

PARENTING IS A MINISTRY SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE



Eleven-Week Group Study

Volumes 1–4

For use with complete workbook series and videos

Craig Caster

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

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Parenting Is a Ministry Series *Leader's Guide* by Craig Caster
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Titles in the Parenting Is a Ministry Series

Transformational Parenting (volume 1)
Loving Communication (volume 2)
Train Up Your Children (volume 3)
Biblical Discipline (volume 4)

Other Workbooks by Family Discipleship Ministries

Christian Foundational Truths: A Strong Foundation for a Disciple by Craig Caster
Marriage Is a Ministry series by Craig Caster
Understanding Teens by Craig Caster

All FDM.world workbooks are recommended for individual study, for small groups, as discipleship tools, and in counseling.

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Letter of Encouragement

Dear Leader,

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

This series reveals biblical truths about parenting principles, brings clarity to God's will and purpose for parenting *His* children, and provides a clear plan to raise children to maturity.

I encourage you to be in prayer daily, seeking how you can help parents understand these truths. Our adversary, Satan, hates the family and is doing everything he can to destroy it, so being prayed up and remembering you are in a spiritual battle are important. Know that God created the family. His Word and grace are sufficient to help believers who yield and ask for His help.

Your Fellow Servant,

Pastor Craig Caster

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.
(1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Introduction

Thank you for responding to the call of making disciples (Matthew 28:19) by leading this parenting group study. Pastor Craig Caster's powerful, no-nonsense, inspiring message has helped thousands of men and women across the globe know God's will for them in fulfilling their roles as parents. The complete Parenting Is a Ministry series, which includes four workbooks, four brief videos, and this leader's guide, benefits traditional families, blended families, single-parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren, and foster families.

Most of the teaching is done through the workbook and personal study, but your part is important. When you follow this leader's guide, you will bring understanding to those who are struggling and help them to do what God has called them to do as parents—no matter how long they have been walking apart from God's will.

Small groups come in different shapes and sizes. A church small group is primarily for reaching people within your own body or existing Sunday school classes. A neighborhood small group could include neighbors, friends, family members, your child's friends' parents, or your child's teammates' parents. Other select small groups may be a women's or men's small group, a discipleship group, or a home Bible study. This series can also be used for one-on-one discipleship with someone God has providentially put in your life. This leader's guide will help you in these settings and will prove beneficial for any discipler.

Since this course is designed for parents (not couples), you may have single parents in your group. Be sensitive to this fact, and do not refer to the parents as couples. While many may be couples, refer to them as parents or as mothers and fathers. If you have a single parent's group at your church, encourage them to attend for additional support.

God exhorts you as a leader to know *and apply* God's principles for parenting in your own home before you can disciple someone else (1Timothy 3:5). You must be working out these truths so your testimony represents what you are teaching. However, do not wait until you are perfect and flawless (which is impossible). If you have not yet completed the workbook series and implemented God's principles in your own home, we suggest you do this before trying to lead a class.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for improvement, please email us at info@FDM.world. We consider your suggestions for continual improvement in our endeavor to assist the body of Christ.

Preparing to Lead

Promote your class approximately four to six weeks in advance. If your group is derived from your church, we suggest that you advertise the class in your weekly bulletin, on flyers, on your church website, via social media, and by talking to others about it. If possible, have your pastor exhort the congregation to invest in being disciplined in parenting. Be prepared to take sign-ups whenever possible. All promotional resources are available online at FDM.world. Or to receive a promotional package via email, contact info@FDM.world.

The class can be hosted in your church or in a home (recommended). The intimate setting of a home helps people relax and communicate more openly. It can be the home of someone the Lord has called simply to host the class while you lead it or the home of someone in your group.

Make sure you have considered childcare. You are not required to provide childcare, but the lack of childcare may prevent some from participating. You may need consider babysitting and transportation for some parents to be able to attend the class.

You may consider serving some refreshments before class, during a break, or after the class. Hospitality will promote unity and fellowship within the group. The parents can even take turns bringing treats to spread the responsibility.

Make sure you have been practicing the principles you are about to share with your class to be a living example of the life He has taught us to live. The Enemy will look for any opportunity to disrupt what God wants to do through you, so make sure you are diligent in the things the Lord has called you to do personally. As a leader, it is crucial that you are abiding in Christ, spending time daily in the Word and prayer. You are an example. Make sure your own home and your relationship with your spouse and family are in order before God. Be ready for the battles that will come, and be prayed up daily as a family.

Getting Started

Once you have planned the class schedule for eleven weeks, determined the location and childcare needs of the participants, and decided how you wish to handle refreshments, you are ready to get started on the material. Each workbook (volume) has an accompanying video available on our website (FDM.world) under the *Parenting* tab. Preview each video prior to the class. Be sure to have all materials for your class, including the electronics necessary to watch the videos. Keep this leader's guide with you while preparing for or engaged in discipling others. And have your own completed workbook with you for reference when answering questions during class.

Each parent should have their own workbook for their personal study. If a couple has only one copy of the series, one parent may not engage as desired. Most of the homework should first be completed individually and then as a couple to discuss and implement what they have learned. Be clear with this direction while promoting the class.

Make sure the seating arrangements provide everyone the best opportunity to see so the full effect of the message is communicated. This will also help the disciples remain attentive.

Stay on schedule. You may find it helpful to position a clock or watch in your clear view to keep the class running on time.

Goals and Responsibilities

The goal of the Parenting Is a Ministry series is to teach and encourage men and women to be the godly parents God designed them to be. The group leader provides a safe environment for individuals and couples to learn and grow stronger while honoring God in their homes. The following goals and responsibilities assist in this process.

