

We had a great Parenting Class on Sunday! It's certainly beginning to take on it's name of "NOT one size fits all" as we discover parenting different ages and different temperaments.

This week's topic was "How to Be A Courageous Parent" and we heard about how sometimes the concept of just "loving your children enough" isn't enough. There is a healthy balance of discipline and love that go hand-in-hand in raising children. We learned that love means making the difficult choice of setting boundaries and limits for your children.

At the bottom of this e-mail I have the notes from the workbook that our video discussed as the main points for this week's lesson.

In class we discussed some real-life things that are working and those that aren't. We talked about the concept of how difficult it is to raise kids in a society that promotes "if you just love them enough" and how discipline (not punishment) is a difficult concept. We talked about setting different parameters for different ages and our expectation levels for our youngest children verses as our children hit early teens to high school ages how those expectations change and how discipline has to grow and change.

In the video, Dr. Leman used the phrase "you have to 'get behind your child's eyes' and see things like they see them." His example was when his 6-year-old daughter was afraid of a spider in her bed and he became frustrated that she was out of bed again. She hit him with this question "daddy, what would you do if there was a spider in your bed?" We were challenged to take time to see the world through our children's eyes and step back before answering or being so quick to judge.

Our last discussion point was what techniques are working or not working in your home?

Some things that were shared included:

- Letting your child come up with 3 ideas when they have done something wrong and then you decide which of the three will be selected as the discipline for the incident.
- Focusing on time for ourselves, as parents, so that we don't reach a "boiling point" so quickly and are able to make positive decisions.
- Chores as a way to help focus on being part of the family until the child's focus on the poor choices is turned into making better choices.
- Giving the child time to sit and think about the choices that were made. (timeout)
- Different discipline for different ages. Figure out what most affects each child and stick with it.

Those were our discussions in the classroom. The video made several concrete points. A few of those highlights were:

1. Obedience: the cornerstone of good parenting.
 - You don't have to be a great parent. You can be a GOOD parent and have a great kid.
 - Love and discipline go hand-in-hand.

2. Parenting Myths
 - Just love them enough. Reality: Discipline is part of loving them.
 - I just want my kids to be happy. Reality: Life has periods of unhappiness. Children need to learn from them.

3. Biblical Standards for Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior: Ephesians 6:1-4 was our main scripture this week. It says: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. *"Honor your father and mother"— this is the first commandment with a promise: 'so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'* And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

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

In closing, Dr. Leman shares this advice ... "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."

Thank you for participating each week and I look forward to next week's lesson... "Why kid's misbehave!" If you know of someone who would like to be on these e-mails just send me their address. Replying to this e-mail will not reply to the group.

Karen