

# MAKING CHILDREN MIND WITHOUT LOSING YOURS

*How to Bring Out the Best in Your Kids  
By Doing What is Best for Them*

W O R K B O O K

DR. KEVIN LEMAN



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By Doing What is Best for Them*

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WITH  
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(Printed scripture references New King James Version)

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The *MAKING CHILDREN MIND WITHOUT LOSING YOURS* workbook accompanies the six video lessons by Dr. Kevin Leman and is critical to the study. This workbook will help parents make practical application of Dr. Leman's video lessons. Use the workbook aggressively! Whether you are completing the study with a group of parents or on your own, be sure to take notes on the video lessons, then work through the discussion guide, writing down your thoughts, ideas, and comments. Fill in every blank.

**NOTE:** Each lesson is designed to be completed in 55 to 60 minutes, but in the event that you are unable to finish in the allotted time, feel free to carry over to the next session or complete the lessons on your own. May God bless you in your study of *MAKING CHILDREN MIND WITHOUT LOSING YOURS*.



## Lesson 1

# DARING TO BE A COURAGEOUS PARENT

*Developing the Courage to Do What Is Best for  
Your Kids!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

*--Ephesians 6:1-4*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Obedience: the cornerstone of good parenting.**

- A. You don't have to be a great parent. You can be a \_\_\_\_\_ parent and have a great kid.
- B. Parents must have a game plan.
- C. Time, love, affirmation, and discipline are four essential ingredients of good parenting.
- D. Love and \_\_\_\_\_ go hand in hand.

#### **II. Parenting Myths**

- A. Just love them. Reality: Love and \_\_\_\_\_ go hand in hand.
- B. I just want my kids to be happy. Reality: Life has periods of unhappiness. Children need to learn from them.

#### **III. Biblical Standards for Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior: Ephesians 6:1-4**

- A. Children \_\_\_\_\_ your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- B. Obey your parents because God has placed them in authority over you.
- C. The first commandment with a promise: Yours will be a \_\_\_\_\_ life full of blessing.



D. Parental do's and don'ts (verse 4)

DON'T provoke your children to wrath.

DO bring them up in the \_\_\_\_\_ and admonition of the Lord.

#### IV. REALITY DISCIPLINE

A. Reality discipline is the action-oriented way to make your children accountable for their actions.

B. The ultimate goal of REALITY DISCIPLINE is to get the child to be able to deal in practical ways with the reality of the authority of God, established in and through Jesus Christ.

### ***DISCUSSION GUIDE***

1. Take a few moments to discuss with the group why you chose to participate in this study. Write down some of your reasons and some of those given by the group.

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2. Think about your own parenting style, especially in terms of how you discipline your children. How did you develop your concept of discipline? Is it working, not working? Why?

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3. What do you feel are some of your strengths as a parent in terms of "making your kids mind"? Share some of your thoughts with the group. List some of your strengths below.

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4. Do you feel you have any weaknesses as a parent in "making your kids mind"? If so, discuss them with the group. Jot down some of your thoughts.

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5. Dr. Leman described his children as nice kids who didn't get everything they wanted. What are some ways our society promotes the myth that children should have what they want and that reward is a "right."
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6. Read Ephesians 6:1-4.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

As a group, discuss what the words below mean to you. Jot down some of your answers.

OBEY –

HONOR –

PROVOKE –

TRAINING –

ADMONITION –

7. Recall the story of Holly's little fingers reaching under the door when she heard her grandmother. How do you think Dr. Leman's actions supported the truths in Ephesians 6? Share your ideas with the group.
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8. How did Dr. Leman discipline Holly in love while still honoring his mother who did not necessarily agree with how he disciplined his daughter? How do you think your behavior and attitudes toward your parents can influence your child's behaviors and attitudes toward you?
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9. Discuss for a moment your understanding of Dr. Leman's concept of reality discipline. What words or phrases trouble you the most about your awesome responsibility as a parent? Read the ultimate goal of reality discipline (IV, B). How can parents' lives reflect their recognition of the authority of God established in and through Jesus Christ?

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10. Read the following scripture references related to discipline. During the following week, reread the discipline passages, and write a brief summary of the biblical truth as it might appear on a bumper sticker. Review and use these passages as a reminder that God expects parents to develop the courage to discipline their children.

