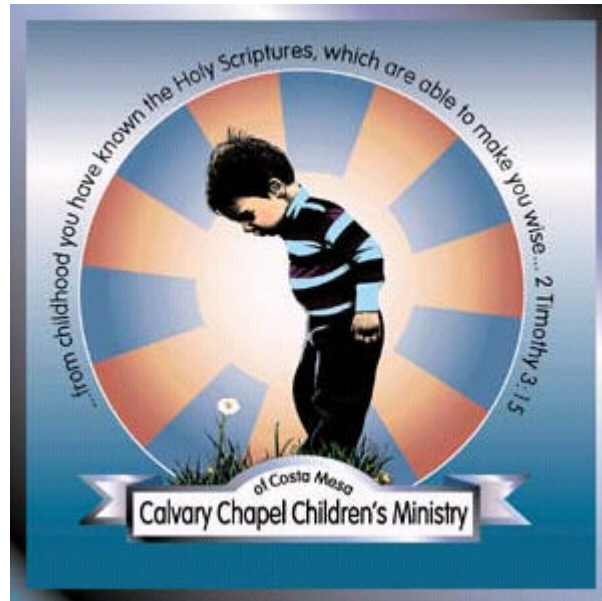

CALVARY CHAPEL CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE



WEEK 8

DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM: CORRECTIVE, PREVENTATIVE & RULES

PASTOR LARRY ENTERLINE

Opening Prayer

“Father, we come to You again, in total need. We need Your strength. We need Your wisdom. We need for You to give understanding. So tonight as we look at discipline, I would pray that You would speak to each of our hearts in very personal ways, in ways that You want us to understand Your love for us. So we thank You for allowing us to come together again, and ask that You become a part of all this. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Introduction To Classroom Discipline

Tonight we’re going to take a look at discipline in the classroom. It’s interesting because there’s all kinds of forms of discipline, different ways, different concepts, different ideas. And the first page that we’re looking at is the introduction page. It’s one up there. It’s just a small introduction. If you want to write some notes up there, there’s not much room, but many times discipline is a very confusing matter. “Am I doing it the right way? Is there such a thing as the right way?” We’re told and taught much about relativity. Everything relates to the situation at hand and all these different aspects of, and if that’s true, well then, is there a right way or a wrong to discipline? And if it is relative, then each situation is gonna be totally different. And so we get kind of checked on that one.

There’s different degrees of questioning what the Word of God has to say about discipline, usually through the secular world, but not all the time, but we find ourselves being concerned. “Maybe I’m doing it wrong”, and then that kind of leads to, “Maybe I won’t do it at all.” Or “I’ll do it second rate, just to be safe.” There’s all kinds of feelings that go into it. “If I discipline, maybe it’ll make the class feel bad, or me feel bad”, and the concept of discipline is many times not understood in its entirety. When we think in terms of discipline, many times what we’re thinking is corrective discipline. We’re thinking, “Okay, somebody’s done something wrong, now what?” And that’s only a part of discipline. And so we’re gonna be looking this evening at different aspects of discipline.

Some of the things we’re gonna be looking at is why our heavenly Father disciplines us? Some thoughts on Ephesians 6:4, “Provoke not your child.” Results of discipline. Why do children misbehave? A very important aspect to understand, the difference between discipline and punishment. Guidelines for discipline, preventative, and guidelines for discipline, corrective.

Steps to discipline in rules. Now, when it comes to discipline, one of the things that you find as a common denominator, if you look it up in a dictionary, you would find the word training, in many aspects of what discipline is. That is very important to understand,

because many times we think it just happens. A child is just born good. And yet that's not true. And many times we get confused in the fact that we do need to do things in regards to training. If you would think about training in any area, it would be coming to be disciplined in a certain area and have knowledge and know how, to train one in a certain direction. The same for discipline. The reason that's important, and we'll look at it a little bit more later, is when you see a student, a child doing something that is not acceptable, the first thought is "Well, maybe they need to be trained properly. Maybe they haven't been trained." And again, we're gonna cover quite a bit. You can use that, what I just said, to terrorize a parent that has a three year old. A three year old needs to be told over, and over, and over, and over again. A three year old has an attention span of about three minutes. And so an hour later, "That must have been a week ago that you told me that I wasn't supposed to run in the house." And then we can think, "Oh, they're being disobedient." And yet it's important also in discipline to know age appropriateness and not to put on a three year old, the same discipline as you would put on a sixth grader. So that's important for you to really keep in mind as we're doing this. So discipline is training.

There was a study done out at USC, and it was very interesting. They took an elementary school, and they observed the playground. It was all fenced in and they watched the recess time, and then... I don't really know how long it was that they observed them, but we'll say a week. They took the fencing down and didn't tell anyone what that meant. And they continued to observe, and what they found was when the fence was up, the kids played all over the playground in this large field area. When the fence came down, they would almost huddle in the center part of this large playing field. They weren't certain what their boundaries were. Then they put the fence back up, and again, the kids were all over the playground. What they were trying to achieve in this study, is to show the importance of boundaries. We have been sold a bill of goods that is not so good. That the freest we will be is when we're free. That's totally contrary to Biblical thought.

The scriptures point out so many areas in our lives that we have borders for our safety. And when we are functioning inside those borders, is when we are the freest in our life. I'll give you kind of an illustration, and it breaks down in many ways, but in Southern California, our speed limit now is 65. You can get on the freeway and do 65, and you're fine. If you do 70, 75, for sure 85, and you are going to be doing something when your speed limit reaches 85. Most likely, you're going to be looking for any possible place that a highway patrol man could be hiding, or parked behind a bush, behind a sign, off ramp, on ramp. At that point in time, if you can relate with this, you'll realize that you start giving that freedom over basically to the highway patrol, and the minute you drop your speed limit down to the acceptable speed limit, you're fine. You don't really have to think about it. You're not watching out, "Where I can get caught or trapped?". And in the

same sense, our life has sets of rules, Biblical rules, and when we are inside those guidelines, we are the freest. And the point that I'm trying to stress, is it is so important to understand that borders are not a bad thing. Borders in the realm of what God would have us to do, are very good, and very important.

I can't imagine what would happen if we had no stop lights, and everybody just kind of at will, did what they wanted to do. You know, it's important for us to have guidelines. Signs are very important. If we had nothing that was posted, we wouldn't know where certain things were if we drove into a new community. So they're important to have, these kinds of borders. That covers what I was trying to convey in the introduction part of this, because I believe it's really important.

Going to number 2. Why discipline? Why does our heavenly Father discipline us? I'd like to take a look at Hebrews 12. Very important. If we are to represent Jesus Christ, then it's very important to find out why our heavenly Father disciplines us. Starting in verse 5, "And have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons. 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, or be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him. For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'" Right there we start off with the reason why our Heavenly Father disciplines us, because He loves us. Now I don't know how many of you this morning woke up and said, "Lord, please discipline me today", probably not too many of you. It's not a common thing. Verse 7, "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there, whom a father does not chasten. But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect, shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them. But He, for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful, but nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness by those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed." In verse 10, it tells us that, "We become partakers of His holiness". Discipline is important. Discipline from the Father identifies us with the Father. How important that is. And then in verse 11, "It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it". Wanting to become more like Jesus and yet we don't often think in terms of discipline. "Lord, train me, correct me, teach me." How important it is. What you need to understand in this aspect of why our heavenly Father disciplines us is, because He disciplines us in love, we need to discipline in love.