During this workbook and group study, parents will learn the following:

- God's plan for parenting
- God's priorities for parents and the importance of unity in the marriage
- To love each child uniquely
- To experience God's power in the home
- To communicate with children effectively
- God's plan for managing the home, including the roles of the mother and father
- God's plan for discipling and disciplining children
- How to have a unified, godly home
- Four tools of training
- To incorporate changes and start over as needed

The leader's responsibilities are as follows:

- Oversee and conduct eleven weekly parenting discipleship classes.
- Begin and end each class with prayer.
- Have a complete understanding of the workbook, the leader's guide, and the videos prior to each session of the small group study.
- Assist participants with application of the principles learned in the material.
- Lead discussions and encourage participation in both the group and individual studies.
- Begin and end the class on time, and stay on schedule.
- Keep the conversation on track.
- Encourage the introverts and monitor the extroverts.
- Refer participants to pastoral counsel if necessary. Do not counsel without pastoral permission and oversight.

The leader should not do the following:

- Counsel participants and solve problems outside the scope of this material (unless pastor has approved).
- Dominate class time discussing his own family.
- Give his personal opinion or advice.
- Discuss any information from participants in the class with others outside the class.
- Use class time to promote or teach personal views or debate the views of other participants.
- Deviate from the materials and the teachings contained in the series.

Missed Class Contingency Plan

In case of a true emergency, as determined by the small group leader, the participants shall complete the workbook lessons (homework), view the video missed (available online), and contact the leader for questions. The leader should make sure participants do not abuse this contingency plan by having a frank discussion with parents who miss more than one class.

Master Plan

Be sure to review this leader's guide thoroughly before you begin. This guide will cover eleven weeks of study, each with four or five lessons per week from the workbooks. Each workbook volume has ten to fifteen lessons, which equals one to three weeks of group study. The participants should do the homework of five lessons each week between meetings. These are designed to be done each day, but they can be combined as needed based on time commitments.

Series Materials

Parenting Is a Ministry series workbooks (all four volumes)
 Four videos at FDM.world (under the *Parenting* tab)
 Leader's guide
 Timer
 Bible
 Extra pens and pencils for participants

All materials are available online in downloadable format. Videos can be streamed directly from the website during group meetings. For those who prefer printed workbooks (recommended), order them online prior to the first meeting. Bring your Bible for reference and encourage the participants to do the same.

Suggested Schedule

To get the most out of the group's time together, meet for eleven consecutive weeks. Schedule the class to avoid holidays and vacation times, and include a one-week break if necessary. Provide a schedule for the participants during the first meeting so they know what to expect each week. See the details for each meeting on the next page.

Weekly Meetings

Each meeting will take approximately sixty to ninety minutes. Provide additional time if you wish to have refreshments or do prayer requests. Each meeting includes five sections. Do each one in order as you lead the class. Weeks 1, 3, 6, and 8 have videos. Reduce the Workbook/Appendix Review time to finish in ninety minutes. Determine *in advance* how much time to spend on each lesson and section. Note the appropriate time to move to the next section, and keep track of time with a timer or watch.

- **Leader Prep** provides key points for your consideration as you *prepare* to lead the class.
- **Workbook Review** examines the *previous week's homework*, except week 1, which introduces the discipleship process. (30–40 minutes)
- **Appendix Review** examines the *previous week's appendices*. (10–20 minutes)
- **Video and Group Questions** provides material for discussion after watching the video. Four weeks have videos of approximately twenty-five minutes each. (0–40 minutes)
- **Final Words** provides encouragement and introduces the new homework. (10 minutes)

Detailed Weekly Plan

Week 1

Transformational Parenting (part 1)
 Review course plan
 Watch **volume 1 video** (26 minutes)
 Discuss video 1 questions
 Assign volume 1, lessons 1–5

Week 2

Transformational Parenting (part 2)
 Review volume 1, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices A, B, T
 No video
 Assign volume 1, lessons 6–10

Week 3

Loving Communication (part 1)
 Review volume 1, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices B, C, D, T
 Watch **volume 2 video** (21 minutes)
 Discuss video 2 questions
 Assign volume 2, lessons 1–5

Week 4

Loving Communication (part 2)
 Review volume 2, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices as needed
 No video
 Assign volume 2, lessons 6–10

Week 5

Loving Communication (part 3)
 Review volume 2, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices E, T
 No video
 Assign volume 2, lessons 11–15

Week 6

Train Up Your Children (part 1)
 Review volume 2, lessons 11–15
 Review appendices E, F, G, H, T
 Watch **volume 3 video** (21 minutes)
 Discuss video 3 questions
 Assign volume 3, lessons 1–5

Week 7

Train Up Your Children (part 2)
 Review volume 3, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices I, J, T
 No video
 Assign volume 3, lessons 6–10

Week 8

Biblical Discipline (part 1)
 Review volume 3, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices D, K, L, T
 Watch **volume 4 video** (28 minutes)
 Discuss video 4 questions
 Assign volume 4, lessons 1–5

Week 9

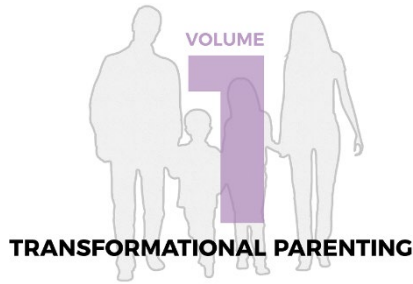
Biblical Discipline (part 2)
 Review volume 4, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices as needed
 No video
 Assign volume 4, lessons 6–10

Week 10

Biblical Discipline (part 3)
 Review volume 4, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices M, N, O, P, Q, R, T
 No video
 Assign volume 4, lessons 11–14

Week 11

Follow-up
 Review volume 4, lessons 11–14
 Review appendices F, G, S, T
 No video
 No assignments
 Discussion and reflections



Group Week 1

Transformational Parenting, Volume 1

Part 1: God's Purposes for Parenting

Leader Prep

This is it! Welcome to your first class. You will do great. Make sure you read and understand this week's material prior to leading. Preview the video and have it cued up. Follow the plan established in this leader's guide. It works!

Be sensitive to the fact that most people are private about what goes on inside their homes. Because parenting can be a serious or even emotionally charged subject, be sensitive to times when you need to interject light humor. Whenever possible, alleviate potential tension with encouraging statements like these:

This Week's Plan

- Review course plan
- Watch volume 1 video (26 minutes)
- Discuss video 1 questions
- Assign volume 1, lessons 1-5

- Let's encourage one another here, not discourage or belittle others.
- We are all here to learn.
- God has a big job on His hands, but He is faithful.
- God did not make a mistake when He gave us our children.
- God knows what He is doing. We must trust Him to tell us.
- It's okay that you didn't know this before. God knows you are ready to receive it now.
- We have a powerful God. He can redeem our failures and mistakes.
- God has given our children free will. Some may choose to go their own way.
- We must be obedient to do our part. God will be faithful to do His part.

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

Be in prayer for those you are discipling. As the Lord begins the process of transformation in their lives, the Enemy will attempt to disrupt this process. Pray that they will hear the Lord speak to them, they will abide in Him, and they will apply His Word to their lives. Pray that God would grant each of them the strength and courage to repent of their old ways that were contrary to His Word and to embrace His Word for their families.

Remember that you are called to lead the group. You may not be a counselor, pastor, Bible scholar, or God-appointed problem solver. You are a disciple making other disciples.

Workbook Review

Since this is the first group meeting, there is nothing to review from the workbook. Instead, we will get to know one another and introduce the discipleship process.

Introduction

- Welcome the group and open in prayer. Thank them for coming and congratulate them on making this important commitment to their children.
- Introduce yourself and your wife. Mention the names and ages of your children. Share how you came to know this material and how it has blessed your family.
- Share the goals of the Parenting Is a Ministry class (see *Goals and Responsibilities*), a brief introduction of Pastor Craig Caster (see *About the Author*) and the ministry of FDM (see *About FDM*), the format that will be followed each week (see *Master Plan*), and the commitment that is required from the disciples to complete the course (see below).
- Explain that the group will meet for eleven sessions, including this first class. It is essential that disciples attend all classes. If there is a possibility that they will not be able to finish the course, encourage them to postpone for a more convenient time. Should they miss a class unexpectedly, the material is available online.
- Announce the dates and locations for all meetings. Provide them a printed schedule.
- Each disciple should have all four Parenting Is a Ministry workbooks for their personal study. (Note that each volume is available as a free download at FDM.world if anyone is unable to purchase the printed workbooks.) Encourage both fathers and mothers that they must each commit to doing their *own workbook* and then discuss the material as a couple. Do all sections, including Self-Examinations and Dig Deeper. These apply to everyone.
- Each week has five lessons of homework. Encourage participants to complete each lesson, one per day if possible, to be prepared for the next class and get the most out of the material.
- Encourage the disciples to pay special attention to the Scriptures in the workbook, which are the basis for the parenting principles emphasized in the lessons.
- Remind the parents that everything discussed in the class is confidential. They are not to share anything they hear in class, give their opinions, or counsel other parents in response to the issues that will be discussed. (In addition, if problems arise between parents, do not attempt to handle the situation yourself unless you have your pastor's permission. Refer them to the pastor for counsel.)
- Encourage the parents to be committed to this opportunity that God has provided for them to be disciplined in parenting.
- Encourage parents to participate in discussions, get to know other parents, and pray for the other families in the class.

Getting to Know One Another

- Ask parents to introduce themselves, share their family structure (traditional or blended family, single parent, grandparent, or foster parent), how long they have been married (if

married), and give the names and ages of their children. If the class is large, these introductions can be excluded or done in smaller groups.

- Ask parents to share why they are attending the class and what they hope to gain. If the class is large, select a few individuals to share to the whole group and have everyone share in smaller groups. (Firmly, yet gently, hold each person to a one- to two-minute limit. You may want to use a timer or phone app to be consistent with each participant.)
- Pass out 3 x 5 cards. Ask parents to write their names and the names and ages of their children. Collect the cards. Upon leaving the class, each couple or single parent will take a card (make sure they do not get their own card) and commit to pray for that family for the duration of the class.

Appendix Review

Since this is the first group meeting, there is nothing to review from the appendices. This section will begin next time.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 1 (26 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group. You may choose to discuss them as a whole group or break into smaller groups or tables as appropriate. Some answers from the video are included after the questions. Others will vary and are asked to get the parents thinking about how the material applies to their families.

1. Why are we here as parents to our children?
We are here to do God's will and tend to our children according to God's Word, not what we think is best.
2. What happens when the husband and wife do not have the same vision for their family?
They go astray. Problems arise. Answers will vary.
3. Why is the marriage a priority in the home?
Struggling marriages affect the kids and the church body.
4. How does a parent get transformed?
God uses our children's behavior to show us our own sin.
5. Who is this study for?
All parents. Although God made men to be caretakers, these principles apply to single moms. Blended families comprise more than 40 percent of families and need these principles too. Even grandparents raising grandkids and foster parents need to understand God's plan for parenting.
6. How do you feel at the beginning of this study, and what do you hope to learn?
7. After listening to the first video, what do you think you are most struggling with in your parenting right now?

If you have time, ask your own questions or let them pose questions that relate to the material.

Final Words

As a leader, you set the tone for this study. Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- This week you begin your journey to a healthier and stronger family. You will learn the importance of having a strong foundation based on God's Word and your relationship with Him. That foundation is critical to everything else you will learn in this series.
- You may not be used to reading books cover to cover, but it is imperative for this course that you do not miss anything. If you haven't already opened volume 1, do so now. Notice the *Preface*, *Introduction*, and *Prologue*. Those are included to prepare you for the lessons ahead. Don't skip them.
- The first workbook has ten lessons, so this will take us two weeks to complete. We will do the first five this week. I encourage you to do one lesson each day. Try to stay on schedule to complete all five lessons. If you get behind, set aside time to finish the material before we meet next week.
- Be sure to complete all appendices referenced in the material. They are designed to deepen your understanding. It is okay to skip an appendix that does not pertain to you. However, it is recommended that both parents at least review the material in the appendices to discuss during your review time together.
- Pray before you begin, asking God to open your heart to what He wants to teach you through these truths, the faith to trust Him, and the grace to work them out. And pray for your family daily, each one specifically by name.
- Your faithfulness to complete all homework is the beginning of a healthy, godly home.
- Do your individual study first in your own workbook. Do each section diligently. Then schedule a time to discuss as a couple (if appropriate) what you learned and what impacted you the most. Begin this time with prayer. Share your responses to Dig Deeper, Self-Evaluations, and Action Plans. Listen to what God is teaching your spouse, support them, and encourage them in their journey. These discussions are to unify you in parenting.
- Each part of the lesson is important to your progress. Remember, we are not simply gaining intellectual knowledge. We are learning to implement the principles God teaches in His Word.
- God has a purpose and plan for us in our marriages, our trials, our differences, our personalities, and the raising of our children.
- As Craig said in the video, parents excuse their behavior because they do not realize their trials in parenting are for God's glorification. God uses our kids to transform us and show us our own sin.
- God's ways of revealing our sin nature are perfect. What you are feeling is God trying to get your attention.
- Commit to walk in the Spirit, and trust God with the results.
- Remember that God blesses obedience.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 1, *Transformational Parenting*. We will review and discuss them next week.

- Lesson 1—Parenting God’s Way
- Lesson 2—The Original Blueprint
- Lesson 3—The Ministry of Parenting
- Lesson 4—God’s Purpose for Parents
- Lesson 5—Parenting Purposes

Close the class in prayer.

As the class leaves, be sure each single parent or couple takes a card to pray for another family during the week.

Be available for questions after the class. It’s best to have the male leader talk to the fathers and the female leader talk to the mothers.

You’ve made it through your first class. *Well done.*



Group Week 2

Transformational Parenting, Volume 1

Part 2: Foundation for Parenting

Leader Prep

Although you may have completed the entire workbook series recently, be sure to review volume 1, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons are critical to understanding everything that follows. Without a solid understanding of God’s purpose and plan for parents, we will struggle to carry out the principles of a godly home. Be praying for the disciples: that God would be speaking to them clearly about what He wants to do in their lives and their families.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 1, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices A, B, T
- No video
- Assign volume 1, lessons 6–10

Encourage each parent to be willing to share their answers with the group. This may encourage others who are struggling to get started.

Begin the meeting with prayer.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 1, *Transformational Parenting*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—Parenting God’s Way

- Parenting is difficult. Raising kids can be confusing and frustrating.
- God’s Word provides the principles we need to raise our children in a godly home.

Discussion Questions

- What training did you receive before you became a parent?
- What is your philosophy for parenting?
- Who have been your examples for parenting? Are they positive or negative examples?

Lesson 2—The Original Blueprint

- God created the institution of family, which is radically different from how many see it today.

- God knows your strengths and weaknesses and promises to guide you in this role as a parent.

Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to you about being intentional as a parent?
- How confident are you in parenting God's way?

Lesson 3—The Ministry of Parenting

- God gave you children to be a minister over them.
- He provides the blueprint in His Word.

Discussion Questions

- How did your perspective change once you learned about your role as a minister to your children?
- How confident are you that you can minister to your children according to God's Word?
- What does ministering to your children look like to you?

Lesson 4—God's Purposes for Parents

- God's first purpose for us as parent-ministers is for His glorification.
- We are to represent God's nature to our children.

Discussion Questions

- Share your renewed commitment to put God first in your home.
- Share how God challenged you and your representation of Him.
- How should this truth affect the way you communicate to your children?

Lesson 5—Parenting Purposes

- God's second purpose for us as parent-ministers is for our transformation, to become more like Christ.
- God's last two purposes for parenting are to love our children and to train them.
- We must view our children through the value God places on them, not on their personalities, their behaviors, or other's opinions.

Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to you that He wants to change?
- How does the truth of your transformation change the way you view and respond to the trials you face in raising your children?
- How do you demonstrate the value of your children, both to them and to others?
- Which of these four purposes was most surprising to you and why?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?

- How has your view of parenting changed this first week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Appendices are included in each volume for deeper understanding of the material. Some participants will complete all appendices, while others may complete only what pertains to them. Encourage the participants to do all material necessary for their transformation. For example, the nonbeliever or unsure believer may wish to review appendix B if unclear about their salvation, while the solid believers can skip that material.

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix A: Parent Commitment Letter

- Share your thoughts about signing this letter to be accountable to God and one another.

Appendix B: Committing Your Life to Christ

- When did you commit your life to Christ? Share a brief testimony.
- How has your parenting (or life) changed since you committed your life to Christ?
- If you made this commitment *this week*, would you share that with us now?

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 1. Use this time for additional discussion.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- We've done our first major review of the material this week. It's a lot to take in. Talk to your spouse or another parent in the group about things that came up today in our discussions. Did something surprise you? Concern you? Stand out for another reason?
- As you learn, understand that this is not the time to point out your spouse's faults but to share what the Lord is teaching you through this material. God will work on each of our hearts differently.
- God strengthens us to do this difficult job and provides power and wisdom through His Holy Spirit. Let Him guide you.

- Abide in Christ through daily devotions to receive His grace to love your children. To see Jesus work miracles, the disciples had to *follow* Him. In the same way, you abide in Him to see Him work in your life and your children's lives.
- Accept your role and purposes as a parent as defined by God in His Word. And trust God for the results.
- Look for ways to minister to your children. Don't just think of ideas—do them. It doesn't need to be big or expensive or time-consuming. You know your children. You know what thrills them, helps them, honors them. Ask God to provide opportunities.
- Pay attention to what God is teaching you this week.
- Pray for your family by name each day.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 1, *Transformational Parenting*. We will review and discuss them next week.

- Lesson 6—A Strong Foundation
- Lesson 7—Three Essential Ingredients
- Lesson 8—True Priorities
- Lesson 9—The Chief Cornerstone
- Lesson 10—Your Amazing Transformation

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 3

Loving Communication, Volume 2

Part 1: Biblical Love

Leader Prep

Review volume 1, lessons 6–10 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons provide the foundation of biblical love. Be praying for the disciples: that God would open their hearts to understand what it means to love their children as God loves them, not in their own strength.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 1, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices B, C, D, T
- Watch volume 2 video (21 minutes)
- Discuss video 2 questions
- Assign volume 2, lessons 1–5

Encourage participation in the discussion. You may need to monitor the talkers and seek answers from the quiet observers throughout the duration of the class.

Begin the meeting with prayer.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 6–10 in volume 1, *Transformational Parenting*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—A Strong Foundation

- Our first priority is a strong foundation in God. Seek Him first.
- Study God’s Word to know and obey it.

Discussion Questions

- How would you grade your spiritual foundation and why?
- If God hasn’t been your foundation, what has?
- How can a weak foundation cause problems in your family unit?

Lesson 7—Three Essential Ingredients

- The three essentials are receiving Jesus, having a daily relationship with Him, and living it out.
- Prayer is communication with God through speaking and listening.

Discussion Questions

- How do you live out your faith to your children?
- What does it mean to abide in Christ?
- What is the importance of meditation?

Lesson 8—True Priorities

- God wants you to *want* to spend time with Him.
- We are in a battle with our flesh every day. Temptations and distractions surround us.
- Obedience is not passive—it's active.

Discussion Questions

- What is your attitude toward spending time with God?
- How do you avoid falling into temptation or being distracted?
- What do your current actions show about your priorities? Are they in the right place?

Lesson 9—The Chief Cornerstone

- Abiding in Christ is the key to obeying Him.
- Choosing to do things your own way is rebellion.
- God is in control and has a purpose in the trials we face.

Discussion Questions

- How is your abiding relationship with Christ?
- How will you train your mind to focus on Jesus?

Lesson 10—Your Amazing Transformation

- Trials are necessary to develop sincere, abiding faith.
- Suffering is a part of God's plan, which leads to our inner transformation and His glorification.

Discussion Questions

- Share how a trial brought you closer to God.
- What is God revealing to you in your current trials?
- What *one thing* can you begin this week to go back to your first love—Jesus?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Note: A good place to begin the practice of daily devotions is FDM's workbook called *Christian Foundational Truths*, available at FDM.world. It encourages daily Bible reading and journaling. It challenges the disciple to learn who Jesus is, important truths about Christian faith, and God's promises to them.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary. Some appendices are repeated for reference in multiple volumes. Participants may not need the appendix in one lesson but may decide to do it as they learn (and experience) more. Encourage them to share.

Since this week is the second part of volume 1, some appendices are the same. Resist the temptation to skip duplicates. These questions might prompt new discussion.

Appendix B: Committing Your Life to Christ

- When did you commit your life to Christ? Share a brief testimony.
- How has your parenting (or life) changed since you committed your life to Christ?
- If you made this commitment *this week*, would you share that with us now?

Appendix C: Developing Daily Intimacy with God

- How many of you are engaged in personal daily devotions? Be honest.
- How does your daily intimacy with God affect your life and your home?

Appendix D: Recommended Books

- Share anything you've learned from one of the recommended books.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 2 (21 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. What is agape love?
It is unconditional, a choice of the will, not the feelings. Dying to ourselves. It is not natural, rather a supernatural gift from God.
2. Where should we be most concerned about our attitudes and why?
We should be more concerned about how we think and feel in our homes than anywhere else. Our attitudes should reflect that our families are the greatest gift God has given us, second only to Himself. When our children see us happy most of the time with others at church and often frustrated with them at home, this sends the wrong message.

3. What message do we send when we excuse or justify our unloving behavior?
The message we send is that we don't love them, our love is conditional, or we don't value them. When we love someone, our actions will show it.
4. Why and how should we spend time with our kids?
Spending quality time with our kids shows that we love them. We must make time to do this. We must adjust to their interests and join in, not expect them to join ours.
5. What is the most powerful way we communicate with others?
Our visual communication comprises 55 percent of our overall communication. Our facial expressions and body language communicate more than the words we choose.

If you have time, ask your own questions or let them pose questions that relate to the material.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, we are to glorify God in all situations, even when our children are unloving.
- Accept and embrace God's ways of transforming us. Our storms are not to destroy us but to strengthen and transform us.
- Commit to learn and obey God's will. And trust Him for the results.
- Prayerfully consider what God is teaching you this week as you learn about love. Set aside any preconceived ideas about what you know about love and learn what God says.
- Let us respond to each other in truth and love, not with sinful words or anger.
- If you need to start over in any area, you must be willing to trust and forgive. Be sure your faith and trust in God are the foundation, and then work on the issue.
- Pray for your family by name. You are learning and growing, but the Enemy doesn't want your transformation. Cover them in prayer.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 2, *What Love Is*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—What's Love Got to Do with It?
Lesson 2—The Uniqueness of Our Children
Lesson 3—Reacting versus Responding
Lesson 4—Love Is Patient
Lesson 5—Love Is Kind

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 4

Loving Communication, Volume 2

Part 2: Principles of Love

Leader Prep

Review volume 2, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons teach us about loving the way God loves. Be praying for the disciples: that God would teach them what it means to love, not as the world does, but as He commands.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 2, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices as needed
- No video
- Assign volume 2, lessons 6–10

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 2, *Loving Communication*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—What’s Love Got to Do with It?

- Amid the difficulty of parenting, parents sometimes act without love.
- Biblical love is supernatural, unselfish, sacrificial, and a daily choice—agape love.

Discussion Questions

- Would your children say they feel like you don’t love them at times?
- What is the difference between *agape* love and *phileo*?
- How do you demonstrate agape love to your children?

Lesson 2—The Uniqueness of Our Children

- God creates each person in His image, and each is unique.
- Love is the most powerful motivator. And it requires quality time.

Discussion Questions

- How have you grieved your child’s spirit by not accepting their personality, not understanding their needs, or not learning to communicate in a loving way?
- How has your view of your child’s personality changed since learning that God made that personality unique to them?

- How do you embrace your child's uniqueness and show their value in it?

Lesson 3—Reacting versus Responding

- We are to respond to our children in love, not react in the flesh.
- Strong-willed children are created that way by God.
- Love is a choice, not a feeling.

Discussion Questions

- Consider how you speak to your children. Are you thoughtful and self-controlled or quick to anger?
- What did your words and actions this week show about how you love your children?

Lesson 4—Love Is Patient

- First Corinthians 13 describes what love is and is not.
- Love is full of patience, not unrealistic expectations.

Discussion Questions

- Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Which ones are you doing well? Which do you need to work on?
- How can you be more patient with your children?

Lesson 5—Love Is Kind

- Love is kind in all circumstances, even the difficult times.
- Children naturally lack maturity, which is why they need godly training.

Discussion Questions

- Which of the examples from Proverbs were most or least like your children?
- Do you allow childish behavior to surprise or frustrate you? If so, how can you change this?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Although no appendices were referenced in these lessons, ask the group if they completed any appendices or referred to the glossary. Discuss what they learned. Answers will vary.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 2. Use this time for additional discussion.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video last week, we are all in a process of being sanctified, and we are all going to fail. We must embrace failure, which requires humility.
- Craig reminded us that children are very observant. They see us failing. They hear us talk about God, then see us misrepresent Christ and not take responsibility for it. This is sin.
- Before you react to your children, remember that they are sinners just like you. Practice patience with them as God is patient and loving with you.
- Seek to love like 1 Corinthians 13 this week. Ask God to convict you when you are not loving, but do not allow Satan to condemn you.
- Commit to gain God's perspective on the uniqueness and value of your children. And trust God for the results.
- Pray for your children by name this week.
- Continue to daily abide with Jesus to build your strong foundation.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 2, *Loving Communication*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 6—Love Is Not Selfish

Lesson 7—Love Behaves

Lesson 8—Love Does Not

Lesson 9—Love Rejoices

Lesson 10—Love Endures

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 5

Loving Communication, Volume 2

Part 3: Love in Action

Leader Prep

Review volume 2, lessons 6–10 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons continue with the principles of 1 Corinthians 13. Be praying for the disciples: that God would impress on their hearts the unique needs of their children and how to love through words and actions.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 2, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices E, T
- No video
- Assign volume 2, lessons 11–15

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 6–10 in volume 2, *Loving Communication*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—Love Is Not Selfish

- Love does not envy, does not brag, and is not arrogant.
- Love encourages our children’s natural gifts and accomplishments.

Discussion Questions

- How did God speak to you about having contempt for your children’s successes?
- How have you compared your kids to yourself or your life?
- How have you negatively motivated your children?

Lesson 7—Love Behaves

- Love is not rude. It builds up rather than tears down.
- Love does not seek its own way.

Discussion Questions

- How can you build up your children instead of tear them down?
- Give an example of seeking your own way in parenting, and how did it turn out?
- What can you do to adapt to your children’s interests or even participate in them?

Lesson 8—Love Does Not

- Love does not think evil or rejoice in iniquity.
- Loving parents do not keep track of wrongs and bring them up later.

Discussion Questions

- How have you been harboring bitterness toward your child, and what can you do to change it?
- What is your attitude when your child does something wrong—*again*?
- How can you show compassion to your children?

Lesson 9—Love Rejoices

- Love rejoices in the truth. Its focus is positive communication.
- Love bears all things and hopes all things.

Discussion Questions

- How much of your communication with your children is positive and how much is negative?
- Share how your spouse (or you) recently praised one of your children and how the child reacted.
- Do your children know you accept them for who they are, even in the difficult stuff? How can you improve their perception?

Lesson 10—Love Endures

- Love endures through all things and encourages others to stay strong.
- Love never fails because of God's supernatural power in us.

Discussion Questions

- How do you compare your children, spoken or unspoken?
- How do you spend quality time with your children?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix E: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 2. Use this time for additional discussion.

Additional Activity

- If time permits, do this activity as a large group or break into smaller groups.
- Read 1 Corinthians 13 together as a group.
- Discuss each element of what love is and how it positively affected them growing up.
- Share some of the negative examples and how they were affected growing up.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- Our transformation is a process, not an event. Trust in the power of Christ and in His Word in times of struggle.
- Continue to gain God's perspective on the uniqueness and value of your children. Ask God for His supernatural power to love your child as He loves.
- Pray for protection from the attacks of the Enemy. You are learning principles that Satan doesn't like. He will do anything he can to stop you. He wants you to use your powerful influence to misrepresent God. Resist Satan's attacks, and cling to God's Word.
- Pray for your children by name.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 11–15 in volume 2, *Loving Communication*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 11—Communication Is Essential

Lesson 12—The Heart of Love

Lesson 13—Failing to Love

Lesson 14—Spiritual Warfare

Lesson 15—Persecution and Selfishness

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 6

Train Up Your Children, Volume 3

Part 1: Managing the Home

Leader Prep

Review volume 2, lessons 11–15 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons dig into communication issues within the home. Be praying for the disciples: that God would teach them how to communicate well and not allow Satan or other influences to distract them from God’s will.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 2, lessons 11–15
- Review appendices E, F, G, H, T
- Watch volume 3 video (21 minutes)
- Discuss video 3 questions
- Assign volume 3, lessons 1–5

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 11–15 in volume 2, *Loving Communication*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 11—Communication Is Essential

- We communicate in three ways: visually, vocally, and verbally.
- Our nonverbal communication is much stronger than our words.
- Parents have incredible influence over their children.

Discussion Questions

- What does your nonverbal communication reveal to your children?
- How has your communication with your children changed since lesson 9, when you first considered the percentage of positive versus negative communication?

Lesson 12—The Heart of Love

- What comes out of our mouths reveals what is in our hearts.
- Loving communication is Christ-centered, not self-centered.
- Every part of a child’s unique personality is “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God.

Discussion Questions

- What do your words reveal about what is in your heart?

- Consider the value you place on your children. How does your behavior mirror that, and how can you improve?
- How has this study changed the way you communicate with your children so far?

Lesson 13—Failing to Love

- The most common reason parents fail to love is unforgiveness.
- Bitterness in a parent’s heart jeopardizes their relationship with their children.
- Just as we choose to sin, we must also choose to forgive.

Discussion Questions

- How can we love our children who don’t always show love in return?
- What are the consequences of unforgiveness?
- What past hurts has God revealed to you that need to be dealt with?
- Share your story of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Lesson 14—Spiritual Warfare

- Parents also fail to love their children due to persecution or opposition from Satan.
- Our thoughts come from three sources: our own soul, the Holy Spirit, or demons.
- Lying thoughts, condemnation, and invitations to sin contradict biblical truth.

Discussion Questions

- Share an example of spiritual warfare in your home.
- How do you determine the source of your thoughts?
- How do you actively fight the battleground of your mind?

Lesson 15—Persecution and Selfishness

- Parents also fail to love due to persecution and opposition from their children.
- Prayer is critical for parents to bring change and remain dependent on God’s strength and wisdom.
- Parents also fail to love due to their own selfishness.
- God allows circumstances to purge parents from selfishness, which helps them embrace their responsibility and be transformed.

Discussion Questions

- Share a time when you felt like your child was the enemy or they thought you were the enemy.
- How does prayer change how you parent?
- What selfish expectations have you placed on your children, and how will you change?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?

- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix E: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix F: Effective Listening Self-Evaluation

- Did you get a better or worse score than you anticipated?
- Did you ask your kids any of these questions about your listening level, and how did they respond?
- What did this evaluation reveal about your ability to listen to your children?
- Which questions were most difficult or surprising?
- What can you do to improve your listening level?

Appendix G: Improving Your Loving Communication

- How did your loving communication improve after doing this worksheet?
- Share your experience with reconciliation in your home.

Appendix H: Showing Love to Your Child

- Which suggestions did you try, and how did it go?
- What did you learn about showing love to your child by spending time together?
- What suggestions do you plan to try in the next few weeks?

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 3 (21 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. If most parents know they need to discipline their kids, why don't they?
Most parents don't know how to discipline. They just try what they learned from their parents.
2. What are the consequences when we are not looking to God's Word for parenting?
We cast off restraint and let the kids run amok. No or little training takes place.

3. What has God commissioned us to do as parents?
He has commissioned us to disciple our children. It is not a suggestion. Even those who were not disciplined as children are still called to disciple their own children. But most parents relinquish this responsibility to the church, which is not God's will.
4. What parenting instructions did God give Israel in Deuteronomy?
God said we are to diligently train our children (how to receive Christ, how to pray, how to read the Word, how to meditate, and how to expect God to speak to them).
5. What have we already learned about the purposes of parenting in this study?
The four purposes of parenting are to glorify Him, for our transformation, to love our children, and to train our children.

If you have time, ask your own questions or let them pose questions that relate to the material.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, your management style can undermine the way you parent, even if you are using biblical principles of parenting. So we must learn and use God's management style.
- No one has more influence over a child than the father. We must step up to the task of training our children in God's Word.
- As we learned over the last week about the reasons we fail to love, know that we have all failed, and we *will* fail again. We must take responsibility for each time we fail, repent, ask our children for forgiveness, and watch as God continues to transform us through it.
- Be willing to examine your work hours, hobbies, and other commitments outside the home that may be keeping you busy. Even ministry and serving in church can affect your home if your life is out of balance.
- Not allowing God to work in your heart gives Satan the ability to corrupt and destroy your home. Be in prayer this week about what you need to change.
- Pray for your family by name this week.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 3, *Train Up Your Children*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—God's Management Style

Lesson 2—Looking to God's Word

Lesson 3—The Power of a Father

Lesson 4—Disorder in the Home

Lesson 5—Biblical Roles

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 7

Train Up Your Children, Volume 3

Part 2: Discipling in the Home

Leader Prep

Review volume 3, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons provide a clear picture of God’s management style in the home. Be praying for the disciples: that God would bring peace to their hearts as they learn about discipling.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 3, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices I, J, T
- No video
- Assign volume 3, lessons 6–10

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 3, *Train Up Your Children*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—God’s Management Style

- Training our children includes discipling and building character.
- Parents, not the church, are primarily responsible for discipling.
- Parents must work as a team to establish leadership and authority in the home.
- The father is the leader, and the mother is the helper.

Discussion Questions

- Have you been more focused on teaching biblical morals or instilling mature character traits?
- How has your home been out of order, and what do you need to do to fix it?

Lesson 2—Looking to God’s Word

- Our world provides unbiblical philosophies about parenting that directly contradict God’s management style.
- God instituted the line of authority in the home. God is the head of Christ, who is the head of the man, who is the head of the woman. And parents are in authority over the children.
- God’s Word is never outdated.

Discussion Questions

- What worldly philosophy about parenting has influenced you the most?
- Which part of God's authority structure is most challenging for you?
- What changes do you need to make in your home?

Lesson 3—The Power of a Father

- Fathers have supernatural influence over their children.
- Godly leadership has nothing to do with being a dictator. Like Christ, fathers have the role of a servant-minister.
- Wives are to submit to their husband's leadership in the home and work alongside them to accomplish their God-given role as a helpmate.
- A home that is out of order lacks peace, joy, and contentment.

Discussion Questions

- How has your father influenced you, either positively or negatively?
- How did the Holy Spirit challenge your perception of a father's leadership role?
- How well do you work with your spouse under God's management style, and what needs to change?

Lesson 4—Disorder in the Home

- Wives, let your conduct motivate your husband as you put your trust in God.
- How parents act or react in the home sets it up for success or chaos.
- Fathers, commit your laziness and fears to God as you step up to lead.
- Mothers, put your trust in Christ as you support your husband and allow him to lead.

Discussion Questions

- Ladies, how do you respond to your husband when he makes poor choices?
- Men, how well do you lead your home?
- How can you work on your marriage to establish order in your home?
- Which question in Self-Examination 2 was the most challenging to answer?

Lesson 5—Biblical Roles

- The father and mother have God-given roles in the home.
- The responsible father is a servant-priest over his family, works to support them, is a witness of Christ to them, makes time to disciple his children, and is a teacher-manager in his home.
- The caring mother is gentle with her children, nurtures them, cherishes them, affectionately longs for them, and gives of herself to do what is best for them.

Discussion Questions

- Fathers, which principle is most challenging for you?
- Mothers, which principle is most challenging for you?

- How can you better support your spouse in their parenting role?
- How do these biblical roles differ from your current parenting style, and what needs to change?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix I: Essentials for Single Parents

- Share what you learned about single parenting.
- What did Hagar's story teach you?
- Which principles for single parents were new to you, and how did they help you this week?

Appendix J: Parenting the Blended Family

- Share what you learned about parenting in a blended family.
- Which issue has been the most difficult for you and why?
- Which issue has been the most difficult for your children and why?
- How did this change your interaction with your ex-spouse (or your perception of them)?
- What is the biggest change you made after learning these principles, and how has it worked?

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 3. Use this time for additional discussion.

Additional Activity

- If time permits, do this activity as a large group or break into smaller groups. Or break into a group for fathers and a group for mothers.

- Review each principle of the biblical roles in lesson 5.
- Ask participants to share what they learned about each principle and how each one applies to them.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig reminded us last week, God does not bless disobedience, even when we are ignorant. He will bring pain to correct us.
- If you have a desire to be discipled or if God is laying it on your heart, actively seek a discipler, or see me for suggestions. We recommend using *Christian Foundational Truths*, available at FDM.world under the *Discipleship* tab.
- If you feel qualified and are willing to disciple others, or if you know of someone else who would be willing to disciple others who hunger to learn and grow, let me know.
- As we have learned, those who do not pursue and practice God's management style will have no peace, no joy, and no contentment.
- Fathers, you have great influence over your children. Use it to motivate and encourage them to be all God wants them to be.
- Ladies, you have great influence on your husbands. Use it to motivate and encourage them to be the fathers God desires.
- Submission and authority in the home is God's plan and will. It is not a matter of superiority and inferiority. It is a faith and trust issue. We must be willing to trust the Lord and follow His will, not our own way or understanding.
- Marriage is the foundation of a godly home. Your children need it to be solid. If you and your spouse desire to strengthen your marriage by better understanding God's plan for husbands and wives, we recommend our *Marriage Is a Ministry* series, available at FDM.world under the *Marriage* tab.
- