs 16:23 From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive." (NLT)

Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human need through loving channels to the glory of God. - Warren Wiersbe

Our Children's Uniqueness

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."*

- **Train up** (original Hebrew form) – *To dedicate or set aside for divine service.*
- **In the way he should go** (from a Hebrew idiom) - *According to the demands of his/her personality, conduct, or stage of life.*

God is the creator of the soul, the mind, will and emotions; our personalities.

Jeremiah 38:16 *"...As the LORD lives, who made our very souls..."*

There is a time and a season for all things.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven"*

Common Reasons We Fail To Love

1. Unforgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Forgiveness does not mean:

- That the offender agrees with you.
- That the offender asks for your forgiveness.
- That the offender accepts your forgiveness.
- That the relationship has to be or will be restored.

2. The Set Up – (Satanic attack on our minds and our thoughts)

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"*

- Lies (*John 8:44*)
- Condemnation/accusations against others or ourselves (*Revelation 12:9,10*)
- Temptations to sin (*Matthew 4:3*)

Parenting is a Ministry
Parent Discussion Homework
(If married, complete and discuss as a couple)

1. Take some time to discuss the habit of facial expressions and/or angry outbursts that need to change.

- Think of when they normally occur (for example, when you come home from work, during or after disciplining your child, when your spouse doesn't support or agree with you, etc.) At what times or during what circumstances do these sinful unloving things happen?

- Is there a particular child who brings out the worst in you? Write your response below.

2. As a couple, what practical things can you do to help each other during these times?

3. Review *Common Reasons We Fail to Love* (Pages 23-24) and discuss. Which ones apply to you?

4. If the Lord has revealed to you that unforgiveness is an issue, turn to pages 27-30 in this session of the workbook for *The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. Review these principles and ask the Lord to help you follow through with forgiving others. This may include your own parents, children, or spouse.

5. Take some time and review *Ways to Tell Your Child "I Love You" Without Saying the Words* on page 26. Circle the ones you are going to begin doing on a regular basis. Commit these things to prayer. Ask the Lord to help you follow through with your commitment.

Ways to Tell Your Child “I Love You” Without Saying the Words

HOMEWORK

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

1. Attend their sports events, music performance, school plays, etc.
2. Find opportunities to trust your child by granting him/her a new area of responsibility.
3. Have a family picnic on a Sunday afternoon.
4. Walk in the rain and jump puddles together.
5. Listen to your child with all your attention.
6. Sit down together and watch your child’s favorite television show.
7. Skip rocks together on a lake, pond, or river.
8. Say, “*I’m proud of you.*”
9. After your teenager comes in from an outing, have popcorn together by the fireplace.
10. Tell your child about the things that you appreciate most about your own parents.
11. Have a family water-balloon fight (without you as the prime target).
12. Take an evening walk together.
13. Let your child *catch you* bragging about them to a friend.
14. Hug your child *just because*.
15. Postpone an appointment and, instead, do something your child enjoys doing.
16. Surprise your child by giving them a day off from school and spend the day together.
17. Tell your daughter that she is beautiful.
18. Tell your son that he is handsome.
19. Give your child grace when he/she has made a mistake.
20. Pray with your child everyday!
21. Seize appropriate opportunities to ask your child for his/her opinion.
22. Accept your child’s unique personality traits.
23. Write a note expressing your love for them.
24. Bake or buy their favorite cookies.
25. Make popcorn and enjoy an old movie together.
26. Take them out to a restaurant for breakfast or dinner.
27. Take up a hobby that *they* particularly like to do.
28. Start a new hobby together.

The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

The word *forgive* means literally, *to give away*. When a debt is forgiven, the rights to payment are *given away*. If someone injures me and I forgive him or her, I *give away* the freedom to continue being angry and resentful towards the one who wronged me. I absorb the loss myself. The word *pardon* is derived from the Latin word, *perdonare*, meaning to *grant freely*. True forgiveness is undeserved, unmerited, and free. It is not *just* or *fair*. In the Scriptures, to *forget* means, *to let go from one's power*.

∞ The Cost of UnForgiveness

When we refuse to grant forgiveness, choosing rather to maintain our *right* to demand payment for wrongs done to us, we must be willing to absorb the cost incurred by that choice. Forgiveness is free, however unforgiveness carries with it a costly price tag. Unwillingness to forgive produces *resentment*. Resentment means, *to feel again*. Resentment clings to the past, reliving it over and over. Resentment, like *picking a scab*, prohibits our wounds from healing.

In Hebrews 12:15 we learn that bitterness, like a deep root, takes a firm hold in the human heart, then grows, and produces *fruit*. However, rather than nourish others, this fruit is bitter, causes trouble, and defiles others.

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." Hebrews 12:15

Most of us do not readily admit that we have been harboring unforgiveness. However, Ephesians 4:31 teaches that there is undeniable evidence in an individual's life that the bitter tree of resentment is growing within their heart.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." Ephesians 4:31

Wrath – An outburst of a strong, vengeful anger or indignation, seeking retribution.

Anger – A state of mind marked by fretfulness and grief.

Evil speaking – Unkind words, verbal abuse against someone, slander, wounding someone's reputation by evil reports, backbiting, insult and defamation.

Malice – Hateful feelings that we nurture in our hearts. A desire to see another suffer.

"Fruits" of Unforgiveness

- Pride
- Health problems
- Self-centered
- Self-righteous
- Self-pity
- Emotional disturbances
- Judgmental & critical of others
- Anxiety, tension & stress
- Lack of trust in relationships
- Lack of peace
- Thinking you are superior to others
- Ultra-sensitive & easily offended
- Absence of peace & joy
- Eating Disorders
- Broken fellowship with Jesus

☪ *Why Forgive?*

Besides the before mentioned devastation that results from unforgiveness, we are indebted to forgive because:

1. God commands it!

Obedience to the Father is not optional. If we pick and choose when we will and will not obey God's commands, we will live unfruitful, ineffective, and spiritually barren lives.

"But love your enemies, and do good...and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." Luke 6:35-36

2. In forgiving, we resemble Jesus, and bear the family likeness.

The term *Christian* means *little Christ*. As Christians, we are called to carry the name of Christ to a lost world. We must be willing to bear His image; to be like Him. Christ demonstrated forgiveness. He came to this earth to bring forgiveness to the guilty. He gave the commission to the church to continue proclaiming forgiveness. We must, if we are to rightly bear His name, forgive those who have offended us!

"...the one who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner as He walked."
1 John 2:6

3. It is the only means of breaking the cycle of blame and pain.

Forgiveness offers the way out! It does not settle all questions of blame and fairness, often evading those questions altogether. It does allow a relationship to start over, to begin anew.

This truth is demonstrated in the life of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37-45. Though he was mistreated, betrayed, abandoned by his brothers, and sold into slavery, he refused to allow the root of bitterness to take hold of his life. Shortly before being reunited with his brothers, he testified of the healing work that God had done in his life during the years of separation, as demonstrated in the naming of his sons. In Genesis 41:51-52 we read:

"Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my trouble in all my father's household."

"He named the second Ephraim, "For," he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction..."

To *forget* in this sense does not mean to cease to remember, but *to let go*, to cease to let the memory of hurtful things control your present life. Joseph's *fruitfulness* was directly related to his *forgetfulness*. Remember that resentment means *to feel again*. Joseph chose to trust God with his past. Unforgiveness imprisons us to the past and locks out all potential for a fruitful life.

During Joseph's years alone in Egypt, he allowed God to heal his heart, which had been broken by his own brothers. Later, when given the opportunity, Joseph extended love, forgiveness, and grace to his brothers. Joseph speaks to his brothers in Genesis 45:5, 7, & 15.

"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life...and to keep you alive by a great deliverance...He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him."

There was no blaming, no explanations demanded, only the voice of mercy and forgiveness. The way was cleared for Joseph and his brothers to be reunited and begin a new relationship.

4. Forgiveness loosens the stranglehold of guilt in the offender.

Joseph's brothers would have carried their grief to their graves if he had not extended forgiveness to them. Forgiveness, undeserved and unearned, can cut the cords and let the oppressive burden of guilt roll away.

"...in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7

If Jesus had not extended kindness to sinners, we would remain in the stranglehold of guilt. He made the first move toward us that made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

∞ Reconciliation

To *reconcile* is to restore to friendship or harmony, or to settle or resolve differences. It is the doing away of an enmity, the bridging over of a quarrel. Reconciliation implies that the parties being reconciled were formerly hostile to one another.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
Ephesians 4:31-32

To be reconciled, the Scripture above simply instructs us to *"Let all bitterness... be put away from you... be kind... tenderhearted, forgiving..."* But *how* do we let bitterness be put away? *How* can we change our own feelings about a wrong done? *How* do we forgive?