We're gonna cover the difference between discipline and punishment in a few minutes, but if we're disciplining not in love, then we are not disciplining like our Father in heaven does. And none of us would want our Father to discipline us in His wrath. We'd be no more. How important it is when we are involved with disciplining, that we are representing our Father in heaven. And that transfers into the classroom for us to really be thinking on that we've been trained by. You cannot discipline apart from love. You should never discipline apart from love. Moving on to number 3. Why do children misbehave? Proverbs 22:15 tells us that, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child". Now there's a second part of that scripture, but right now we're trying to get a concept of why do children misbehave. Sometimes we overlook this. We want the kids to be something better than we. We put standards on the kids many times that are greater than standards that we're willing to handle. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child". Yes, there's a training up process, but don't be surprised when a two year old, a three year old, a four year old child does foolish kinds things. It's bound up in their hearts. We don't leave them there. That's the process of lovingly disciplining them and caring for them. Now when we see a sixth grader, or an eighth grader, or a tenth grader doing something that a three year old normally does, yeah, I think we should be a little bit concerned. Somewhere along the line, the training process has not taken root. But foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

Number 2. Ignorance of the rules. They don't know what you expect. Now many times we have this idea that, "If I think it, they think it. If I understand it, they understand it." And that's not true. And there can be different sets of rules for different circumstances and places of being in a classroom, in a playground, in the recreation hall, wherever it may be, you're gonna have different standards, therefore it's important to set a standard in the classroom and go by that standard.

Three, frustration. Children misbehaving because of frustration? What do I mean? The best example that comes to mind, I find for some reason that when we become teachers in the classroom, teachers in the sense of Sunday school, we also try to become English teachers and therein lies the problem of frustration. We tend, without realizing, to try to force all the students to read. We want to make sure that they can read. No matter what grade. If you experienced difficulty as a child in reading, you'll know what I'm talking about. Or you can talk to a parent who has a child who has difficulty in that, and they'll give you insight. It is so frustrating to be asked to read when you know your peers are going to laugh at you. My suggestion is, don't force anybody to read in class. You'll always have enough volunteers. But we can do things, because we aren't sensitive to their needs. That causes frustration and then they'll act out. Important to understand.

Number 4. Now I know this will not relate to any of your classes if you do come into the children's ministry. But a major reason for misbehaving is boredom. They're just plain bored. They're being trained too high, too old, or too young. You can teach a kindergartner like you'd be teaching a fourth grader and lose them. And you can be teaching a fourth grader like a kindergartner and lose that fourth grader. So you need to come to know the age appropriateness, and there's all kinds of books and we have a section in here, not really involved, about age appropriateness. The best way is to be observant, to watch, to listen, be around that age. And if you're willing to listen to what they're saying in their conversation, you'll know the kind of vocabulary that you should be using around them. You'll know their attention span and so on. So being aware of them.

And the fifth, why do children misbehave? It's home related problems. I think sometimes we forget that the world is way beyond the hour and a half in class, and we try to get them hooked into our thing for that hour and a half. They've got a lot of things they're carrying into the classroom, a lot. And it's important to realize that when they come through that door, they may come through with an attitude. It's not an attitude for you. You just happen to be the authority right now. They may have just been in a big fight in the car. They may not have a Christian parent, and they just struck them across the cheek. It's really hard to know what's bringing them in. And it's so important for us to remember that there's only so much that we really can do and we need to be sensitive to the needs. Usually if, and you've heard this, if you throw a rock into a path of dogs, you know which one you hit, the one that's yelping. The same thing happens, when a child comes in the class, and they're coming in with an attitude, there's an issue in their life. There's a reason. They may have caused it. They may have not. And the most important thing for us to understand is to love them through it. Now, we'll cover this evening, when we have to stop at the point of interrupting the classroom time and when we need to ask leadership to step in that classroom to work with that child on that given day. There is a point in time for that, so that we can truly minister to that child, but it's important to understand the whole related problem can be heavy duty in ways that sometimes we can't even comprehend. Sometimes the kids handle it so much better than adults, and so we assume that, you know, it can't be that bad and then they share with you the loss of a parent, you know, due to a car wreck or whatever it was the night before. And, you know, it gets pretty heavy.

You have to be careful, though, when it comes to prayer time, the younger ages are going to love... I mean they all love to pray if they're trained to pray. But the younger ages, four year old, five year old, they can give some wild stories, really wild stories. I was told one about two weeks ago, and it was good to hear because I know that this is truthful because, well, when my wife and I were teaching a kindergarten class, we had a child

pray for his uncle and really was upset and really was showing that he was upset. His uncle lost his leg and it had to be cut off is what he says and, man, we were like “Oh, okay.” You know, trying to be as sensitive all hour with this child as we possibly could be and his mom came to pick him and we pulled her aside and asked if there was anything we could do. She looked at us like really strange, you know. We said, “Well, we heard about the uncle.” And she looks at us. “What do you mean?” And so we explained and she is... her eyes were so... she goes, “Nothing like that has happened. That didn’t take place. I don’t even... I don’t know.” They can imagine things and they so much want to pray that you have to be careful with what you’re hearing. A real life situation around here again it took place, if I can get it straight. It was an older age class, which makes it even worse, because they kind of can relate and they were praying for mom and dad because mom and dad were always in fights and mom swore all the time. And so here the parents are coming to class and the teacher has this information and we highly recommend that you just pray because you don’t know what it really means, okay. If there are occasions of abuse, you do need to bring it to me if you think there’s an issue but to me personally because even that can be very confusing and it can destroy homes if it’s done wrong. So keep that in mind. So they started talking, and I won’t go into the whole story, but what they found out, was the mother always said, “I swear.” “I swear you kids,” you know, and she used the word swear. She did not swear, as we are understanding it. And so for almost the whole year the teachers just, you know, had been praying a storm up for this family. They looked to be like a really nice family and, well, I guess she was swearing but not the way the teacher was interpreting. So when kids are praying, you need to be understanding. Sometimes you don’t have all the information. Sometimes they’re communicating something that’s not necessarily true. If you have a question, in that regard, then see me. A lot of times we can clear up things and get to issues that will take care of it. But it’s always interesting.

All right. Moving on to the next page there. Do not provoke your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. What I would like you to do, is list four ways the children can be provoked to anger. I’d like you to list four ways that you can think of. If you can think of more, that’s fine too, and we’ll take just a minute or so and take a look at this, because it is very important. Go ahead and list those now. Okay. We’re going to talk about a few of them. I’m sure you’ve come up with some.

Number 1, that’s very difficult for children to deal with is breaking promises. Basically being built up and then let down is what they’re going through at that point. It’s very, very important, that if you say something to a student that you’re going to go do, you write yourself a note, because it’s really easy to forget and it’s not that you’ve tried not to do it. But you can forget so easy with so much going on and say, “Oh, okay.” I’ve had experiences when I was teaching the third grade where a student would ask a question

and I didn't know what the answer was and I would commonly say, "Well, you know, I don't know but next week I'll try to have the answer." And I remember coming back one of those times and said, "Hey, I think I've got it. Let's talk about this." And the student looked at me like, "What are you talking about?" Then he remembered that he asked the question and, yet, you could see in his face like, "Wow, he followed up." And it's very, very important that if you promise something, you say something that you back up your word with that.

Number 2, speaking harsh words. There's really no reason to be doing that. If you find yourself speaking harshly, you've probably have bypassed some real important issues of training and waiting on the Lord.

Question & Answer

Pastor Larry: Anyone else have something that they'd like to share?

Male: Improper teasing. Not that teasing is necessarily wrong, but over doing it.

Pastor Larry: Right. That is really an adult thing. That constantly teasing wrongfully, and that's a real borderline, because a lot of times adults think that they aren't teasing wrongly but kids hate to be teased.

Male: Taking your anger and directing it towards the kids instead of leaving it outside.

Pastor Larry: Directing your own anger towards them. Yes?

Female: Not giving the children a chance to share.

Pastor Larry: Yes. Now, there's a fine line on that one too. Ignoring the children when they want to share. The reason there's a fine line is, because they still need to be trained when the proper time to share is. You really have to do that with a three, four and a five year old. When it's Bible study time, they'll share through the whole Bible study. And so you need to say that, "We'll save that until after the Bible study is done." As they get older then you have more interactions sometimes, but again being sensitive of them. That's good. Any more?

Male: Too overly critical and having too high standards and expectations.

Pastor Larry: Yes. Being too critical.

Male: Also, you know, after a while once you enter a class you will probably notice some people should not sit together. So maybe creating like a seating chart and not allowing certain kids to sit together. That would kind of take them to an anger point, because you're not allowing them to sit by their buddy or making them sit by somebody they're not used to.

Pastor Larry: That would be under the judging them from their past and not having a free day, a new day, and that's exactly what goes on many times in class.

You know that is your major issue many times in class. Friends. Maybe they don't go to school together. When they get to see their friend once a week. Maybe they get together during the week. It's hard to say. They come in and they're going to talk, talk, talk. And one of the best ways to deal with them is to give them the time when it's all right to talk. Let them understand that. When it's not right during Bible study or whatever it is, there again there's Bible study that can be interacting and so the kids will be talking about the Word, but not to each other. You need to train them. But if the minute they come in, there's three friends and they're always talking and by the end of the class, you've got to split them apart, when they first come in, you go, "Okay, I know what this one is. Every week you're over there, you're over there, and you're in the middle," it doesn't give them an opportunity, it gives them no grace, it gives them no possibility to be trained, and so prejudging from past experiences, and it's important that we are careful with that.

One thing that we haven't covered, before we move on that is very, very important to understand and that is being inconsistent. Being inconsistent will drive kids whacko. It just is a tough thing to deal with. One week you say one thing and this is the way the rule is this week, next week it's a new thing and nothing was informed or one week you allow certain things to happen, the next week they can't do that. So it's important to be consistent, it's very, very important. Inconsistency will tear down any form of discipline that anyone has, because there never was a set pattern or a habit or training that can take place, because from week to week it's different. We'll cover that a little bit more in a few minutes.

The difference between discipline and punishment. The purpose of discipline as we've been talking about, it is to train for correction and maturity. The purpose for punishment is to inflict penalty for an offense, for something that was done wrong, big difference. The purpose for discipline is for future correct deeds. The focus for punishment is for past misdeeds, something that they've already done. They aren't in that groove of training, or let's get them out of our hair, let's get them quiet, so we don't have to hassle with them. Big difference. It does take more time to discipline than it does to punish. It does. Not in the long run. In the long run it takes much less time because as they mature and grow, then that consistency is there and you aren't being challenged in the same manner. Attitude for those that have been disciplined, love and concern on the part of the teacher, or punishment would be anger and frustration on the part of the teacher. And the resulting emotion for those that have been disciplined is security, and for those that have been under punishment, fear and guilt and anger. They're so similar sometimes.

I know I'll go home and I'll be exhausted and it's so easy to sit down in the chair and there's four children running all over the place ranging from 3 years old to 16, and that

can look sometimes like a zoo. And a couple of them are going at it, and it's just easy for me to yell, "Just be quiet." And when I yell, I don't usually say, "Just be quiet," you know. Yeah. I know. The sins will be exposed. It's really sad, that that can still happen and yet it doesn't do any good. It doesn't really show the love of the father. What I need to do is get up out of the chair... oh, that's awful. I've got to get up and get out of the chair. I just got in the chair. Don't you understand this? And it's something that we have to pray and pray and pray and ask God to help us through. But discipline in the long range as I see our 13 and 16 year old has paid off. Now, they get upset because I just tell them I've improved. God's really helped me, because they feel I yell more at them than I do at my two little girls. But how can you yell at your two little girls. I mean precious as they are. So I explain they are monsters and their sisters are, but really we need to just be constantly seeking the Lord in his wisdom in the area of discipline. "Lord, help me to do this. Enable me. Give me Your wisdom." We are not perfect. There's not one in this room.

And when it comes to discipline, because it has different facets of it, it's always a challenge. It always will be. But if you think in your mind whether it's in the classroom or at home, if you think in your mind that this is long range, this is going to pay off down the road, they're going to get out of the three year old stage. They're going to be 16 some day. I'm not sure which is better, but we can look to their growing up and their maturing, and it's a blessing to see that when discipline is taking place.

The next idea is very, very important. No teacher or helper will, under any circumstances, spank a child; for no reason. If for some reason you think that you've got to have the motion behind the seat of a child, you need to think again. We don't even want it to look like there's a possibility of this in the class. To date, I've only asked one person to leave, for that, and it was really a spanking, but it looked as if that was what was happening. And I tried to be very clear in this class. I don't question it. If somebody comes up and says, "you have a teacher that struck my child in seat", and I have another teacher in there that says, "Well, yeah, it was kind of like a tap, but there was discipline in the attitude". That's it, God's not calling that person in the ministry any longer, not this ministry. We need to make sure that the parents are absolutely comfortable with the care that's going on when they're being taught the Word of God, and there's no question about it. And there are times that I have to adjust, and there's times that I have to talk with people. It's a part of this. It's a lousy part of this, but it does happen. And it's important for you to understand it. Just nothing like that, you've gone way beyond at that point. There's no reason for that. Now, I'm not gonna get involved with whether it's a Biblically sound way or not. We're talking about in the classroom. We're talking about with other people's children, and that's important.

One of the reasons we're very tight on observing, we want people to clear it, it's because years ago in one of the nursery classes, we had a situation happen where the mom wanted to watch her daughter, and so she was in, it was either a three or four year old class. Before the teacher could do anything, the mom had seen something that she didn't like her daughter doing whatever it was, and took her to the corner of the classroom and spanked her. Well, people were walking by and all of a sudden "The nursery spansks, oh no!" You know, it's like "My kid's in there." No, it was a parent observing and since then we have changed some policies in regard to those that are coming in, because she didn't know we had a hard stand on something like that. So it's important. What we look like is extremely important. Not to look like something that we aren't, but it's important that we don't portray something that we aren't. So I think I spent enough time with that. I usually do, because I think it's important for you all to understand that, and to know what we think about that.

Preventative

Moving along to the next page there. Guidelines for discipline. We're gonna take a look at the preventative. If discipline is training, for future deeds, then discipline can be termed preventative. Begin your class with prayer. How important that is. That's about as preventative as you can get, asking God by His Holy Spirit to come and be a part. We can get so busy and forget about it. "I don't have time to pray. I got to get this thing going." And pay a price that we don't even realize we're paying.

Number 2. Purpose in your heart, to love them. Now how's that discipline? Because you're gonna have unlovables come in your class, and they're gonna get a hold of you in a way, that if you don't purpose in your own heart, you need to love them, and that you've already lost, and discipline will become a problem, an issue. Purpose in your heart to love the unlovables. Very important. I remember many, many years ago, I was not a Christian, I was in the fifth grade Sunday school class, and I was labeled as one of those unlovables. And I did things to that teacher that were not kind. I'm choosing my words because I can live it out right now what I was doing and he should have removed me permanently from the classroom for the remaining of the year. But he purposed in his heart to love me. And at that time, without going into it, I needed somebody to purpose in their heart to love me. I was in major turmoil, and as a kid, I wasn't reasoning it out, I was just going for it. And so it's important that we purpose in our heart to love the unlovable. And by the way, that fifth grade teacher of mine, was the major cause for me to seek out Jesus Christ when I got to be older because he showed me true love, when there shouldn't have been any love. There should have been a lot of anger, a lot of resentment. So God can do a lot when we purpose in our heart to love. Three clear rules. Weekly remind students. And we'll cover that a little bit later.

Number 4, know what you're gonna be teaching. That is so important that you do. If you think you can come in here, and just on the spur of the moment, come up with something that will not bore the students, you're wrong. A pit fall is, once in a while you'll find yourself in a place where you had no choice. I mean, your week was just horrendous and you didn't have the opportunity to prepare, and you go in the class and God will bless. He will bless. But then you get this idea, "That was easy because I didn't have to prepare and God really blessed." But He knew your heart, He knew your circumstances, and so you'll try it the next week. Well, no, you won't prepare and you'll go in there and... well, you do it just once and you'll understand what I'm saying. That's not really the way to have an active class that is being ministered to. Know your curriculum. We ask that you arrive in the class early, as much as you can. Twenty minutes, if at all possible. Fifteen to twenty minutes and be there, be set up, and be ready, very important. If you aren't ready, and if you aren't set up, when that first student comes through, then you've lost some really valuable ministering time. Just talking to a few kids at the beginning can be very valuable, because once your class gets full, you don't have that same kind of attention that you can give. Don't play favorites.

Number 5 You can play favorites two different ways. With those that are good and kind, and those that are troublesome. You need to be aware of that. And we'll talk about that in a little bit. Involve your students. Don't just preach at them. Get them involved.

Number 7, learn to read your group. What I mean is, if you're in a first, second, third grade class, or something like that, it doesn't really matter what classroom, and you're doing a craft, and the class is starting to get really loud, there's something to do with levels of sound, that if it gets going, it's hard to get them back. It's hard to get the students back. They get really wound up.

We had a situation in a class a number of years ago, where the class was out of control and the teacher was really bummed and couldn't figure out why, so we observed the class. After observing him jumping up on the desk leading worship, and just going wild... I mean they were having some good worship, but he was up on the desk, just wild as could be. He'd come back down and he never could regain control of his class. He got them so wound up, that they were out there. And you can do that with worship music or not worship music when you first come into the class. I know in some of the demonstration classes they've had the tape recorders playing and you can get some guys that are really fast beat and go for it, and the kids will be calm when they come in. All of a sudden they pick up that beat and before long, they're ready to go. Or you can have praise music you know, and keep them in the flow of things. I can go into a class usually, and probably within five minutes have it so out of control, in a way that it would take at

least a half hour of an experienced teacher to get them back in control. Because they get hooked into things and as much as you try to get them back in control, many times it's the teacher that will allow them to get out of control, not realizing that a really neat song, like Father Abraham will do that. You know Father Abraham? Usually what happens is Father Abraham is the last song in the worship time. And then Bible study time. Well, the kids are running, you know, turning, this and that, they're ready to go and you can't get them calm to do a Bible study. So we have to be very, very careful with what we are doing. You may want to do Father Abraham at the beginning of the worship time, so it gives them time to calm down and to really worship in song. But you need to be aware.

Learn to read your group and what's going on. Learn the names of the students. There are ways that you can do that. One of the easiest ways to do that is you have a word search or a coloring page when they first come in. Have them write their name on it, or you can sit there and write their name on it. And you walk around and you make comments of them coloring or words defined, or whatever, and their name's right there. And they feel like, "Yeah, they know who I am." "Hi James, how are you doing? So you're not going, "Hey, what's your name? Hey you". "You keep asking me what my name is every week?" (Laughter) So there's all kinds of ways. Some people do name tags and little name badges on their desk. There's just all kinds of ways that it can happen.

We once had a teacher in the three year old classes, we have sign in, sign out sheets, and they look something like this, where the parents will sign in the student's name, and then the adult's full name, and so by the time the class starts, you've got all these names here, and so the teacher would take this and sit down in the front and have all the kids come down in the three year old class and start going through the names. "Hi Jennifer. We're so glad you're here Jennifer." Well Jennifer's number one and "Why don't you wave to everybody and let them know who you are." Well, the teacher doesn't know who Jennifer is either. And so when Jennifer waves, then the teacher can start remembering "That's Jennifer." And you go all the way through the list to introduce them and find out who they are.

So there are all kinds of ways, especially if you have a hard time remembering the kids' names. I guarantee you'll have about four or five names that within the first 10, 15 minutes you'll remember right off, because they're active go-getters. But, you know, sometimes we play favorites because the quiet ones are just quiet and you don't pay attention to them, and that's terrible. Just because they're quiet, you know, well, they're good; and if you're quiet, it doesn't mean that you're good and if you're loud, it doesn't mean that you're bad. We have this idea somewhere because quiet means I don't have to hassle with him and loud means I have to hassle with him, but that doesn't say anything

about the heart. The heart can be as wicked and deceitful in either one of those. So learn their names.

Number 9 be prepared. It's very important to have eye contact for a couple reasons. They feel like you mean what you're talking about, and that you care about them. And the other is if you don't have eye contact, they could be doing all kinds of things that you have to pay a price for later. They can be getting in the desks. They can be, you know, doing different things that you don't want to experience. So if you're watching them, and sometimes on the older age classes it's really good to be walking up and down the aisle. Walk around the whole thing. That keeps the hands out of the desk, because we share with the school. And that's something that's very important. It creates a lot of frustration. It's a hard one for us to overcome, because some of the kids in school, a good percentage of them, are also in the children's ministry classroom and they set each other up. And don't allow the students set you up either because there are those times when you can be set up.

We had a situation where the teacher, this was about four years ago, they had their marker pens in a certain place in the cabinet... only if somebody told one of our teachers they would know where they're at and one of the students that went to school there in that class said, "Well, you know, we have some marking pens that we can use in this class," and the teacher said, "Well, what... where are they?" "In the cupboard." "Oh, no. We're not allowed in the cupboard. We have our own things." And "Oh, no, no. I've heard my teacher say 'Any time the children's ministry wants to use their stuff, they can use it.'" "No. Really?" And she convinced her. So nothing would have been found out about this, but the teacher put them back into the wrong cupboard when class was over with, and so the day time teacher came in the office and said, "You know, I've got proof that your teachers are using our stuff and aren't supposed to be." "I don't understand." And so piecing it all together, we found out that there was student in the class that was telling one of our naive teachers that it was all right and it kind of changed things, that one point in time. But you just need to be aware that sometimes they'll do that. They think it's funny.

Number 10, avoid inconsistencies. Be as 100 percent consistent as possible.

Inconsistency is often that which is challenged the most. And that's why in the long run, if we're willing to discipline consistently over time, less and less challenging takes place. If my older children know that when I mean no, there's no way around it, they may go, "How about this time, dad?" And I'll just look at them. "Okay. Okay. Okay." If they know that my no is a thing that's negotiable, then they'll start asking, and they'll come up and give me a back rub or foot rub and, "Dad, you know, what do you think about this," and "I know we haven't been able to in the past but, you know, I think this would be a good..." That's where you have to start working. When you're inconsistent in that yes or

that no, and the same thing happens in class. If you have certain rules and those are the rules in class and that's it. No, that's it. "But just this once?" "No, not this once." It's firm but it's protection. That's it. And you'll even hear when it's that consistent a student will come in for the first time and they'll start asking another student, "Well, why don't we get them to..." "Oh, no. It's not allowed in this class." You didn't have to deal with it. I love it when I hear that. That's fun. I'll hear my boys at home, they'll go, "Well, let's see if we can pull it this time." You know, they look down the hall and they can't, you know, they don't know I'm there. The other goes "You know he's not going to budge on this one." You know. So you can hear those different things once in a while. Being inconsistent. Very, very important that we're consistent as much as possible. Now that statement is a... yeah. It's a kind of thing that creates... can create depression, can create a second guessing of one's ability to do anything right. None of us are as consistent as we should be, and that's why we need Jesus. We need Him desperately. We need the empowering of the Holy Spirit daily. Moment by moment when we think we've got it wired, look out, because we are in absolute need. Yeah, inconsistency is tough. We need God to enable us to be more consistent and that's the bottom line, God's enabling. So don't let the enemy start nailing you up, "Oh, I told you so, just been telling you that for years" and, you know. Pray and ask God to help. Keep in mind that if the children are busy, secure in your authority and love, sure the of the classroom rules and are interested, you'll have fewer discipline problems. That's so important for you to understand. The way to have very few discipline problems is having a class that's moving, that they enjoy, that they're learning about God and His love for them. Very, very important.

I took a vacation a time back, and we went somewhere where we usually attend the church out of state, and some friends live in that area. And there was a need for someone to go teach two and a half year old through four, I think it was four, maybe five class and there's about 17 kids there and so I suggested that the husband and I would go and do that, so that the wives could go to the study that they wanted to go to. And so we did. The average age was about three and a half. They were so hooked in, I didn't believe it was lasting as long as it did. We did two separate Bible studies in a period of about an hour and 20 minutes and the first one was 20 minutes, the second one was 17 minutes. You don't keep three year olds attention for that length of time on anything unless they're enjoying it. Now the books say you can't do that. The book say three or four minutes is all the attention that you can have, but the book didn't work in that class for some reason. It was almost 40 minutes that we had the kids just totally hooked in. Now, that was too much and I don't suggest we try that too often. That individual had quite a bit of experience and I too and so after the 17 minute second part which is the part that I was doing, we lost them. They came unglued. So it's not necessarily the kind of thing you're shooting for to keep them, you know, one spot as long as you can. Point in sharing that, is that they will sit if they're enjoying it longer than the book tells us if they're enjoying it,

if they're hooked into it, if they're being ministered to by it, and that's important to understand. Get to know the children. And you can read through the rest of this.

Corrective

Okay. We're dealing with discipline in the classroom and we've just completed guidelines for discipline A, Preventative. And we're taking a look now at B, Corrective. And we've gone over the difference already and it's important to clarify that in your own mind that there is a preventative and there is a corrective. Well, we're going to look at corrective at this point in time. Number one on there says, "Pray and ask the Lord for direction." Now if you remember back to the preventative, we also said pray. But that was a prayer for preparation and understanding. This is a prayer, that now you're having to deal with issues that are going on in class and you need God's wisdom. You need to understand what He would have you to do, and how you can best represent Him in discipline at this time. And so very, very important, do not overlook the praying for. And that means you have to be patient. That means you have to take a second and hold back on addressing it and just say, "Lord help. I need to deal with this. I need your direction. I need your wisdom." So number one is extremely important in the whole process of corrective discipline.

Again, I want to remind you that this is discipline in the classroom, and we take a little bit different approach to discipline in the classroom. It's not quite the same as what you would have at a home where you have more consistency, not that you have wildness or craziness in a classroom either, but I believe you do it a little bit different, because they are not your children and you're only there supporting the family and the home and, therefore, we have to do it a little bit different. Number two, discipline the action, not the child. That's important to remember. So many times you can get so personalized in this and you start talking at the person, at that child. Yes, you need to address that child but you need to address them in the fact that your love and the Lord's love and that the action that's going on, the things that they are doing are not correct, it's not pleasing to the Lord and take a look at that. So that's important to remember.

Number three, try to be aware of as much as possible. It's easy to miss the cause and see the effect. And that is so important. So many times you are coming in, in the middle of whatever took place and so you need to cover all your bases and check out everything that's taken place up to that point, and that may take a few minutes to do.

Number four is to reinforce love after discipline. Again, we talked about earlier that without love you are not really disciplining, but you're punishing and we aren't talking about a punishment system. We're talking about discipline. And we talked about the

reason God disciplines us. He disciplines us because He loves us. Therefore, we need to be involved with that same kind of discipline, and so we need to reinforce the love that we have for that child, and the love that God has for them and that's very, very important, because you may have to lay down the law at times and they need to understand there needs to be order, and there needs to be a willingness and a cooperation but you're glad that they're there. Let them know you're pleased that they're there and take a look at how our Father treats us, and how many times we do things that are not acceptable, and He's not like, "Hey, get lost". We aren't treated roughly or mean, but we're treated with His long suffering, with His grace, with His mercy, and so you just need to keep that in mind as you're involved with doing active discipline of a corrective sort.

Number five, discipline privately, compliment publicly. Again, here we are fortunate we have two teachers in a classroom, sometimes more. And that makes it realistic. That makes it possible. But even here, you may find a situation where you're in class alone. The teacher may have had to step out. The teacher may have gotten sick, or a number of other reasons. And you find yourself in class alone, and it's going to be impossible basically for you to be involved with disciplining on a private manner, because you no longer have the capacity to take them to the side and talk with them while the other teacher is involved with the class. And so they need to become aware that you don't want to embarrass them in front of their peers and their friends, but it may have to take place because you're the only one there. And that is a situation where it's acceptable. But you have a capacity and means to discipline them privately, you need to do that. Take them to the corner and talk with a low voice to them or take them outside if you have capacity to do that. Here we have different leaders that may be able to come in and help out and support in that. I know that, years ago when I taught a third grade class, I was the only one that taught the class. I never had a helper or a co-teacher, so I had a pretty well accepted standard that if there was an issue in class, I would be talking to them in front of the class, and that did help, because most of the time the kids didn't want to have that embarrassment so, again, discipline privately when it's at all possible, compliment publicly.

Six, never yell at a child. If you get to the place where you're yelling at a child, you have missed a whole lot of concepts. You've missed a whole lot of what we've already talked about, because you've come to the place where you're saying, "You know what? I can't take this anymore," and then you yell. Well, if you can't take it anymore, that means there are past times when you were missing the issue. You didn't deal with them directly so you need to understand that first of all, there's no place for yelling. And if you find yourself in that place, you need to pull yourself. You need to call them to our office and get somebody down here in class to take your place, because there's no reason for you coming to that place and really feel like, "I'm going to strangle this kid," or yelling at

them, no reason at all. So you keep that in mind. It will be a good barometer for you to be able to tell where you're at, and where you need to be when you're in class.

Seven, know all the facts. Very similar to three. That tells us to be aware of as much as possible, but you need to know what's going on before you make any decision or discipline action. So talk to the students around. They'll usually share with you. They'll usually tell you what took place and what was going on.

Number eight, don't over react again. Psalm 6:1 said, "Oh, Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger." There's no reason to over react. You can start taking it so personally because you think it's your class. This is not your class that we're talking about, it's God's class. He's put you in it as a vessel to touch those lives, to minister to those lives, to allow God to minister through your life to their life. And so you need to realize that He needs to stay in control of what's going on, and that's very important when it comes to corrective discipline.

Number nine, a time of silence, putting your head on the desk. Now, what do I mean by that? There may be times when you are doing a craft, they don't necessarily have to be quiet. There may be times when you're doing some kind of activity and you're enjoying yourself, and they're enjoying themselves, and you kind of track of what's happening and how loud it's getting in class and they may have their outdoor voices on and need to get those indoor voices back, and you realize, you know, "I've talked to them a few times and told them to quiet down but they've gotten beyond that level. So that's the time that you say, "Okay, class. We're going to take some time. Put your heads down on the desk and I don't want anyone to talk". Now, I need to share this too. Sometimes you, as a teacher, as an adult, may say, "We want you to quiet down. Okay?" "I want you to quiet down" means relatively nothing to one of these students because it's a relative term. "Well, I'm not screaming as loud as I was before," or "I'm not talking as loud." So what you need to say is "Stop talking." They understand that. That's not the same as quiet down and many times we think it is, but it's not. So just tell them that they need to put their heads on the desk and stop talking, and the time will start when the last person stops talking and it may only take 15 seconds. It may take 30 seconds. It may take a minute. But the point of that you're trying to establish, was to break the flow of what was going on, and again, get control again of the class. If you are not preparing for your class, then they're out of control all the time, this does not work. You can have them put their heads down on the desk for a few minutes, and they're going to be back finding something to do, because you have not prepared for your class. Don't try this approach. This won't work, and remember that you need to be preparing. I'm going to bring that up again because I find that the best discipline is a well prepared class. A class that's age appropriate. A class that the kids are enjoying. If the kids are enjoying what's going on,

they aren't going to mess around as a whole. You may have one or two that, does that but as a whole, they will not. And so when you're having a discipline problem in class, a good thing to do, is to check out how you're teaching. Whether it's age appropriate. Whether you're preparing enough to excite the kids and to get the kids involved with that lesson.

Ten, minimize classroom disruption. Continue to talk and to share your lesson, the Bible study whatever is going on, and walk around the class. I find that as a very, very excellent way to control a class. If you stand in one spot as I'm standing right here, the kids have a tendency to get bored just watching the same spot. So if you're moving among the class, as you're walking around the class, if a child is doing something they're not supposed to be doing and you come close to where they're sitting, then they're going to stop and they're not going to be as apt to start messing around and doing different things, and so it's a good approach. Go stand on the side of the room. Go stand at the back. Stand in the front, to the left, to the right. Never necessarily stay in one place at one time. So it's a good way to stay in control of the class.

(B) Pause at the desk and place your hand on the desk. If you have one student that keeps responding or not responding to you and acting up, all you need to do is walk up to their desk and put your hand down onto the desk and just continue talking. You don't have to look at that student. I tell you, with your hand on that desk, that student right now is saying, "You know what? I don't want that hand on my desk." And they're thinking all this through their mind. "I'll do anything to get that hand off my desk." And they feel the pressure of that. You don't even have to say anything. You don't even have to address them. You just quietly take your hand off and walk on. That's a good introduction to, "Hey, stop doing what you're doing." Maybe the next time you might have to say something to them, but maybe you won't have to say anything again. Again when you do something in a class with one of the students, the whole class sees that. And I guarantee the majority of the kids in class don't want to see your hand on their desk, and it's so small and so ridiculous in the sense that it doesn't do anything, but it is an effective way to try to get your point across that you don't want them doing what they're doing.

There may be a student that's tapping a pencil or toy or some money, you never know what it's going to be, and basically you need to say, "You need to put that back into your pocket, or the next time I'm going to have to remove it from you." Now, I don't encourage you to remove objects from the students primarily because you'll forget to give it back to them, not that it's so bad. But if you do take something from someone in the class, make sure you give it back to them before that class is over with. If it's a kindergartner or a first grader, you crush him, not to have it all week long. That's their favorite toy. So make sure if you're using that method, that you give it back to them. But

I highly suggest that you just warn them and tell them to put it back in their pockets so you don't have to do that. Many times that will work.

(E) try a pause during class, and a gentle, “Shhhh.” Not, you know, “Grrr”, or “I’m going to tear your head off if you’re not quiet,” but just a gentle, “Shhh” and sometimes that’s enough and that’s all it takes.

(F) call a child by name and shake your head. You can just say, “Billy, don’t be doing that.” Or you don’t even have to say anything. Just say, “Billy,” and shake your head and they know what you’re saying. And you don’t have to be mean looking but just make them aware of what they’re doing and that it’s not acceptable. And many times that’s all it takes. Do you warn the child that if you need to speak to them that you’re possibly going to have to separate them, if you have to continue to talk to them? Now that’s one of the big issues that we find in class. The kids are friends. They may not see each other all week, and so they come and they just enjoy each other. They’re thrilled to be together again and so they want to talk and talk and talk and it’s a challenge that you have to try to establish the right time to talk in class and the right time not to talk in class. So that’s important. But there are those times when you have to separate the students. Now, you may have the same kids talking and you may separate them every week the same students. I highly recommend that you still every week give them a chance. Don’t, as soon as they walk in the door, say, “Okay. You always get separated so I’m going to separate you now.” Give them some grace. Give them a chance to grow and to learn. You would want the same for you. That pretty much covers H also. I ask the child to sit in the chair in the back better known around here as a time-out chair. Again, if you use it as a chair that’s for troublemakers especially in the younger age, kindergarten, four year old class, a first grade class, then it creates more of a commotion. But if, with the younger ages you tell them it’s your time-out chair and you explain to them, “You know, I don’t want you to get into trouble and so what I’m going to do is have you come back here and sit for three minutes in this time-out chair so that you don’t get in trouble,” what it does is it helps them think through. You can pray with them and hopefully they don’t go so far and get so wound up that they do get in trouble.

Now something to remember for time-out, I highly recommend that you do not sit a child any longer than their age per minute, and what I mean by that is if a child is three years old, don’t have him sit any more than three minutes. If they’re four, four minutes. If they’re five, five minutes. You know, once they get in the school age then there may be a little bit of variation there. But the younger age, if you sit a three year old longer than three minutes, then they don’t remember why they’re sitting there. And so that’s important for you to remember if you do use the approach of a time-out chair.

(J) a child should always be assured of the teacher's love. Again, we have covered that and how important that is. (K) to assure them that you enjoy having them in class. Again, that goes all the way back to disciplining the action and not the child. So that's just another way to reiterate some of these things. (L) you basically asking if they're ready to rejoin the class. (M) if the child cries, you need to reassure them.

There was a situation in class when my wife and I were teaching a kindergarten class, where we kept working with this youngster, and he just wasn't going to give in. He wanted to do his own thing and for about 25 minutes it just wasn't happening. And it was during the Bible study time and I told him that the next time we had to address him, he was going to have to go sit in the time-out chair in the back. And so that time came and I told him he needed to go and the minute I said that, he starts crying. That's the last thing I want to take place. I'm not trying to offend a child. So I walked over to him quietly and knelt down and said, "You know, I understand now that you understand what I mean, and I think you're probably willing to do what we're talking about and that's to be quiet and to be orderly and if so, you don't have to go back there and sit." And he's going, "Yeah, yeah." And so at that point, we established what we wanted. Now, I could have taken him, picked him up, put him back there, but what good would that have done. It wouldn't have done any good. So you have to be careful and you have to consider the kids are very sensitive, and reassure them of your love.

On the handout that we've got here or in the training manual, we stop there, but there's an end. I want you to write in there, "There's an end. Take care of the little things, and the big things rarely happen." All right? That's important for you to understand. "Take care of the little things and the big things rarely happen." If you see a child come in with gum in their mouth, it's a good idea to put it in the trash can, otherwise you might have gum in the hair, in many heads of hair, and so on. So when you see small things occur and you go, "Well, that's not a big deal," don't say that's not a big of a deal, because over the course of a class, that can become a very big deal and you need to take care of those little things and then rarely will big things take place after that. So that's important for you to understand. This is basically covering the corrective aspect of discipline. There is much more, and as time goes on, we'll develop more and, as you are in class, you need to ask the Lord, as we said early on with number one, pray, and ask for His wisdom. Every situation is a little bit different. So it's important for you to keep in mind that you need to seek the Lord when it comes to discipline. Okay. That covers the preventive and again, discipline goes on and on and on, and there's so many aspects of it. This is just an introduction to it, giving you some ideas and some things to think on.

Discipline

The next one is steps to discipline. This will be here in this ministry. Step one, the children's minister will talk to the child in private. Be sure to explain what he has done and why his behavior was wrong, and then pray with the child. So you're using just wisdom, letting them know what you're expecting. Number two, use appropriate steps to use appropriate disciplinary action: time-out, separate, all the things that we've talked about and more that the Lord will guide you through. If, by step two, you find yourself losing the battle and that may be 20, 25 minutes into this whole thing, it's time to go to step three and that's call the children's ministry office and that's extension 206. Either I will come in, or a family leader will come in and have a visit and sometimes that is all it takes. Sometimes we deem it important to remove the child at that point in time and bring him to the office.

Consistently everybody around here has come to learn that Larry has an office somewhere on these grounds and have been informed, so that when they were in first grade or fourth grade or sixth grade, they may not know who Larry is but they usually know that he's around and that he has an office. And a kindergartner doesn't really have a clue of who Larry is or where his office is and prefer to stay in his classroom because that's got to be safer. So it's important to use this for control but if a child is really out of control, we don't feel that that's your place as a teacher to have to deal with him in that state. You've done everything you possibly can to work with them, now it's time for us to step in. Sometimes that's all that will work and we will, in the best of our ability, minister to that child the way they need to be ministered to. And I don't mean that kiddingly. It's a hard kind of a thing to minister love and discipline when a child is acting out a certain way. We usually kind of find out all kinds of interesting things that happened at home or has happened in their life. And there's no place for an entire class to be disrupted because the child's having a hard time. And so many times they need one on one help. And we pray. We try to do everything we can. Sometimes we can't even get that far. So you don't be the brave teacher once you've gone beyond trying to keep control and go, "Well, they'll think I don't know what I'm doing." It has nothing to do with that. It has nothing to do with that at all. You need to use the support. The kids know it's there.

I don't know if John, whether he shared this or not, but last week when he was here, we had a thing going about five years ago where if you had a student that was really acting out in his class, he'd give me a call. But when he went over to the phone in his classroom, he'd talk very openly. He'd say, "Larry," or however he'd want to address me, he's say, "I am having a problem in this classroom with a student and they don't want to follow directions. Do you have time to come over here?" And we'd already set up what this is all about so I'd say, "Sure. Be right there." And we can be almost anywhere in 15 seconds around here. So it really surprised the kid. Here comes this guy full of beef standing in the doorway, not smiling, saying, "John, your class looks to be very well behaved. I don't

understand. But, John, you know my rule that if I get called back twice, I don't go back empty handed. One of these kids is coming with me." And I left. Well, for the most part at that point, I mean by the time I get to the class and we did that maybe three times but it was when the student was really out there, by the time I get to class, they're perfect. They're just perfect and usually I don't have to come back. Once in a while I do, but that same idea for any class of the younger ages, first, second, third grade, you get a family leader or somebody in leadership in the doorway, and the chances are a lot better for them in class with the teacher that they know, than this person they don't know, going who knows where. So usually by the time we get to the class, you're doing okay. And so for your benefit as teachers, you want to use that support. It's very, very important. And step four, if that isn't working, then it's time for myself or the family leader to step in and talk to the parent. We prefer that you didn't although sometimes there's no option and you have to.

When you are talking with a student's parent, there's something really important to remember. In everything, remember that that student is their child. Never forget that. It's not your student. That student is their child. And if you start off saying... you don't have to say anything. Just give a look, "Your child has been so disruptive to this class," you're not going to get the ear of the parent very easily after that point. Now, you may be right, but as far as that parent concerned, you've got a bad attitude. "What are you teaching for? Have control to at least tell me what's going on". And the proper way and the real way and the truthful way is, "You know, we are having some situations where I'm not totally sure what to do. And we've tried different things, but you being the parent," and this is valid, this is truthful, "I thought maybe I needed to talk with you, because I'm sure you have understanding that I don't to help me to be able to be a better teacher and to work this out with your child, and so I just thought we needed to talk." And that's if you have to speak with a parent, because they can become very defensive, very defensive. They haven't been to class and the truth of the matter is, the kids can play people real well.

I had that happen in a class that I taught and I learned the hard way. For three months this kid tortured me. He just put me through it and I was a new teacher and I was just going to show my love and he just, all hour long, he raised havoc in the class and finally I couldn't handle it anymore. Two and a half months down the road I talked to his grandfather. He had custody and was caring for little Bobby, who's no longer little. He's probably graduated from high school by now, but the next week Bobby came back to class and Bobby became my best student the rest of the year. Not only best, favorite. He was so helpful. He was like... What happened? I never had the nerve to ask the grandfather what he had done. I mean he just was... and I was being played for a sucker. I wasn't being the disciplinarian that I needed to be. I wasn't being wise and Bobby had total potential to be a super kid. But why be a super kid. He didn't need to be, you know. So it's important to

work through and to be wise when you're talking with the parents, they can many times, they'll look at you like, "Are you... what are you talking about? My child?" And they may really be puzzled because that may not be their character. And I've seen some good kids act out in children's ministry classes, and it's hard to convey that to the parents. So when you're talking to the parents, understand, it's their child. And something at this point, I may have already shared, but please, it's worth sharing again.

There are situations where the children have learning difficulties. People have labeled in all kinds of manners, I won't put any labels on, but they're active. Some people would call them hyperactive. It's really a hard thing when the teacher who just became aware of this from the student because they just started coming to class goes up to the parent and says, "You know, I've noticed that your child is really out of control and has some real issues and some real problems here and I did see a program once about this kind of a thing and...." You're talking with a parent, first of all, that lives with that child, and just because you as a teacher has become aware that there is some activity level that may need to be worked with, be careful about becoming a doctor in class and trying to prescribe the needs. I happen to think it can be very brutal to the parent. If there are areas of need that we need to deal with that's fine, but don't talk down to a parent. The parents are probably very aware of the issues in their lives. Many times it doesn't have as much to do with lack of discipline as most people would like to believe. I have been involved in areas of learning difficulties and, believe me, there's a reason God told us not to judge, because we don't have all the information. Many times we think we do and the best thing you can do in class is not to judge. Make sure, yes, that you can control the behavior so that you can do what God's called you to do. But be very careful about becoming a professional, prescribing, telling what needs to be done. I'm sure the parents are aware.

Rules

Next one, rules on rules. Very, very important to keep some clear, simple rules. Three or four, five. It doesn't really matter how many. Don't go out and just make rules for the purpose of having rules. Make sure that there is relevancy. That's number two. That they're relevant to the class and they're needful so that you can maintain those borders. Number three, make the rules meaningful. Sometimes it helps to think through with the class, but many times the class will give you more rules than you'll really want to deal with. And make the list positive. Now, what do I mean by making the list positive. If discipline is for the purpose of correction in the future, if it's for the purpose of training, don't, the word don't, probably should not be found in it. The word that you would want to find is, "We follow directions." Not we don't do this or that, but the rule is we follow directions in this class. And that's what I mean about making them positive or making them so that they're a training platform, not an after the fact kind of a thing. "We don't

talk without permission” would be one where you could say it but better would be, “We raise our hands to speak. That’s what we do. That’s what we want you to know what we do.” And, “We stay in our seats unless we have permission to leave” instead of, “We don’t get out of our seats.” You can say, “We don’t hit others” or, “We keep our hands to ourselves.” And you have to pray about the rules that specifically are needed, and from year to year you may have to change those rules. You may start off with three real basic rules and then, important, at the beginning of each class go over the rules so the students know what you expect. They aren’t guessing at that.

Now if you have rules, it’s very important to have the consequences figured out, because if you don’t and they break the rule what do you do? And you usually don’t have time to figure it all out right at that point in time. So natural consequences are usually very good for establishing rules. What do I mean by natural consequences? If a student is mishandling a pencil, that means that student does not have the responsibility level to use that pencil. So you remove the pencil from that student, saying that we will try it again in 10 or 15 minutes if you are able to control yourself. If a student continues to talk out, the student needs to be aware that they are no longer allowed the freedom to talk. They can only talk when they raise their hand or whatever it may be. Natural consequences are very good ways of coming up with what happens when they break the rule. Very important. You will find yourself in the middle of that time just frustrated because, “Yeah, yeah. They broke it. Yeah. Oh. Now, what? Now what do I do?” So beforehand it’s probably a good idea to pray and ask the Lord what would be a reasonable natural consequence. They throw crayons. Well, they obviously don’t know how to use crayons. You can step back and say to the kindergarten class, “You can only get crayons from me now. And so when you’re done with your one color, you come back and get another one from me as the teacher.” And if that doesn’t help, then, “You can’t use the crayons. You just have to sit there.” You know, again, for a five year old, you don’t want to make it long. You want to give them the opportunity to work through it. So those are some ideas on rules. Very, very important. If you choose not to establish rules, you will, well, I don’t know how long it will take, but you will establish some rules eventually. You will find yourself going, “Why didn’t I do this in the beginning. It makes it a lot easier. Letting them know what the rules are, the ground work for when they come through the class. Very, very important.

Discipline in the classroom has some similarities to the home, but not always. You have to remember that they are the parents’ kids, children. They aren’t ours. We have been entrusted to care for them to the best that God enables us to do that. To love them. I would rather see a teacher lean to the grace side than the law side. We’re talking an hour, an hour and a half into the classroom, and probably the greatest thing that can happen in the class is the students experiencing the love of God. The love of God will mark them

for life. They can't outrun His love and if you're a person that walks through the class and says, "You know what? I may make some mistakes but I'm here to love them. I'm here to do what God would have me to do," you're going to find yourself being fruitful in the ministry of ministering to the kids. God's love covers a multitude of sins. It's just that simple. We aren't perfect. We do make mistakes. But there's never a mistake in His love ever. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer

"Father, we thank You for Your love and Your grace and we ask, Lord, that You continue to reveal that to each of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Last Thoughts On Rules

Okay. We've got a page called rules in your discipline chapter, and we've gone over the rules themselves but this is just a work sheet that if you want to, you can go ahead and the first two on here as rules established or to, "Love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and great Commandment. The second is like it and that's number two, that you should love your neighbors yourself". And then you can just continue to list different rules that you may want to have in your class and that's all this is for. It's just a little hand out, a little work sheet that you can use or not. So just something for you to remember. Okay. And another page in the discipline chapter that I want to bring to your attention that we do not cover, but it's got some excellent scriptures for you to look over. The title of it is Scriptures on Discipline and it goes over purpose of discipline, true love, benefit of discipline, and it has different scriptures that would be good for you to look up and so, again, we're not covering this but I would advise you, encourage you to take some time to look up these scriptures and read them. Very important scriptures on discipline.