Proverbs 10:17	Proverbs 12:1
Proverbs 13:18	Proverbs 13:24
Proverbs 15:15	Proverbs 15:32
Proverbs 19:18	Proverbs 22:15
Proverbs 23:13	Proverbs 29:17

11. Many times our family schedules are extremely busy, maybe even hectic. Sometimes we may feel we live in a "zoo." Discuss some positive or negative examples of how parents discipline their children that may match the "zoo" scenarios listed below.

My home is a zoo and I'm the animal trainer!	
My home is a zoo and my kids are the zookeepers!	
My home is a zoo and it's feeding time again!	
My home is a zoo and I'm left cleaning up after the elephants!	

12. Enlist a member of the group to be your prayer partner for the rest of the study. Commit to call or meet with the person at least once during the week to pray about your being able to practice reality discipline in your homes. Agree to keep requests confidential. If possible, keep a prayer journal to record prayer requests and praises as you see God answering your prayers.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

13. Dr. Leman described children as being like wet cement that must be formed early before it hardens. What concerns do you have that you may be “too late”? You will learn more practical aspects of reality discipline during the rest of the study. Ask God to give you the courage to do what is best for your children as you continue to learn not only what reality discipline is, but also how to practice it in your family.
14. Call or meet with your prayer partner during the week. Remind your partner that you will keep your prayer concerns confidential, and remember to record prayer requests in your prayer journal.
15. Here are the actual words Holly wrote to her father:

World's gatist father,  
My father is the gratist,  
for your the best,  
caring, Loveing,  
THE BEST!!!!!!  
even when you disaplin me,  
I love you the same,  
Love,  
Holly

Dr. Leman was not worried about Holly's spelling. He was thrilled that she used the word “discipline” instead of “punish.” Write a note that you think one of your children might write you to describe the world's greatest mom or dad. Pray for your child right now, and then pray for your child's other parent. Ask God to show you anything that might prevent you from having the courage to do what is best for your children.

Remember, your goal is to bring out the BEST in your kids by doing what is BEST for them, and sometimes this is not easy or comfortable. It takes courage. But it's the first step to making your children mind without losing yours.

*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*  
--Colossians 3:20-21







## Lesson 2

# WHY KIDS MISBEHAVE

*Understanding Kids and Why They Do What They Do!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."*  
--Deuteronomy 6:7

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Give yourself and your child permission to fail.**

A Christian home needs to be a place where children can learn to \_\_\_\_\_, pick themselves up, and move forward.

#### **II. Who's in authority here anyway?**

- A. The child's message is "I'm in authority over you and I'm going to make you do what I want."
- B. Let them know who is in authority over whom.

#### **III. Three reasons why kids misbehave**

- A. Attention
- B. Power
- C. Revenge

#### **IV. Practical tips for dealing with misbehavior**

- A. There are times when you should let your kids cry.
- B. Notice or recognize the child in \_\_\_\_\_ ways.
- C. There are few, if any, no warnings in reality discipline—focus on actions, not words! Get attention by taking action.
- D. Don't right all the wrongs in your child's life. Don't pay off the consequences of their actions.

**V. Maintaining the balance of discipline and self-control**

- A. Step over the child – not on the child – who is out of bounds.
- B. Maintain \_\_\_\_\_ between discipline and healthy authority.
- C. Provide balance and boundaries.

<b><i>DISCUSSION GUIDE</i></b>
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1. Recall the definition of *reality discipline*. Reality discipline is the action-oriented way to make your children accountable for their actions. List some of the new things you heard in the video today that give you a better understanding of reality discipline. Share with the group.

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2. Dr. Leman reminds us that most children misbehave because most parents expect them to misbehave. Recall the eight and ten-year olds in the grocery store with their mom. Pretend you have already gotten into the rut of giving those same verbal “warnings” prior to entering the store (no running in the store, no fooling around, etc.). Talk with the other parents in the group to think of reality discipline options this mom could use. Jot down some of the ideas you might use.

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3. Read John 21:15-22. Remember, Peter had failed Jesus by publicly denying him three times. Imagine how uncomfortable Peter might have been when Jesus asked him if he loved Him three times. Notice that Jesus lovingly and redemptively confronted Peter in front of his “family” – Jesus and the disciples. How do you think Jesus’ reinstating Peter among his “family” relates to Dr. Leman’s description of a Christian home as a place where children can fail, pick themselves up, and move forward? Share your views with the group.

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4. Talk with the other parents to describe circumstances or situations where it might be easier for you to allow your child to fail.

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5. Work with the group to brainstorm situations in which it might be hard for you to allow your child to fail. Take note of the ones you feel are the most difficult.

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6. Why do you think it is most difficult in the situations you listed above? Read the reasons below. Place a check by those reasons where you find it hard to allow your child to fail. Share with the group the one you find the hardest.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm afraid my child might be physically harmed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm afraid it might ruin my children's self esteem.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be embarrassed in front of others.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don't want my child to be embarrassed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want my children to be successful.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm afraid my child's failures mean I've failed as a parent.

\_\_\_\_\_ I think my duty as a parent is to protect my child from bad things.

7. Dr. Leman shared three reasons children misbehave. Think of a brief description of each of these types of children who misbehave. As you share yours with the group, take some notes for your own reference.

ATTENTION-GETTING CHILD -

POWER-SEEKING CHILD -

REVENGEFUL CHILD -

8. Read the examples of a parent talking about a child who misbehaves. Talk with the group about some possible consequences of allowing each child to fail.

“Tim just does not know how to play well with others. I’ve tried and tried to make him mind. I reward him in some way every time he plays without hitting.”

Consequences:

Consequences:

“I don’t like carrying Jamey to the store. She pitches a temper tantrum when she sees something she wants. I have to give it to her to make her quit screaming.”

“I’m so tired of cooking two different meals. My kids don’t like what my husband and I like, so I end up cooking their favorites, too. Kids have to eat though.”

Consequences:

Consequences:

“Michael just throws his clothes on the floor in his room. I went to put clothes in his room and found two more pairs of jeans. I guess I’ll have to wash again. He’ll need a pair for school tomorrow.”

9. Just as we need to give our children the right to fail, parents must give themselves the right to fail. Focus on Dr. Leman's principle that there are few, if any, warnings in reality discipline—the focus is on actions, not words! (Get attention by taking action.) List ways parents give warnings instead of taking action. Discuss some examples with the group.

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### ***PERSONAL APPLICATION***

10. During the coming week, list some of your own actions or attitudes that send the wrong messages to your children. Think specifically about how they know you mean business. For example, do they know you are in authority when you change your tone of voice, or raise your voice to a certain pitch or volume level after repeated warnings?

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11. What do you think has helped you the most so far in this study? Write one or two sentences sharing how some principle or example has helped you as a parent.

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12. Keep a log or journal during the coming week recording examples of how you are putting one or more reality discipline principles into practice. As you pray this week, thank God for continuing to show you how to be a good parent who can raise great kids.

Remember, providing a home that gives children and parents the right to fail may be “out of step” with the world. It may be hard for you to allow your children to fail instead of smoothing out all the bumps in the road, but your children need opportunities to make decisions for which they are responsible. Doesn't it make sense that these tests take place within a loving and safe environment? Hopefully, you better understand now why children misbehave and have gained some practical tips to help you when they do misbehave. Remember, “The ship is leaving.” One day your children will recognize that it's going in the right direction.

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



## Lesson 3

# BECOMING THE PARENT GOD WANTS YOU TO BE

*Maintaining Authority without Being an  
Authoritarian!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.  
--Proverbs 13:24*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Understand the distinction between the parents' role and the children's role.**

- A. God is THE supreme \_\_\_\_\_, but is not authoritarian. God created people with a free will. They can choose to obey or disobey Him.
- B. Parents are under the authority of God and are accountable for their choices. They guide their children with love and freedom. Children are a gift from God.
- C. Children are under the authority of their parents, but are accountable for their choices. Children are not to be puppets or imitators of their parents; instead, they are to be their students.

#### **II. Making rules, building relationships, and dealing with rebellion**

- A. Rules without \_\_\_\_\_ leads to rebellion (Josh McDowell).
- B. Relationship is the key. Rules are not the key.
- C. When children rebel, hold them accountable. \_\_\_\_\_, not words—"the ship is leaving."

#### **III. Super Parent Syndrome**

- A. Long on control—short on love and support
- B. I own my children.
- C. I am judge and jury.
- D. My children can't fail.



E. I'm the boss—What I say goes!

#### IV. Building self-discipline in kids through boundaries

- A. Children need guidance; they want you around even if they say they don't.
- B. Parents may have to make decisions that are not popular in a secular world. Let your children know why you're different. (Romans 12:2)
- C. Set up \_\_\_\_\_ and back off. Believe in your children.

### ***DISCUSSION GUIDE***

1. Take a moment to review the first section of the lesson outline, then discuss what you think your role is as a parent. Jot down your own thoughts as well as some of those shared by the group.

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2. Dr. Leman described two extreme parenting styles, the authoritarian and the permissive parent. God is not authoritarian – He is authoritative. Read the characteristics of each parenting style, then place a check mark by those that best describe your attitudes or practices. Share your comments or concerns with the group.

Authoritarian	Authoritative or Responsible	Permissive
a) Makes all decisions for the child.	a) Gives the child choices and formulates guidelines with him or her.	a) Is a slave to the child.
b) Uses reward and punishment to control the child's behavior.	b) Provides the child with decision-making opportunities.	b) Places priority on the child, not on his or her spouse.
c) Sees himself as better than the child.	c) Develops consistent, loving discipline.	c) Robs the child of self-respect and self-esteem by doing things for him that the child can do for himself.
d) Runs the home with an iron hand; grants little freedom to the child.	d) Holds the child accountable.	d) Provides the child with the "Disneyland" experience, making things as easy as possible.
	e) Lets reality be the teacher.	e) Invites rebellion with inconsistent parenting.
	f) Conveys respect, self-worth, and love to the child, and enhances the child's self-esteem.	

3. Place a circle by the points in #2 above that you want to practice. Choose one reality discipline approach (authoritative) you need to work on most. Remember, all parents can find room for improvement. Consider sharing reasons why some of the reality principles may still be difficult for you to follow.

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4. Discuss the following situation. Think of one way an authoritarian, an authoritative, and a permissive parent might respond to the teacher and to Amanda. Share your thoughts with the group.

*Amanda seems to enjoy the third grade, but her teacher called today to tell you that Amanda does not always turn in her homework. She said this happens about once a week.*

AUTHORITARIAN	
AUTHORITATIVE	
PERMISSIVE	

5. Josh McDowell says, "Rules without relationship lead to rebellion." Talk with the group about how you think authoritarian and permissive parents view rules. Perhaps you can relate personal experiences from how you were raised. Make some notes.

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6. If the relationship -- and not the rules -- is the key, do you think authoritative parents should have rules or should not have rules? Why or why not?

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7. Here are four myths or “super parent” statements that are commonly associated with “super moms” or “super dads.” Draw a line from the myth statement on the left to match the reality discipline statements on the right.

MYTH

REALITY

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (1) I own my children.            | a) Children learn they are accountable for their decisions by succeeding and making mistakes.                |
| (2) I am judge and jury.          | b) Children are a gift from God—they belong to Him.  |
| (3) My children can’t fail.       | c) Parents guide their children toward making wise decisions about the realities of life.                    |
| (4) I’m the boss—What I say goes! | d) Spend time guiding children to work out their differences instead of trying to find out “who started it.” |

8. Dr. Leman talked about spanking in this lesson, as well as in lesson 2. Recall the guidelines for spanking by sharing some of your notes with the group. As persons share, decide whether you agree or disagree and why.

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<b><i>PERSONAL APPLICATION</i></b>
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9. Open your Bible to Proverbs 13:24 and 29:15. Underline the words or phrases that might help you understand reality discipline better. Share your words/phrases with the group and discuss Dr. Leman’s clarification of how the shepherd uses the rod to guide the sheep—not to beat them into submission.

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10. Think of ways you are like the shepherd who cares for, guides, and loves his sheep.

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11. Think about ways your children are like sheep. Does your child wander off because he or she is busy looking down at the green grass and keeps moving to other patches? Is your child like the sheep that looks up and does not see the shepherd looking, so he or she bounces away to go explore beyond the pasture? Is your child like the sheep that looks the shepherd in the eye and still goes the opposite direction from the flock? Thank God for being our model of the “good shepherd.” Continue to ask Him to guide you as you try to guide and shepherd your children.
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Remember, reality discipline is the best system to use to avoid inconsistent meandering between authoritarianism and permissiveness. By now you understand that parents don’t really *make* their children mind, they *guide* their children toward making wise decisions about the realities of life. While guiding your children, believe in them as they make more wise decisions than unwise ones. This is the process through which they are learning to be accountable and responsible.

*The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.*  
--Proverbs 29:15



## Lesson 4



# NINE WAYS TO BECOME YOUR TEENAGER'S BEST FRIEND

*How to Gain Your Teenager's Love and  
Respect and Keep It Forever!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.  
--Proverbs 19:18*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Schedule home games.**

Make your home the center of activity.

#### **II. Listen to your teenagers when they are ready to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. Say, "Tell me more about that."
- B. Teens may want to talk at the weirdest hours.

#### **III. Talk to your teens about your \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. Builds intimacy and relationship
- B. Gives opportunity to share your faith
- C. Allows storytelling

#### **IV. Spend time with your teenagers.**

- A. Tell them positive things.
- B. Affirm their wise decisions.

#### **V. Expect the best of your teens. . . but don't take any "guff"!**

- A. Recognize the special relationships between mother-son and father-daughter.



- B. Recognize the different ways that affirming parents or abusive parents will likely impact a child's choice of a mate.

**VI. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ the road of life for your teenagers.**

**VII. Love and respect your mate.**

Model the behavior you want your children to practice when they are married and have children of their own.

**VIII. Never beat or bully your teenager into submission.**

- A. Take time—don't overdo it.
- B. The shepherd's rod is for \_\_\_\_\_ the sheep.

**IX. Pray for your teenagers and their future spouses daily.**

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Think about what a sign might say that you would hang in your home. Would it look like the “Home, Sweet Home” signs you used to see? Write words or phrases in the frame below to share your perception of your home with teenagers or what you anticipate your home to be like when your children become teenagers. You may choose to draw a design summarizing your perception. Have fun and consider sharing your sign with the group.

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2. Look at the lesson title. Think about the three styles of disciplinarians we studied in the previous lesson. Do you think authoritarian parents want to be friends with their teens? What about permissive parents? Why or why not? Look at the characteristics on page 12 of your workbook to refresh your memory. Jot down a few of your reasons to share with the group.

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3. Many parents of teenagers laugh about having home activities with their teens. They find it hard to get all family members at the dinner table at the same time. Brainstorm ways this family might schedule home activities. Share at least one of your ideas with the group and take notes of others you might use with your teens.

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4. Many parents think they are listening to their teens when they are actually telling them to stop talking. Parents don't mean to send that message, but sometimes they do. Write what you think may be the message as teenagers perceive it under the "They hear" column. For example, you may say, "It's 1 AM—this better be good!" They may hear, "There are times when I can't talk to my parents." Share your ideas.

<i>You say...</i>	<i>They hear...</i>
Oh, it's not that bad . . .	
Don't worry about that—it happens to everybody.	
Don't say that about yourself. You're a great . . .	
I can't believe you said that!	
You know you're not supposed to call me at my office. What's wrong?	

5. Write parent statements for the examples in number 4 that you think would encourage teenagers to talk.

Doesn't want to ride the school bus –

Failed the driver exam –

Cheated on a test –

Doesn't want to share a bedroom—

Child got an A on a project—

6. Dr. Leman encourages parents to be approachable and “walk slowly.” Share your video notes of the four suggestions of how to be approachable by being real with your teenagers. Fill in the acrostic with the suggestions.

**R -**

**E -**

**A -**

**L -**

7. Dr. Leman encourages parents to talk about their own imperfections with their children, especially their teenagers. He reminds us that our being able to become Christians begins first with acknowledging our imperfection—our sin. Parents should take the opportunity to share their faith with their teenagers. Share with the group some of your experiences of sharing your faith with your children. Make some notes.

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8. Read the parable of The Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32. How do you think this parable supports Dr. Leman's advice to avoid “snowplowing” the road of life for your teenagers?

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9. Consider the following modern-day prodigal daughter story. *Jeanie is a senior in high school who just turned 18. She has a younger brother, Matthew, who is a sophomore. Jeanie and Matthew's grandparents left them a trust when they died. The grandchildren could not touch the trust until they were 18. The grandparents' wish was to help with college tuition. Jeanie has a better idea. She wants to get out of the house. She's tired of having to clean her room, help with other household chores, and be home at “a reasonable time.” She doesn't want to go to college; she just wants to dabble in her music. Matthew was shocked that Jeanie might take the trust fund and leave home. Jeanie thinks her parents want her to be like Matthew—he always does his homework, is never late, and always has a clean room. Jeanie thinks he makes her look bad! If you were Jeanie's mother or father, how would you handle this situation? Include ideas on how you think the story might end. Share your solutions.*

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## ***PERSONAL APPLICATION***

10. Review the nine ways you can be your teenager's best friend. You may have thought of other suggestions you have found helpful. List your additional suggestions. Look at your list again. Do your suggestions support reality discipline principles? Share your list with the group or work on the list during the week.
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11. Plan a family night during this next week. During your family time, try to set up a specific time of the day and week that will be designated as family time. Encourage the entire family to think of what types of activities they might enjoy together. Remember, family time does not and should not always involve spending a lot of money or going out. You might share how you had to develop a sign during this study and invite family members to help design a sign representing their home. You may develop one sign or let each member come up with his or her own ideas. If you share custody of your children, you still can have family activities when your children are with you. Jot down your ideas for your first family time.
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Remember, we need to believe in our teenagers and pray for them daily. Celebrate their wise decisions and be patient like the loving father in the parable as they make some unwise decisions. Someone said the older your children get, the more costly their mistakes. Recognize the truth of the proverb, "*Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction*" (Proverbs 19:18). It is never too late to begin disciplining your children. Use Dr. Leman's nine ways to be your child's best friend to help make sure they're on the ship. Remember, the "ship" is leaving. Get your children on board now.

*Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.*  
--Proverbs 29:17





## Lesson 5

# THE ABC'S OF SELF-IMAGE

*Helping Kids Feel Good about Themselves for All the Right Reasons!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*--Romans 5:8*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

- I. ACCEPT your children for who they \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - A. Love your children for who they are, not for what they do.
  - B. Parents must be encouragers instead of "flaw-pickers."
- II. Make sure your children BELONG to the family.**
  - A. Make home a place where kids \_\_\_\_\_, not a hotel where they bunk.
  - B. Avoid the activity trap. Get your kids out of some activities.
  - C. Expect kids to give back to the family.
- III. Help kids develop COMPETENCE.**
  - A. Children must feel like they are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. Watch the critical eye.
  - C. Encourage in all ways.

### **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

1. How do you think accepting children for who they are lays a foundation for self-esteem through Jesus Christ?

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2. Think of people who accept you for who you are, not for what you do. What do they say or do that makes you feel accepted? Share a personal example with the class.

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3. Think about the things you say that make your children feel accepted. Most of us have fallen into the trap of praising our children for their performances, or the *external* things we can see. Dr. Leman advises parents to focus on *encouraging* their children rather than simply praising them. He believes that encouragement focuses on the *internal* person. We can encourage their effort, improvement, sense of responsibility, persistence, or appreciation for progress. Complete the Encourage or Praise evaluation below. Check how frequently you might make the following type of statements.

<b>ENCOURAGE</b> (Focus on the Internal Person)	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. You looked as if you were having a great time in the game today.				
2. I'm sure you can handle it.				
3. How thoughtful of you—the kitchen looks great.				
4. It looks as if that extra work really paid off for you—congratulations.				
5. I'm glad to see you enjoy learning.				
<b>PRAISE</b> (Focus on the External Person)				
6. You made Jesus very happy.				
7. I am so proud of you. You did so well in the game tonight.				
8. You ate all your dinner. What a good girl. Now you can have dessert.				
9. Three A's. That makes me so happy. Next time, let's get that B up to an A.				
10. Your behavior was great at the scout meeting tonight. Here's five dollars to show you how much it meant to me.				

4. Imagine you are William. Read his father's comments aloud. *"William insists on wearing those big, baggy pants. I can't stand them! He looks so sloppy! I told my son he'd better not wear those sloppy things if he comes to my office. I went to William's high school last week for an honor's program and saw lots of other teenagers wearing them. I know how their parents felt. I was really proud of*

*William's science award though. He is smart boy."* Write down what you think William heard. Add other opinions as you discuss the situation with the group.

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5. Imagine you are William's father. What could you say or do to encourage William by focusing on his internal instead of external characteristics?

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6. *Fran's mother teaches gymnastics and let Fran start training when she was a preschooler. The other students wonder why Fran's mother is so hard on her. Fran told her father she wants to quit taking gymnastics. It embarrasses her when her mother tells her she is clumsy in front of the other children. Fran's mom was surprised when her third grade teacher called to say that Fran was eligible to represent the third grade in the district spelling bee, but she refused to take part.* How do you think Fran's mom is helping or hurting her daughter's self-image? List your ideas below. Discuss your ideas with the group.

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7. What could Fran's mother do or stop doing to enhance Fran's self-image? Share one idea with the group.

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8. If you were to give your children a ribbon that reminds them of how you accept them just as they are, what would it say? Write your ideas below and share them with the other parents.

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9. Review the suggestions Dr. Leman gave for helping children feel like they belong to the family. Jot down some practical ways you can put these suggestions into practice in your home. Share your favorite idea with the group.

Make home a place where kids belong, not a hotel where they bunk. - \_\_\_\_\_

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Avoid the activity trap. Get your kids out of some activities. - \_\_\_\_\_

Expect kids to give back to the family. - \_\_\_\_\_

### ***PERSONAL APPLICATION***

10. You may have noticed how Dr. Leman has preferred to use the word *encourage* rather than *praise*. Don't get side tracked over which word you use—just remember the principles of acceptance, belonging, and competence. Think about the discussions today. What concerns you most about helping your children feel good about themselves? Share your concern as a prayer request with the group.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Last week you thought of times, places, and activities to begin or strengthen a family time. Use your family time this week to help your children feel that they belong to the family by helping make family decisions. Consider beginning now to plan next year's family vacation. You may want to set some limits such as an amount for the entire vacation budget. Consider setting some ground rules, such as how everyone's ideas will be listed and considered. Model accepting behavior by actively listening to each idea and do not allow others to treat them as odd or ridiculous.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Jack Canfield is a motivational speaker who has shared many of his stories in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. He shared the story of a father who used Post-It notes to remind his daughter of the many ways he appreciated her. One day the father was surprised to find over 250 notes stuck onto the back of the daughter's bedroom door. Why do you think the daughter kept so many of the notes? What are some tangible ways you can give your children reminders of how special each one is? Write your responses below. Write your children an encouragement note this week.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Dr. Leman shared his ABC's for helping kids feel good about themselves for all the right reasons. You have probably thought of others you would add. Jot down a few

and continue to add to the list as you think of them. If you do not have time to share your list with the group, share your ideas with your prayer partner this week.

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Remember, the world tends to criticize children for the things they do wrong or the things they didn't do. You can create a loving, accepting environment in which children can learn to feel good about themselves for who they are. As they learn to accept and appreciate themselves, they will be more apt to accept and love others.

*So he answered and said " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "*  
*--Luke 10:27*



## Lesson 6



# WHEN TO LET THE LITTLE BUZZARDS TUMBLE

*Turning Everyday Hassles into Everyday  
Successes!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

*--Ephesians 6:1-4*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Strategies for everyday hassles**

- A. Dinnertime
- B. Curfew
- C. Potty training
- D. Chores
- E. Allowance
- F. Clean room or pick up toys

#### **II. Principles of Family Values**

- A. Make tough decisions.
- B. Get kids out of some activities.
- C. Raise your own children.
- D. Realize that people are more important than \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. Discipline your children with love.



- F. Take your children to your place of \_\_\_\_\_.
- G. Have dinner together as a family.
- H. Realize your kids don't necessarily \_\_\_\_\_ what you didn't have as a child.
- I. Turn off your \_\_\_\_\_—it's what you don't see that should concern you.
1. kids respecting adults
  2. adults acting like adults
  3. fathers depicted as loving, giving, caring
  4. people who pray and worship God
  5. programs that emphasize giving, not getting
  6. programs that show the reality and the consequences of casual sex
- J. Walk it! Don't just talk it!
- K. You can't run your life on your feelings.

<b><i>DISCUSSION GUIDE</i></b>
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1. Look back at your notes for the first outline point, Strategies for Everyday Hassles. Discuss Dr. Leman's suggestions with the group. Jot your ideas below.

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2. You may not have children old enough to deal with curfew issues yet, but some day you will. What did Dr. Leman stress about setting a time for curfew? How do you feel about setting or not setting a definite time? What are some factors to consider?

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3. What did you find most helpful from Dr. Leman's suggestions for dealing with children who do not want to do their chores or pick up their toys? Share your comments with the group and write them below.

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4. Consider the following everyday hassles. Based on what you have learned during this study, how would you “pull the rug out” to enforce reality discipline? Fill in your answers in the chart below.

Everyday Hassle	Reality Discipline Response
Quit telling me what to do—you’re not my boss.	
Make Sherry leave me alone.	
Why can’t I go to the movies with a boy? I’m 13 years old.	

5. Suppose your first grade daughter, Ella, falls and uses the Lord’s name in vain. Ella’s older siblings laugh and leave the room. What would you say or do based on today’s video lesson?

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6. Decide which of the following family values are most important to you by ranking them in order of importance with 1 being most important and 11 least important.

_____ Make tough decisions.	_____ Take your children to your place of worship.
_____ Get kids out of some activities.	_____ Have dinner together as a family.
_____ Raise your own children.	_____ Realize your kids don’t necessarily need what you didn’t have.
_____ Realize people are more important than things.	_____ Turn off your television—it’s what you don’t see that should concern you.
_____ Discipline your children with love.	_____ Walk it! Don’t just talk it!
	_____ You can’t run your life on your feelings.

7. Perhaps you identified some family values you find hard, if not impossible, to practice. For example, single parents may not be able to give up a job outside the home. So, brainstorm ways you can do your best to uphold important family values when the ideal may not be possible.

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8. Review Dr. Leman's concerns about what he does not see on television. We know that children will watch some television, so suggest some television shows that you think are appropriate and do encourage family values. Discuss them with the group.

- 1) kids respecting adults
  - 2) adults acting like adults
  - 3) fathers depicted as loving, giving, caring
  - 4) people who pray and worship God
  - 5) programs that emphasize giving, not getting
  - 6) programs that show the reality and the consequences of casual sex

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9. Parents cannot be nor should be with their children 24 hours a day. Children will see and hear things on television and in other forms of media that are contrary to your family's values and beliefs. Discuss how parents can use these times as "teachable moments" or opportunities to reinforce their own Christian values.

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***PERSONAL APPLICATION***

10. Lesson 1 talked about your possible strengths and weaknesses as a parent. What will you do with what you have learned? What insights have been most helpful to you? Your helpful ideas might be something you do or maybe something you stop doing.

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11. Consider reading and signing the prayer below to commit to practice what you have learned during this study. If you have been meeting regularly with your prayer partner, you may consider continuing that relationship as you encourage one another in parenting.

### **My Prayer of Commitment**

Thank you for showing me my imperfection;  
First, as your child in need of a Savior;  
Second, as a parent who wants to do your will.  
Acknowledging my imperfection reminds me of my dependence on you.  
Help me be the parent you have called me to be.  
Help me share my faith with my children.  
Help me see them as individuals, as your unique creations.  
Help me see their mistakes as rungs in life's ladder of learning.  
Help me see and encourage their inner qualities that build  
character.  
Help me to love my children unconditionally.  
Help me to discipline them in love.  
Continue to give me the courage to discipline my children;  
Especially when I am out of step with the world.  
"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Remember, you DO make a difference in the lives of your children! You can't change the past, but you can begin steering the "ship" in the right direction. It is never too late to start becoming the parent God wants you to be. You can't be a perfect parent, but you can be a good parent and raise great children.

Use the foundational principles you have learned in these six lessons as you guide your child down life's road. Modify or adapt them to fit your own personality. Just remember to act and to act quickly! Remember, the ultimate goal of reality discipline is to help your child be able to deal in practical ways with the reality of the authority of God, established in and through Jesus Christ. Seek God's guidance regularly as you pray and study God's Word to seek His will for your life as you guide your children. They are God's gifts to you!

*He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.*  
--Proverbs 10:17

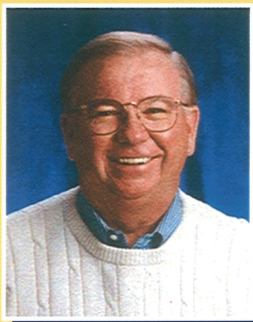
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Dr. Leman is a frequent guest on FOCUS ON THE FAMILY, Moody Network's MID-DAY CONNECTION and OPEN LINE, as well as numerous radio and television appearances on OPRAH, LIVE WITH REGIS AND KATHIE LEE, CBS' THE EARLY SHOW, TODAY, THE 700 CLUB, and THE VIEW WITH BARBARA WALTERS. Dr. Leman also served as a consulting family psychologist to ABC's GOOD MORNING AMERICA for several years.

Dr. Leman is the founder and president of "Couples of Promise," an organization committed to helping couples remain happily married. He is currently the host of the new television program REALFAMILIES.COM and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio program, PARENT TALK.



Dr. Leman's 21 books include the following bestsellers: *The Birth Order Book*, *What A Difference A Daddy Makes*, *Sex Begins In The Kitchen*, *The Six Stress Points In A Woman's Life*, *Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours*, *Keeping Your Family Together When The World Is Falling Apart*, *Becoming The Parent God Wants You To Be*, *Bringing Up Kids Without Tearing Them Down*, *Women Who Try Too Hard*, *When Your Best Is Not Good Enough*, *Becoming a Couple of Promise* and *The New Birth Order Book*.

Dr. Leman is affiliated with the American Psychological Association, American Federation of Radio and Television Artists, National Register of Health Services Providers in Psychology, and the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology. He received his Bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Arizona, where he later earned his Master's Degree and Doctorate. He and his wife, Sande, live in Tucson, with their five children.



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