As an act of the will, we must

Confess our unforgiving spirit to God; ask Him to forgive us and to fill our heart with His love (1 John 1:9-10).

If possible, go to those we have wronged, share God's love and forgiveness with them, humbly make confession, and ask for their forgiveness (Matthew 5:22-24).

Spend time daily with the Lord in His Word and in prayer (Matthew 6:33).

Ponder the meaning of the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for your sins (Titus 3:3-5).

Ask the Holy Spirit to generate His love within your heart and give you the strength to obey and forgive others (Romans 5:5).

*"Forgiveness is not an emotion...
Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function
regardless of the temperature of the heart."
Corrie ten Boom*

*"Whenever I see myself before God and
realize something of what my blessed Lord
has done for me at Calvary, I am ready to
forgive anybody anything, I cannot withhold
it. I do not even want to withhold it."
Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

*"The degree to which I am able and willing to forgive
others is a clear indication of the extent to which I have
personally experienced God my Father's forgiveness for me."
Phillip Keller*

Six of the most powerful words
in the English language,
"I was wrong. Please forgive me."

It is awfully hard to forgive. It is harder not to forgive. If we do not forgive, we deny what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Our experience of God's forgiveness is directly related to our ability to forgive. A readiness to forgive others is part of the indication that we have truly repented and received God's forgiveness. A broken heart toward God cannot be a hard heart toward others.

Pride and fear keep us from forgiveness and reconciliation. Refusing to give in, or be broken, insisting on our rights, and defending ourselves are all indications that our selfish pride is ruling our life, rather than the Lord. If fears of *what-ifs* are consuming and controlling you, you need to pray for the faith to trust and obey God. Enemies are very expensive to keep. Matthew 18:21-35 warns that an unforgiving spirit will put us in an emotional prison.

"The first and often the only person to be healed by forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving... When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner we set free was us."
Lewis Smedes

You can go to our website at www.parentingministry.org to download a 13 page Workbook that may help you or someone you know further in this area.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 3 Session Five

1. Review Session 4 Homework → 25 minutes

Q: Page 25 of your homework asked you when your unloving facial expressions or tones normally occur. Would anyone like to share?

Q: Is it with a particular child?

◆ It is so important for us to remember that God uses our children as one of His tools to reveal our selfishness or anger. As we accept this truth (remembering that we are being transformed into Christ's image) and we take responsibility for this sinful response through forgiveness – not only are we healing the heart of our child, but we will also experience our transformation. It is not something that happens over night – it is a process.

Q: Again, on page 25, would any parent like to share what they learned about themselves in answering question #3?

Q: Did any of you use the list on page 26 to do an activity with your child?

Q: Did anyone have the opportunity to ask forgiveness from their child for unloving behavior who would like to share their experience?

2. Video → 38 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *God's Management Style*

➤ In this session, Pastor Craig is sharing with us *God's Management Style* for the family. How a husband and wife are to work together in the raising up of their children. Some of you may be a little shocked by what you are going to hear. It may be very different from the way you were raised or the way you are currently running your home in this area. **NOTE:** Encourage the group to be taking notes in their workbook. **ALSO:** If any single parents in the group (especially moms), encourage them to not become discouraged. These biblical instructions are important for them to learn in the event they ever give advice to someone in this area or in the event they consider remarrying. Let them know God knows their situation and He is faithful to help single parents.

➤ Show the Video.

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 27 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

Q: How many of you were raised in a home that had this type of management style?

Q: Did you ever think that there can be consequences for not running our homes in this way? As a husband, God has called us to lead in all areas (even in the raising of the children). When a man relinquishes this to his wife, God will bring His discipline upon him and it will affect the whole family. **NOTE:** You may want to share your personal experience if this is something you had to change.

◆ Encourage the group not to become anxious over what they have heard. Over the next few weeks they are going to learn how to work together and accomplish the roles God has called them to.

HOMework for SESSION FIVE

Explain the homework.

1. Page 35 → is to help parents to first do some self examining over what they have learned. After it's completed, they are to come together and discuss what it is they believe the Lord is speaking to them regarding *God's Management Style*.

NOTE: Single parents can also go through this exercise. Have them skip Q 3 but on Q 4 have them write their answer using the management style they did have when they were married (if applicable).

2. Page 36-40 → Brings more clarity to the father and mother's roles in the home. **NOTE:** Encourage them to read both roles – not just the one that applies to them.
3. Page 41 → Will guide you in some simple steps on how to begin to manage your home differently. **NOTE:** Encourage them not to use this time to remind their spouse of all the times they failed to do this or how many times they told their spouse to do this. Use this as a time to start over and to look forward – not to live in the past.
4. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
Is A
Ministry*

Session Five
Workbook & Homework

God's Management Style

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Session Five

God's Management Style

Training Is Twofold

1. _____ your children.
Teach them the Word of God.
2. Raise them up to _____.
Discipline your children.

God's Management Style

Marriage is an institution created by God.

Genesis 2:18 *"And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

Genesis 2:24 *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*

Luke 14:26 *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."*

God established the authority. The husbands/fathers are to lead the home.

1 Corinthians 11:3 *"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."*

Colossians 3:18-21 *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."*

Colossians 3:18 "...as fitting in the Lord."

A wife is to submit to her husband's leadership unless his leadership is in conflict with specific Scriptural commands.

What if you have a blended family or the husband is not a believer?

1 Peter 3:1-2 "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear."

- **Submission** – A voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden.

How Do You Know If There Is A Problem With Your Management Style?

Read and ponder the following questions. The purpose of this exercise is **not** to find fault in your spouse, but to allow God to speak to **you** about your own weaknesses. Be aware that responding with resentment or pride will hinder you from yielding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

1. **Dad**, when your children are in your presence, do you discipline them?
 Yes No Sometimes
2. **Mom**, do you consult your husband for input on all aspects of discipline?
 Yes No Sometimes
3. **Dad**, do you listen to your wife's input on the emotional state of your children?
 Yes No Sometimes
4. **Mom**, do you keep information from your husband, not informing him on everything regarding the children? Yes No Sometimes
5. **Dad**, when mom says 'no' and the kids come to you, do you always consult with your wife before responding? Yes No Sometimes
6. **Mom**, do you find yourself arguing with your children or teen, defending yourself and why you made a particular rule or disciplinary decision? Yes No Sometimes
7. **Parents**, have you sat down together and agreed on the rules and disciplines you will use with your children? Yes No
8. **Parents**, do you disagree in front of your children over rules or discipline issues?
 Yes No Sometimes

Answers should be : 1.Yes 2.Yes 3.Yes 4.No 5.Yes 6.No 7.Yes 8.No

The Biblical View of Leadership

A Father is one who serves, manages, and teaches.

1. A Servant Priest

Ephesians 5:25, 26 *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her. That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”*

Job 1:5 *“So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus Job did regularly.”*

2. A Teacher and Manager

Teacher

Ephesians 6:4 *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

He is to _____ them.

Manager

1 Timothy 3:4 *“...one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence”.*

- To rule is to _____.
- He sees that his children are to _____.
- He is the main *disciplinarian*.

Today in most homes, the mothers are setting the rules and issuing the discipline.

Moms are missing opportunities to nurture.

In single-parent homes, the parent, with God's power, fulfills both roles.

Parenting is a Ministry
Parent Discussion Homework
(If married, complete and discuss as a couple)

Remember when we read God's Word, it reveals our hearts, our lack of understanding, and our selfishness. God has used this time in your life to bring these truths and understanding to you. He did not reveal these truths to you to discourage you or to cause you to become hopeless, angry, or resentful but to show you His love for you and His will for you as a parent. You may want to use this time to ask for forgiveness for not following God's order in the home; either not leading as a husband, or not submitting as a wife. Trust the Lord and He will bless you and heal you.

1. Review Pages 31-34 in the workbook.
2. What did you learn about God's order in the family?

3. Go back over the *Management Style* questions on page 33 (1-8). Were your answers to those questions the same as your spouses? Yes No If no, why do you think you see it differently?

4. Review and pray about *The Biblical Roles of the Mother and Father* found on pages 36 – 40 of Session 5 in the workbook. Are there areas that the Lord has revealed to you that need to change? Write them below.

5. Now take some time and discuss them with your spouse. If one of you is feeling overwhelmed or insecure in making these changes, make sure you are willing to be patient with each other and take these concerns daily to the Lord in prayer together.

Biblical Roles of the Responsible Father

HOMEWORK

1 Thessalonians 2:9-11

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

The responsible father works to support his family.

"...our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you." V. 9

God's Word is not suggesting that fathers work to the point of neglecting their families, but rather to work responsibly, that the family would not be burdened financially. The responsible father is instructed to maintain a job in order to care for the needs of his family while not neglecting the priorities of a husband and father.

*"...for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."
-2 Corinthians 12:14*

The responsible father is a servant-priest over his family.

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word."
Ephesians 5:25-26*

Jesus is the High Priest over the church; likewise men are the priests over their homes. See Hebrews 5:10. A priest has the authority to perform the sacred rites or duties of a godly or religious institution. When fathers perform their function they are not only serving God, but their wives and children also.

Fathers, have you ever considered yourself to be a priest?

You have been chosen and ordained by God to lead and serve as a priest over the institution He has created - your family. Quit looking at your inabilities and weaknesses and start looking to God's promises to you and His power and might that will enable you to accomplish the task He has given you.

The responsible father is a witness of the Christian faith to his family.

"You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you..." V. 10

- Devoutly - *Holy, pious, sacred, dedicated to God.*
- Uprightly – *With integrity and honesty, just, uprightness of character and behavior, daily desiring to live life according to what pleases God.*
- Blamelessly - *Faultless, able to stand a critics' scrutiny.*

Fathers are called by God to be the spiritual leaders in the home and role models to their children. A father does not abandon his responsibility to his wife to disciple the children, but takes the authority as the priest in his home. A responsible father does not compromise in his speech, nor does he find pleasure in things that might stumble or offend his children.

The responsible father makes time for the training, teaching, and discipling his children in the faith.

“...we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.” V. 11

- Exhort - *To call to one's side, to encourage.*
- Encourage or Comfort - *To inspire, support; console in time of trouble or worry, soothing encouragement designed to cheer up and to inspire correct behavior.*
- Implore - *To call or pray for earnestly, giving personal witness. Solemn, earnest entreaty, urging.*

To train is to *raise up to maturity or to disciple*. The responsible father does not neglect his God-given role nor does he delegate it to his wife, but takes the authority as the leader, shepherd, and servant in the home.

The responsible father is a teacher-manager in his home.

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

He is to train his children. Not to say that mothers are not to be part of the training. They are to be part of all aspects of discipline, but not the one ultimately responsible.

*“One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.”
1 Timothy 3:4*

To rule is to manage. The father is to see that his children obey. He is the disciplinarian.

Fathers, what principles have you learned from 1 Thessalonians 2 that have most ministered to you about your role as a father? _____

How does this biblical role differ from your current parenting style? _____

Biblical Roles of the Responsible Mother

HOMEWORK

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

Because God places such high value on the family, and because He knew that raising children would be a challenging, and often overwhelming responsibility, He lovingly provided instructions for parents in His Word. The Bible is our parenting manual.

Parenting is a privilege! It is God's desire to bless the marriage relationship, in order that it would produce "godly offspring."

"But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth."

-Malachi 2:15

Though 1 Thessalonians 2:7-13 is instruction for spiritual parenting and discipleship (mature Christians helping young believers grow in the faith), the roles of the mother and the father in the maturing process of the child are clearly outlined.

As Christian parents, our desire for our children should, above all else, be that they become godly, mature adults. We should diligently pray for our children as the apostle Paul prayed for the young Thessalonica believers, that they would,

"...walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."
-1 Thessalonians 2:12.

The Caring Mother

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

The caring mother is gentle with her children.

"But we proved to be gentle among you..." V. 7

- Gentle = *Mild, peaceable, quiet, composed.*

Some women are gentle by nature, while others have a coarser demeanor. The word *proved* in this verse originated from a Hebrew word implying *a state of change, condition, or the passing from one state to another, to become*. By determining to yield daily to the Holy Spirit, He will cause us to become all that God calls us to be! A gentle mother *is not* out of control, angry, yelling, and judging.

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
-Proverbs 15:1

The caring mother nurtures her children.

"...as a nursing mother..." V. 7

- Nurse - *The act of nursing, suckle, nourish, train, something that nourishes, to supply with nourishment, to educate or foster, to further the development of someone of something.*

From the time of conception and throughout the life of the child, a mother is called to nurture her children. Obviously the methods of nurturing change with the maturity of the child, but a mother's heart should always be to nourish and build up her children. The role of the mother is to make her children feel secure in her love and acceptance, by her actions and her words. A nurturing mother *does not* use harsh words, ignore her children, or withhold affection from them.

The caring mother is tender with her children.

"...tenderly cares for her own children." V. 7

- Tender Care (Cherish) - *To give heed to, to pay attention to, to minister, to soften by heat, to keep warm as of birds covering their young with feathers, to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care." Vine's Expository Dictionary*

A caring mother always keeps her heart soft and tender towards her children, which is not always easy. It is easy for a mother to become hardened or calloused from disappointment, frustration, fatigue, or other pressures. A caring mother must continually be yielding to the Holy Spirit to guard her heart. A tender mother forgives her children and seeks their forgiveness when she has been wrong.

The caring mother displays affection for her children.

"Having so fond an affection for..." V. 8

- Fond affection (affectionately desirous) - *A longing or yearning after, prizing highly.*

Nurturing, care, and fond affection require touch. A mother must affirm her children with hugs, kisses, encouraging words, and other appropriate displays of affection. An affectionate mother *knows* her children individually and studies how to make each child feel special by baking a cake, leaving notes in their lunches, or doing individual activities with them.

The caring mother gives of herself in order to do what is best for her children.

"...well pleased to impart to you the gospel of God but also our own lives..." V. 8

The caring mother understands that her priority is to place the loving and training of her children before her own needs. She loves her children with God's *supernatural* love, despite the mistakes, failures, and sin nature of her children.

Mothers, what principles have you learned from 1 Thessalonians 2 that have most ministered to you about your role as a mother?

How does this biblical role differ from your current parenting style?

Starting over with God's Management Style HOMEWORK

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

God's Word can be sobering. As we recognize where we are in comparison to where we *ought to be*, there is the temptation to judge and accuse one another or become discouraged and hopeless about our situation.

Be encouraged! God is able to accomplish in and through us what we are incapable of doing in our own strength and wisdom. God will be faithful to intercede, mend, and bless, but you must be obedient and take the following steps.

1. Confess your faults, failures, and sins to the Lord. As you are transparent and honest with God, He will faithfully forgive and restore.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- 1 John 1:9

2. Go to those whom you have wronged (spouse and/or children), confess your failures, lack of understanding, or sin. Then pray together, recommitting your home to the Lord.

"...confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed..."

- James 5:16

3. Establish a daily habit of personal and family devotions (prayer and reading the Word of God).

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

- Matthew 6:33

4. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with the kind of love you need to minister to others in your home.

"...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

- Romans 5:5

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

- John 13:17

Leader's Schedule

DVD 3 Session Six

1. Review Session 5 Homework → 20 minutes

Q: Would any of the men want to share how this last lesson changed their perspective regarding their role as a husband/father?

Q: On page 35, question #3 asked if your answers to the management style examination on page 33 were different from your spouse. Would any of you want to share why *you* think you didn't have the same answers or why you see it differently from their spouse?

NOTE: The purpose of this question is to help couples see two things: ① How men and women can see things very differently from each other. ② How, by not making this clear and being on the same page, this can be a major part of contention in their marriage.

Q: Would anyone like to share anything they learned after reviewing the roles of the father & mother on pages 36-40?

NOTE: To help parents open up and not feel like they are the odd ones out, you (as the leader) may want to share how these truths helped you to make some changes.

2. Video → 43 minutes

- Introduce the video: *Discipling Your Children*
- In this lesson Pastor Craig teaches on the Spiritual area of 'training up your children'. Encourage them to be ready to take notes and follow along with their workbook.
- Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 27 minutes

- Video Discussion Questions:

Q: Were any of you surprised to learn that this is something God has instructed us to do?

Q: How many of you were disciplined by a parent or had a regular Bible Study with your parents?

- ◆ If we did not experience it, then how would we know we are supposed to do it and also know how to do it? **NOTE:** As a leader, share how yours is going with your children. Share some of the fruit you have seen and experienced personally by doing this. You may, if applicable, share some of the struggles you had and/or adjustments you have had to make. Let them know how yours is going and what you are using: discipleship book, Bible, prayer, etc.

Q: Has anyone been doing this regularly?

- ◆ Let them know they can start this now. Ask them to pray about it. See if they need some help.

HOMEWORK for SESSION SIX

Explain the homework.

1. Page 45 → Will help you review the things you have learned but also as you write them out, this will help these truths to be solidified in your heart. It will also help you as a couple to share your thoughts and desires in the area of training your children.
2. Page 46 → Remember what we learned about those inappropriate influences within our homes being those things we need to manage as part of the spiritual training. This sheet will help you as a couple to discuss and devise a game plan for how, if necessary, to eliminate those things in your home.
3. Page 47-49 → Some simple steps to get started with discipling your children. Encourage them to review these together and pray about when to start. Page 49 has some good resources for discipling your children.
4. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
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Session Six
Workbook & Homework

Discipling Your Children

Parenting is a Ministry
Discipling Your Children – A Personal Evaluation
Parent Discussion Homework

1. List the Biblical truths and/or parenting principles that the Lord has revealed to you (or reminded you of) in this lesson.

2. Review *Deuteronomy 6:7-9* again. Discuss and describe the elements of discipling your children according to this passage.

3. Take a moment to ponder *Psalms 1:1-3*. Does this describe your life? Yes No
Explain _____

4. Write out your commitment to make changes where needed and to diligently disciple your children.

- Pray, asking God to help you follow through and get started.
- Choose the most convenient night of the week.
- Commit to a starting date.
- Tell your kids about the family Bible study night.
- Get started, remain consistent, and watch God bless your family!

Eliminating Inappropriate Entertainment

Parent Discussion Homework

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

1. Make a list of the music, videos, video games, magazines, posters, television programs, books, and other forms of entertainment that you and/or your children are currently enjoying that need to be eliminated. A simple question that will help you sort through this exercise is: *If Jesus visited your home today, do you believe He would approve of these materials?*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Do you need to make some changes in your home in this area? Yes No
3. Write out your commitment to make changes where needed and to diligently disciple your children on the subject of appropriate forms and content of entertainment.

Effecting Change

Parents should be careful **not** to act impulsively or like tyrants in an effort to make these changes. Parents should **not** go through their teen's bedroom with a vengeance, tearing posters off the walls and destroying music. Your children should be approached with love, humility, and without anger or arrogance.

If you have previously allowed inappropriate entertainment in your home, take the following steps:

- Pray and seek the LORD'S guidance and wisdom.
 - Discuss and agree as a couple on what items should be discarded.
 - If your child has purchased these items with their own money, with either your explicit or implied permission, you may, if applicable, offer to replace the inappropriate entertainment with reasonable appropriate entertainment of your child's choice.
4. Discuss together your plan of action on how, **together**, you are going to make these changes. Write out your plans.

How to Teach Your Children God's Precepts & Commandments

HOMework

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

- A. Parents should continually evaluate themselves biblically and be faithfully obedient to Scripture in order to avoid hypocrisy when correcting their children. Remember to practice forgiveness. God knows that we will fall short. The key is to surrender to His will and purpose daily. Many parents are practicing bad habits daily, but do nothing about it.

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." James 1:22

- B. Parents should be unified, one in mind and judgment, if possible. If a spouse is an unbeliever, the believing parent can lead in this area.

"Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Philippians 2:2

- C. Christian fathers should pray with their spouses and children every day. Single mothers or women with unsaved husbands can initiate prayer with children.

"Pray without ceasing." 1Thessalonians 5:17

- D. Parents should lead in regular family Bible studies, at least once weekly, and help their children develop a daily personal devotional time. Father and mother can split up the duties. For example: mom with younger ones and dad with teens.

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge." 2 Peter 1:5

In leading Bible studies with your children, keep in mind the following points:

- 1) **Keep it simple** - Your objective is to instill God's Word in your children's hearts, not trying to produce Bible scholars!
- 2) **Keep it short** - All family members have different attention spans. Be sensitive to that fact in order to keep Bible studies a fun family time rather than a lecture. Starting small (15 to 20 minutes) and building from there is fine.
- 3) **Try to make it exciting** - Your love and excitement for your faith will transfer to your children. You can use games, stories, videos, TV, current events, etc.
- 4) **Be flexible** - All families experience unexpected events and schedule changes (important events, i.e., child's sports, school activities, etc). If necessary, re-schedule your Bible study night to an alternate day to accommodate changes. Don't be so rigid that you become legalistic.
- 5) **Be consistent** - While flexibility is sometimes a necessity, you must be consistent with your Bible studies. Don't discontinue, for instance, because your son or daughter wants to play sports. Make Bible study a regular part of your family life.

- 6) **Be realistic with your expectations** - Teaching our children about God should occur over a lifetime. Remember that you are sowing seeds now. It may not be harvest time quite yet!
- 7) **Don't put off starting** - Change can be a bit uncomfortable. You may be nervous, or afraid that it won't go the way you've planned. Review the previous points and get started. You can develop your program as you go, personalizing the Bible study for your particular family. You may want to purchase age-appropriate daily devotionals for your children, to help them develop a daily relationship with Jesus.

Remember that God has called parents to disciple their children. God blesses obedience; therefore we should not let our fears, pride, busyness, or our inability stand in the way of our obedience. Trust God and get started!

Recommended Devotional and Discipleship Books **HOMEWORK**

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

The Bible

Strong Foundation Discipleship Workbook by *Family Discipleship Ministries*

Meet the Bible by *Philip Yancey and Brenda Quinn*

Everyday With Jesus by *Greg Laurie*

Self-Confrontation by *John C. Broger*

Experiencing God by *Henry Blackaby*

Drawing Near by *John F. MacArthur*

My Utmost for His Highest by *Oswald Chambers*

The One Year Book of Psalms by *William J. Petersen and Randy Petersen*

Streams in the Desert by *Mrs. Charles E. Cowman.*

Devotional and Discipleship Books for Children and Adolescents

Favorite Bible Stories, grades 3 & 4 by *Rainbow Books*

Talksheets™ - Junior High by *Youth Specialties*

Talksheets™ - More Junior High by *Youth Specialties*

Talksheets™ - High School by *Youth Specialties*

Talksheets™ - More High School by *Youth Specialties*

God and Me! Devotions for Girls, ages 2–12 by *Legacy Press*

Growing Little Women by *Donna J. Miller with Linda Holland*

Youth Devotions by *Josh McDowell*

Leader's Schedule

DVD 4 Session Seven

1. Review Session 6 Homework → 11 minutes

Q: Has anyone begun to disciple their children and would like to share their experience?

◆ On page 46 you were asked to make a list of negative influences within your home.

Q: Were you able to agree as a husband and wife?

Q: Were you surprised at how many there were?

Q: Does anyone want to share how the eliminating process went?

NOTE: Encourage the parents to follow through with this. If they don't get on it and then manage it, these things will slide back in. Soon they will be learning effective ways of how to discipline their children if they participate or use any of these as entertainment in the future.

2. Video → 68 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *Disciplining Your Children*

➤ Pastor Craig is going to share with us the 2nd part of training. The first was discipleship of our children last session. Now he is going to focus on the disciplining of our children. How we are to instill mature character into our children. **NOTE:** Encourage them to pay special attention to how Pastor Craig differentiates between training versus controlling their children. Also encourage them to take notes and fill in the blanks in their workbook.

➤ Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 11 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

Q: Did you see the difference between training versus controlling your children?

* Oftentimes, parents who struggle with this (both fathers & mothers), it's because of the way they were raised. **NOTE:** If they feel they are stuck there, encourage them to revisit the *Forgiveness & Reconciliation* section on pages 27 through 30 and prayerfully go through it and ask the Lord to reveal any hurt or bitterness that may need to be dealt with from their past.

Q: On page 52, did you get all of the *Four Tools for Training*:

1. Rules (written out).
2. Discipline (to train).
3. Punishment (a powerful motivator).
4. Consistency.

Q: How many of you are used to going straight to punishment?

* At first, as you begin to apply the principles, it will seem a little strange to you but you will see the good fruit and soon it will become second nature to you.

◆ At the bottom of page 54 Pastor Craig shared with us that some strong-willed children may need more disciplining, more boundaries, and sometimes tougher consequences.

Q: The question he posed is: Do we accept the ministry God gave us with this child?

◆ We learned how important it is for us parents not to try and govern their emotions through discipline and that we are to discipline wrong behaviors – not wrong emotions.

HOMEWORK for SESSION SEVEN

Explain the homework.

1. Page 56 → If married (as a couple) sit down and write out your current rules and the form of discipline you have been using to date. Then at the bottom of the page, if you differentiated between discipline and punishment, what has been your form of punishment?
2. Page 57 → Same exercise but reviewing your children's current weekly chores.
3. Page 58-61 → Encourage the parents to review these pages together. This exercise will help parents to better understand the difference between a bad attitude and wrong behavior. It will also help you to look at each of your children individually and write out what it is you believe a bad attitude is. You may find that as a husband & wife, you may not agree on these. This is ok. The key is agreeing on the disciplines you are going to give for the wrong behaviors.
4. Close in prayer.

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Session Seven
Workbook & Homework

Disciplining Your Children

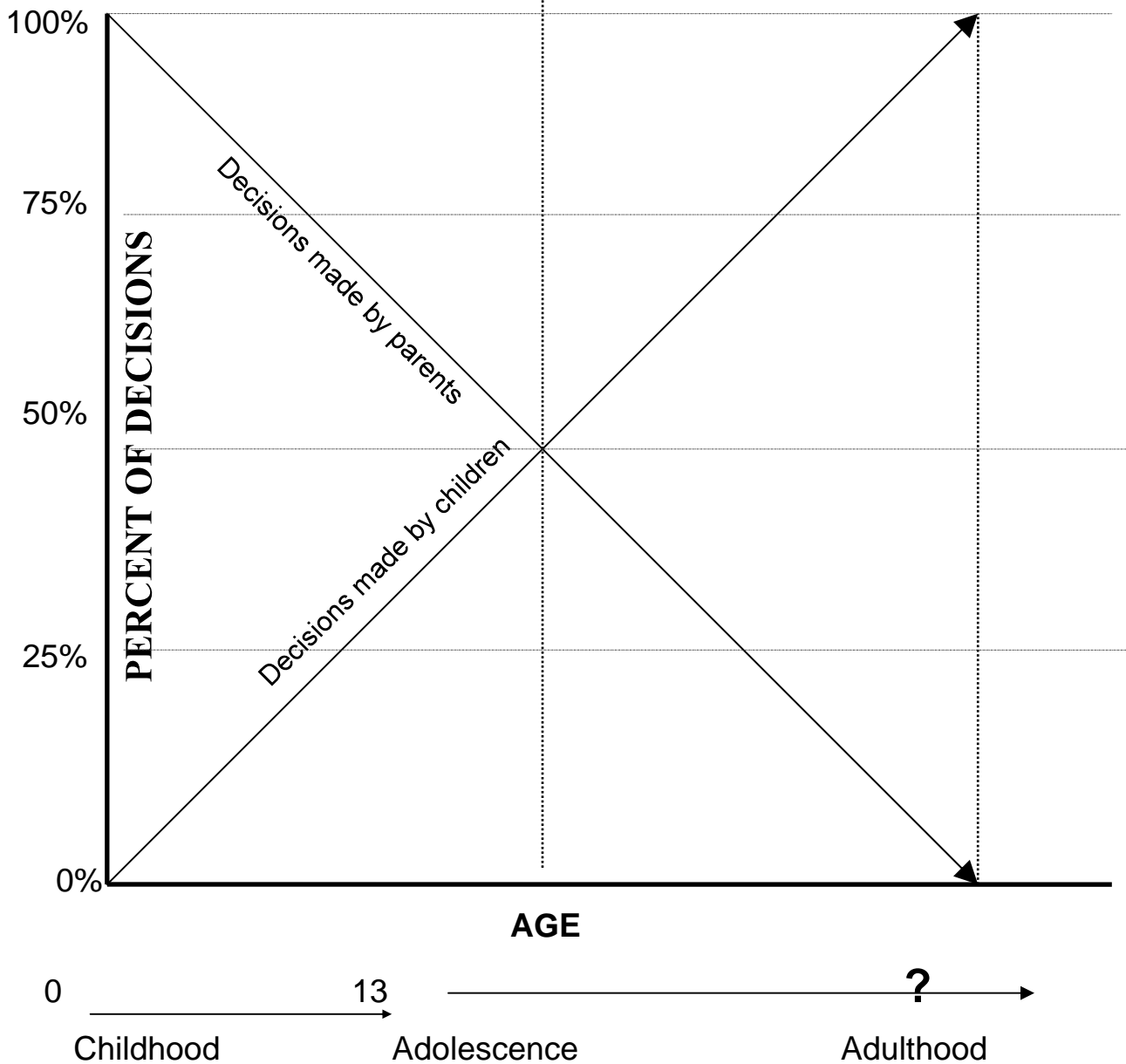
PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Session Seven

Disciplining Your Children - Training Up Your Children

DISCIPLINE FOR RAISING ADULTS

PARENTS' DECISIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES GRAPH



If you don't know where you are going you will probably end up there!

Training or Controlling?

- **Controlling** – *To exercise power over; to dominate or rule; a restraining force.*

A *Controller* is a dictator, not a trainer. He is one who will not accept failure, has an attitude that failure is wrong, and a direct threat to their parenting. A controller is motivated by self-fulfillment.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*

- **Training** – *To cause to grow as desired; to make or become prepared or skilled.*

Like a small tree that has a certain bent or lean to it. You cannot straighten it out by force or it will break. The trainer must gradually and persistently keep pressure on it to eventually make it straight. A trainer is motivated by a desire for God’s best for others.

Proverbs 22:6 – *“Train up a child in the way he should go...”*

Disciplining to Maturity

Ephesians 6:4 *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

- **Bring them up** – *To bring up to maturity; to train or educate.*
- **Training** – *Discipline; chastening; correction; educative discipline (Vines Expository Dictionary says, “Discipline that regulates character”)*
- **Admonition** – *Instruction; warning; exhortation; any word of encouragement or reproof which leads to correct behavior.*

Hebrews 12:11 "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

4. Consistency

How important is consistency?




- No Consistency = No Rules
- No Rules = No Training
- No Training = No Peace!

Know Consistency = Know Peace!

One of the reasons that parents do not like to write out their rules and disciplines is because it will hold them accountable to follow through!

How Do Children Think and Choose?

Let's Make a Deal

 Door #1 Follow Rules	 Door #2 Break Rules Accept Discipline	 Door #3 No Rules No Discipline
---	---	--

Each child is unique in his or her own way.

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Some children may need:

- More discipline
- More boundaries
- Tougher consequences

Parenting is a Ministry
Family Rules and Disciplines
Parent Discussion Homework
(This is an exercise only)

1. Take some time as a couple (if married) and write out your current rules and the way you are currently disciplining. If you need more space use a separate sheet of paper. If there are any rules or disciplines that you do not 100% agree on together, put an asterisk beside them.

Rule 1: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 2: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 3: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 4: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 5: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 6: _____

Discipline _____

2. What has been the punishment you are using in the event that your child refuses to accept the discipline?

Parenting is a Ministry
Chore List
Parent Discussion Homework
(This is an exercise only)

1. Discuss together (if married) the chores you have given to each of your children. It's good to use another note pad or make copies of this sheet for this exercise. Write your child's name at the top of the page and then write out the chores and form of discipline used in the event they did not complete the chore.

Chore: _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Discipline _____

2. What has been the punishment used in the event the child did not accept the discipline for not doing the chore?

Disciplining Behavior, Not Attitudes & Revenge versus Training

Parent Discussion Homework

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

There is a lot of confusion when it comes to how parents should deal with bad attitudes. As you read through the following worksheet, I believe you will get a better perspective on how you should deal with your children's bad attitudes. What to do and also what not to do.

Attitude – A posture or position; feeling; opinion or mood.

Behavior – The act or manner of behaving.

- Behavior is something we do or don't do, by either breaking a rule or not doing what is expected of us.

God gave us our emotions.

“Be angry, and do not sin...” Psalms 4:4

Attitudes stem from the heart. The heart of a child can only be changed through their willingness to accept our authority, to receive through us, the love of Christ and God's instructions for them.

Behaviors are changed through discipline or training.

- A rebellious heart is a miserable heart. It has no peace, joy, contentment, or lasting pleasure – all by God's design.
- If you know that your child is harboring bitterness toward you, or is rebelling against God's plan for their life, it requires your commitment to prayer and patience, without compromise. To compromise means several things for parents:
 - A) You allow a child's bad attitude to make you angry or resentful. You misrepresent God in the way you treat your child.
 - B) You allow the child's bad attitude to rob you of your inner peace.
 - C) You allow the child's bad attitude to dictate how you follow through with your agreed method of discipline either by not disciplining or adding to it.

We must allow our children to feel the way they feel.

In many cases children use this as a form of manipulation or revenge.

Manipulation - to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means, especially to one's own advantage.

- Some children will try to manipulate parents with attitudes so the parents will not follow through with a discipline. They will even premeditatedly attempt to set the parents up to guilt the parents into allowing them to do something they would not normally permit them do.

- When children know that if they exhibit a bad attitude and it bothers their parents, this often prompts them to continue this behavior. This is our sin nature to get revenge. When their pouty, moody, or bad attitude provokes you to anger or sadness, you can be the one encouraging them to continue in this childish, manipulative practice. It takes two to play this game.

When we become angry, this gives our children satisfaction that is very damaging to his/her character development, your faith, and your authority. It is important to not show any emotion when disciplining or correcting our children. Stay to the discipline plan. If you don't respond in the way they want or, in other words, if you don't serve the ball back to them, they will eventually quit playing this game.

If you have been playing this sinful game for a while it may take some time to break the bad habit, for both of you. Be patient and stay the course and the Lord will have victory. **Remember:** if the bad attitude turns into a poor behavior choice such as: yelling at you, a bad word, kicking the wall, slamming the door, etc. then you discipline that behavior, not the attitude.

Revenge means to inflict injury in return for an insult.

The Lord has instructed us to train up our children, not inflict injury in reaction to their childish and foolish choices. Is our attitude one that wants to get even with them and/or hurt them in some way because they just won't do what we ask? This is our problem, not our children's fault. The Lord gave us these children and sometimes it is hard to raise them in the way He desires. If you have the wrong motive in the disciplining of your children, you should repent immediately and ask for forgiveness from both your child and the Lord.

- **Revenge does not train our children, but instead, causes them to become defiant.** This will lead to division between the parents and the children.

Training = Discipline

- Training teaches our children. It is fair and not motivated by anger or revenge. It transforms and shapes our children's character without destroying or bringing division.

Notes:

Parenting is a Ministry
Disciplining Behavior
Parent Discussion Homework

1. Discuss together (if married) the Attitude and Behavior section on page 55 along with pages 58-59. Write out what you believe are the typical bad attitudes you see manifesting in each of your children (you may want to use a separate sheet of paper for this exercise). It is important for you, as a husband and wife, to be unified in your plan for dealing with this. Try to clarify the difference between their attitudes and what the behavior is that may stem from these attitudes.

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Leader's Schedule

DVD 4 Session Eight

1. Review Session 7 Homework → 25 minutes

Q: Did you all finish writing out your current rules and chores?

Q: Were any of the fathers surprised to learn how many there were?

Q: Anyone want to share which of the rules or disciplines they did not agree with on page 56-57?
NOTE: As a leader, don't let this become an embarrassing situation for the parent who is sharing. The purpose for them sharing is to let other parents know they are not alone in this area. Assure them that after they have completed all the videos, in most cases, parents are more unified and are able to better compromise with each others desires.

Q: Did any of you better understand why there have been problems in this area between parents & children?

Q: Ask if any of them would like to share what they learned from each other when they described their differences between attitude and behavior with each of their children.
NOTE: As a leader, it would be good to share (if applicable) any area you & your wife saw some of these differently.
NOTE: This is not the time to try to work out all of these differences of opinions. Encourage them, as they complete the entire series and revisit these differences; that the Lord will help them with the new knowledge they have learned.

2. Video → 46 minutes

- Introduce the video: *Disciplining Your Children*
- Pastor Craig is going to bring more clarity to this training area. He is going to give some practical examples for 14 months old to 5 year old children. He also touches on a very popular parenting technique called "positive reinforcement" that many parents use today. Encourage them to take notes in their workbooks.
- Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 19 minutes

- Video Discussion Questions:

Q: Did you take note of those 5 points that Pastor Craig covered on the top of page 62?

- Love them – don't yell or get angry.
- Stay calm – if you lose control you will lose credibility.
- Teach them to obey and respect authority.
- Be consistent.
- In all possible situations, kid-proof your home to remove the temptation.

* Bedtime can be a challenging one for some children. Pastor Craig offered us some simple steps to follow. **NOTE:** Encourage parents who are trying to or have been discussing when to make this change to stick with the plan for 7 to 10 days before they start to panic.

Q: How about what Pastor Craig taught us about when to use positive reinforcement? Any reaction from parents?

- ◆ The most positive reinforcement we can give them is to always treat them with love and value. Yes – it is good to praise them when they do good but good behavior or wrong behavior should not change the way we treat them. We are to discipline them in love, not anger.

HOMEWORK for SESSION EIGHT

Explain the homework.

1. Page 63-64 → Take some time to review these pages on *The Principles for Using Spanking*. Discuss each of these points as husband & wife (if married). Try to come up with a consensus of what each of these points mean in the training of your children.
2. Close in prayer.

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Session Eight
Workbook & Homework

Disciplining Your Children

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT HOMEWORK

Applied Correctly

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

Positive reinforcement is using charts, graphs, or some other system to record a child's behavior, accompanied with ongoing rewards for good behavior. It is not very effective for the strong-willed child or beneficial for the compliant child for the following reasons.

- Love, not gifts or gimmicks, is the most powerful motivator and the most powerful way to build self-worth.
- Parents should be daily complimenting and praising their children because they are a gift from God, not tied to performance.
- Good behavior is expected, not rewarded. Our love toward them and how we show it should not change because of their failures.
- It can be beneficial for parents to use *special incentives* for a child who is struggling to overcome a particular weakness or personal challenge, such as bedwetting or academic struggles in school. For example: a special outing with the child or a material reward if they put forth the effort and improve in a specific area, not an ongoing reward system for perpetual behavior.
- If you have a compliant child whose natural bent is to please mom and dad they will find this system very appealing. However, if they have a brother or sister who is not compliant, but has a strong-willed bent (the strong-willed child), they will begin to resent their compliant sibling and struggle with their own self-worth. They can easily become discouraged because their compliant sibling receives more gifts and/or affirmation than they receive from what they perceive comes more natural to the compliant sibling.
- A perpetual system of rewards for good behavior for even a younger compliant child can set the stage for an entitlement mentality within the compliant child as he or she grows older. Once the rewards are removed, or become unsatisfactory, the compliant child may rebel in an effort to manipulate the reinstatement or improvement of the reward system to his or her benefit. The child has learned to selfishly seek the reward first and the good behavior has become only a means to a reward. Simple chores may not get done if they are not accompanied by a reward. This is teaching the child to serve only when it has personal benefit for them.

The parent's attitude toward their child's failures should be similar to when the child first began to walk; proud and excited when they first stood on their own and took their first steps. When they fell, the parents lovingly picked them up and encouraged them to try again, confident that in time they would develop, mature, and learn to walk on their own.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 5 Session Nine

1. Review Session 8 Homework → 20 minutes

Q: Did you get a chance to review pages 63-64 on *The Principles for Using Spanking*?

Q: Would anyone like to share about how their discussion went regarding anything they learned?

Q: Did anyone begin to use the time out with their children?

NOTE: In some cases parents are unable to use spanking as a motivator due to certain circumstances: foster parenting, court orders, a divorced other parent who has made threats to call authorities if spanking is used, etc. In those cases parents have to use an alternative way to get the children to accept both the parents' authority and disciplines. One way that has helped parents who find themselves in this situation is what I call "*Hold them Shut Down*", which means: the parent physically holds the child in their lap in a controlled way so they are not able to butt the parent with their head or hit or kick them with their hands and feet. When the child calms down and is able to sit in the parents' lap or next to them without constraints, then the timer for a time out discipline begins. This can take several months of consistency before a child who has had very little discipline begins to yield and accept the disciplines without pushing a parent to this "*Hold them Shut Down*" motivator. The parent staying calm and not yelling or becoming angry is very important if you are going to use this method of punishment.

2. Video → 34 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *Discipline Box*

➤ Pastor Craig is now going to give us some practical examples for older children along with some very helpful tools that work great for instilling mature character in our children; tools like: *The Discipline Box* or the *Discipline List*. **NOTE:** Encourage them to be ready to take notes.

➤ Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 36 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

Q: Are you beginning to get a better picture of how this works?

◆ God wants us to be clear on these things and just as important is us being a unified team working together as parents to get the job done.

◆ We learned about some great tools on page 69: *The Discipline Box* for kids 9 to 12 and the *Discipline List* for kids 13 to 18.

◆ At the top of page 70 Pastor Craig give us parents 3 important areas not to compromise in during the adolescent years.

① Respect both parents and your authority over the home (mouthy to parents, bossy over siblings, telling parents what they are going to do, or demanding that parents get out of their room).

② The morals and values you have established in your home, including your child's personal interests/pleasures (music, TV, videos, other entertainment).

③ Training them; you can stop training when they become responsible adults (which means they are no longer breaking the rules) or when they leave your home, whichever comes first.

◆ In the middle of page 71 we learned a great form of punishment for teens or children who are too big to spank.

* *Shut Down* – If your child refuses the discipline, *Shut Down* means your child has no privileges; no television; telephone; music; no friends over; and it may include being confined to their bedroom. Their only freedoms will be to go to school or church, eat meals, and use the restroom. This continues until they are willing to accept the discipline. *Shut Down* can last for five minutes or five days or longer. It is up to them.

◆ At the bottom of that same page we learned 5 important points for implementing chores.

1. Make them fair.
2. Make them age-appropriate.
3. Write out the chores.
4. Determine and write out when the chores are to be completed (day & time).
5. Train – don't nag!

◆ There are a few examples of chores at the top of page 72 that you'll want to refer back to when completing your homework.

HOMEWORK for SESSION NINE

Explain the homework.

1. Page 76 → Follow steps 1-6 to begin to write out your training plan.

- ◆ Take some time to review the lesson and create your own *Discipline Box* or *List* (see pgs. 67-68).
- ◆ Make copies of the blank *New Rules* and *New Chores* pages (pgs. 74-75) and complete them with what you've learned. Children are NOT to be part of this discussion.
- ◆ Look at pages 63-64 from session 8, discuss, and make changes where changes are needed. Remember: spanking is punishment, NOT discipline.
- ◆ As a couple, discuss what form of punishment you will use for your older children. See page 78 for suggestions.

NOTE: Because the above is a condensed version of the list, encourage the parents to review page 76 completely and to NOT implement these new rules & chores until they have completed the course as there are a few more very important things for them to still learn.

2. Page 66 in session 8 → Have parents review the *Positive Reinforcement* applied correctly instructions. This will help them to better understand when and how to use this technique correctly.

3. Close in prayer.

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Session Nine
Workbook & Homework

Discipline Box

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY

Session Nine

The Discipline Box

The Discipline Box

Make sure your children understand the purpose and the contents of this Discipline Box.

1. Take an ordinary box, no bigger than a shoebox. Decorate it, write your child's name on it, label it, or leave it plain.
2. Write individual household and/or outdoor chores on small pieces of paper, fold the papers and place them inside the Box.
3. Make sure the chores are age-appropriate and can be completed in three to fifteen minutes.
4. For a discipline, have your child draw a chore out of the Box (make sure it is at random, don't let them choose the job). Parents can determine if the chore drawn is appropriate, for example, if they draw, *sweep the porch*, on a rainy day, or if they draw a chore that has already been done.
5. After the job is complete put the slip of paper back into the box to be drawn again.

The Discipline List

If you have teenagers you can adapt the Discipline Box concept using a list rather than a box.

- Make a list of chores and number them.
- For a discipline, they do whatever is next on the list.
- Put your initials by the completed chore. When they finish the list they start over.
- Keep in mind the discipline should take between 10 to 20 minutes.

Nine to Twelve Year Olds

If the foundation of training (rules and discipline) has been laid during the first nine years, the transition into adolescence will be smoother.

It is a good idea to plan to stop spanking your child by the time they are twelve. Some strong-willed children absolutely need to be spanked in order to get them to bend, but in most cases, by the time a child reaches 12 or 13, spanking should not be used as punishment.

Examples of Rules and Disciplines

Rule 1: Respect one another at all times.

Discipline: Draw one item from the Discipline Box.

Rule 2: No physical fighting or verbal arguing.

Discipline: Apologize and ½ hour of Saturday work.

Rule 3: Be ready for school by 7:15 a.m.

Discipline: Be awakened at 5:00 a.m. the following morning or go to bed 1 hour earlier.

Rule 4: Clean up your own messes expediently.

Discipline: Clean up the mess and draw one item from the Discipline Box.

Rule 5: Return home by a specific time from an approved outing.

Discipline: Restriction for two days.

Rule 6: Telephone privileges until 9:00 p.m. (**with approval**).

Discipline: No telephone privileges for two days.

Thirteen to Eighteen Year Olds

Kids go through a multitude of changes between the ages 13 and 15. This season of change is called *puberty*.

Physically, they are growing rapidly, developing their sexuality, and their strength increases.

Emotionally, they are becoming more independent. They are much more aware of the opposite sex, they have a strong desire to be accepted by their peers, and they begin developing close friendships.

Cognitively, they begin to think abstractly and symbolically, which means, in a nutshell, that they begin to think a lot like we think! They are able to see another person's point of view, they test the structure and values they were raised with, and they become more goal-oriented.

NEW FAMILY RULES AND DISCIPLINES Homework

Child's Name _____

Rule 1: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 2: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 3: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 4: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 5: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 6: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 7: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 8: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 9: _____

Discipline _____

Rule 10: _____

Discipline _____

NEW CHORE LIST Homework

Child's Name _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Chore: _____

Day _____ Time _____

Discipline _____

Parenting is a Ministry
Parent Discussion Homework
(If married, complete and discuss as a couple)

1. Take some time to review this lesson and create your own **Discipline Box** and/or **List**. You *may* want to get your children involved with this exercise – it can be lots of fun to do together.
2. Make copies of the blank **New Rules** and **New Chores** list (pgs. 74-75) and complete them with what you have learned. I do not recommend having your children be a part of the discussion of what the rules and chores are going to be. This should be done by the parents only.
3. Discuss pages 63-64 in Session 8, *Principles for the Use of Spanking*. Is there anything that you need to change that you may be doing or not doing in this area? Remember: this is punishment, not a discipline so if you are planning to implement this as part of your training plan, it is to be used when the child refuses to accept the discipline (training). It does not replace the discipline. The discipline must be completed also. If, after the spanking, the child still refuses to do the discipline, he/she is to sit in a chair or stay in their room until they are willing to accept the discipline.
4. If you have older children – see page 77 – make a *Discipline List*.
5. Discuss together, if married, what form of punishment you are going to use for your children. Have a clear plan in place so you are not lead by your emotions in any situation. See page 78, *Punishment for Teens*, for some suggestions.
6. Here are some suggestions for age appropriate chores (disciplines) for children ages 6 to 12.

Vacuum Living
Room

Empty trash in all
Bathrooms

Dust Living Room

Vacuum Any
Room a Parent
Chooses.

Sweep the
Kitchen.

Dust Baseboards.

Brush Dog or Cat.

Clean up Play/Toy
area.

Dust Window
Sills.

Sweep the Patio.

Clean Animal/s
Dishes.

Clean up (tidy)
Video/DVD area.

The Discipline List HOMEWORK

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

If you have teenagers you can adapt the Discipline Box concept using a list rather than a box.

- ◆ Make a list of work projects that are not already part of your children's weekly or regularly assigned chores. These short work projects should be those that are not normally completed on a weekly basis, like spring or fall cleaning projects, or they can be those work projects that the parents do themselves on a regularly scheduled basis.
- ◆ Keep in mind the discipline work should take between 10 to 20 minutes.
- ◆ For a discipline, they do whatever is next on the list.
- ◆ Avoid making the list too difficult. Remember this is a training tool for teaching them the personal characteristics of a mature adult. This is not the parents getting revenge on their children.
- ◆ This list can be used when a related discipline is not applicable. For example: if your child is disrespectful, use the list. If your child comes home late, a related discipline of in-home restriction for 3 days can be used instead of the list.
- ◆ If you have a strong-willed child, you may need to consider having a large number of work projects on the list so that your child is not doing a discipline he/she has recently done.
- ◆ If the child does not perform the discipline satisfactorily, as you have previously trained your child, then inform your child that he/she is to complete the original discipline and be in *Shut Down* until it is done correctly. See page 71 for details on *Shut Down*.
- ◆ We recommend that the parent put their initial in the box after he/she has inspected the work performed by their child versus putting a check mark that any child can write.
- ◆ When your children have completed the list, start again at the beginning of the list.

The Discipline List

1. Vacuum a particular room																			
2. Clean all mirrors in bathroom																			
3. Clean sink and bathtub in bathroom																			
4. Clean toilet																			
5. Clean behind couch, silk flower in basket, & TV																			
6. Clean up backyard – dog																			
7. Mow the backyard																			
8. Pull weeds in front yard for 10'x20' area or 15 min.																			
9. Water back yard – 20 minutes																			
10. Water front yard – 15 minutes																			
11. Wash four windows inside and out																			
12. Wash car																			
13. Vacuum inside of car																			
14. Sweep garage																			
15. Clean out refrigerator																			

OTHER PUNISHMENT SUGGESTIONS

HOMEWORK

The Motivator

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

SHUT DOWN

If your child refuses the discipline, an effective punishment is *Shut Down*. *Shut Down* means that your child has no privileges; no television, telephone, music, or friends over, and may include being confined to their bedroom. Their only freedoms will be to go to school, church, eat meals, use the restroom, and do their chores and homework. This continues until they are willing to accept the discipline. *Shut Down* can last for five minutes or five days (or longer). It is up to them.

SATURDAY WORK DAY

An effective punishment for a teenager who refuses to accept the authority left in charge in the absence of the father (i.e. mother, stepparent, grandparent, babysitter, or guardian).

- Have your child work on Saturday morning to complete tasks given. For example, give them a "TO DO" list to begin at 8 AM and they will be done when everything on the list is finished correctly. This is a great time to get those things done around the house you can't seem to get to. If they choose to drag the work out longer than it should take, let them, but until all the work is done correctly, they are in that *Shut Down* mode.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

Rescind license or permit (this can be done with written request from parent to the DMV). This should only be used if a child is rebelling against the rules and disciplines and is leaving in their car or your car. If used as a discipline – you must have a designated time period that it is taken away for and returned after that set time, not when their attitude is better.

Leader's Schedule

DVD 5 Session Ten

1. Review Session 9 Homework → 30 minutes

Q: Pages 67-68 – did any of you have your children help you with creating your *Discipline Box*? How about the *Discipline List*?

NOTE: You may want to ask if anyone is still confused over how to use the *Box* or *List* in the disciplining of their children.

Q: Do any of you want to share your rules and disciplines? How about your chores?

NOTE: You may want to take a moment and explain what a related discipline is versus a discipline box or list consequence.

Example:

RULE: No phone past 8 pm. The related **DISCIPLINE** may be: no phone for the next 2 days.

RULE: Be home by a certain time. The related **DISCIPLINE:** the next 2 days – home restrictions (no friends over & child goes nowhere for fun activities).

Q: Were there any rules or disciplines that you struggled in agreeing with each other that you would like to share? How did you resolve the issue?

NOTE: Refer back to *God's Management Style* in Session 5.

Q: Did you, as a couple, clarify your plan of action in how to deal with a child who refuses to accept the discipline and need to be “motivated” or punished?

NOTE: It is very important for parents to be very clear and unified in this area. There are two additional points to cover in this area as a leader.

① If a child is upset and having a hard time controlling themselves after they receive a discipline, a parent is NOT to continue to add up discipline after discipline. A good rule of thumb: after a maximum of 3 disciplines then the child should be sent to their room and continue in room restriction until they are ready to come out and accept all three disciplines.

② If the child is still in the room due to this situation when Dad comes home, he should calmly sit down with the child and talk with the child about the situation and why it is important for them to accept mom's authority. Explain to the child that mom is doing what dad has instructed her to do.

For the single parent: encourage them that they can do the same thing. After the child has calmed down a while, go into the room and sit down next to the child and calmly ask, “Do you know why you are in here?” Explain to the child that one of the things parents need to teach them is self-control. It is normal to be a little frustrated when we don't get our way but if you let your frustration come out in a bad behavior, I (mom or dad) must discipline you. Explain to the child that when they are ready to come out and do the disciplines, then they can come out of their room.

◆ You may want to review briefly page 66, *Positive Reinforcement Applied Correctly* just to make sure there is no confusion.

2. Video → 28 minutes

➤ Introduce the video: *Starting Over*

➤ In this video Pastor Craig is going to review the steps in having the Family Meeting with your children. There are some very important principles that parents need to implement as part of this meeting in order for God to truly bless these new changes. Be ready to take notes.

➤ Show the Video

3. Discuss the video and explain the homework → 32 minutes

➤ Video Discussion Questions:

Q: Is ignorance an excuse for doing something wrong to someone? NO

◆ God has used this time in your life to reveal His will in raising your children. If what you have learned has revealed some sinful practices from you as a parent toward your children (yelling, ignoring, unfair discipline, inconsistent discipline, division between mom and dad in this area) then it is important for you to take responsibility and ask for forgiveness before you explain the new system.

NOTE: Some parents may have already started using the new discipline system. If so and they did not do this encourage them to take this step even though they have already implemented these things.

HOMework for SESSION TEN

Explain the homework.

1. Pages 80-81 → Follow the steps on these pages and have your family meeting.
NOTE: Remind them not to forget their weekly Bible Study as part of their new plan.
Q: Does anyone have any questions about the Bible Study?
2. Pages 82-84 → Explain the purpose for each sheet. Pages 82-83 has a brief description of their purpose.
3. Schedule the follow-up meeting to be in 3-4 weeks to see how things are going and a time to encourage them.
NOTE: Let them know if things seem to be slipping back to the same old bad habits have them review page 82.
4. Congratulate them for their commitment and encourage them to continue to pray for one another and to use their workbooks to go back and review. Tell them about the website where they can watch the DVD series for free.
5. Ask them to tell their friends about what they have learned and for them to be praying about becoming leaders or one-to-one disciplers with other couples to teach people the things they have learned.
6. Close in prayer.

*Parenting
Is A
Ministry*

Session Ten
Workbook & Homework

Starting Over

Parenting Is A Ministry

Appendices

- **Parent Self-Evaluation Checklist**
- **Parent's Questionnaire for Youth Turning Age 18**
- **Seminar Comments Form**

Parent Self-Evaluation Checklist

(Review and discuss as a couple, if married)

Now that you have established your parenting structure, which includes the *Four Tools of Training* enforced in love, you may experience times of defeat or frustration and begin believing that this parenting style does not work for your family. If this happens, don't panic and look to the world's methods! Don't fall back on old habits! Instead, use the following evaluation checklist to discern the true source of the problem.

Your Spiritual Foundation

- How is your devotional life? Read *Psalm 1:1-3*. Would you use words like worshiping, listening, thanking, confessing, interceding, etc. to describe your daily communication with God?
- Do you read and meditate upon God's Word in a daily quiet time?
- Are you trusting God with your finances and giving tithes regularly?
- Are your priorities in accordance with God's desires for you and your family? Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your life?

Remember: You must depend upon The Lord! The key is not your parenting methods, but a relationship with God!

Communicating In Love

- Take the Effective Listening Self-Evaluation in *Loving Communication* (pages 18-19).
- Have you been reacting in the flesh to your children or responding to them in love?
- Take a moment and review *What Love Is Not* (pages 14-17). Are there areas where you need to improve in your communication or apologize to your children?

Remember: Your communication with and toward your child reflects the value you have placed upon them.

Training Your Children Through Discipleship and Discipline

- The best way to train is by personal example. How are you doing?
- If married, are you and your spouse working together and supporting one another? How is your management style? Who is the main disciplinarian?
- Are you sticking to your rules and using **only** the pre-determined disciplines and punishment, or has nagging, yelling, empty threats, and inconsistency crept back in?
- Are you praying regularly with your children? Have you followed through with your commitment to have a weekly family Bible study?

Remember: God loves you and He loves your children. You must trust Him. He did not give you the wrong children. He has not given you a task beyond your ability to accomplish as you trust in Him and obey His will.

Has God revealed areas in your family relationships where you have drifted off-course? If so, follow the steps outlined below to get your home back on course.

1. Confess to God, acknowledging your weaknesses, mistakes, or failures.
2. Receive God's forgiveness. Allow Him to embrace you in His arms of love and grace.
3. Repent by turning away from your error and commit to walk in obedience to His will.

Parent's Questionnaire for Youth Turning Age 18

(Revealing the parents' reality vs. the child's possible delusion)

The following questions are designed for discussion with your child just prior to his or her 18th birthday and/or for parents who have a child over 18 living at home. They are most effective when discussed in a relaxed setting, for the purpose of stimulating your child to think, and to encourage a more adult relationship with your child as they are entering adulthood. It will also reveal what they believe is going to change or has changed in their relationship with you and your support of them.

Give one copy to your child to fill out & one copy for you to fill out. Set a date and time when you will sit down with your child to discuss their answers and share your answers (reality) with them.

1. At 18 what do mom and I owe you besides our love?

2. Do you believe that the reason we help you the way we do is because we love you? Yes No

**3. Should we be doing more for you than we are currently doing?
 Yes No if yes, what should we be doing?**

4. Do we have the right to require anything of you in return for you continuing to live in our home? Yes No Explain.

5. If you do not agree with something we ask or require of you what should you do?

6. If you ignore our request and do something that we have made clear not to do, what do you think we should do? What should you do?

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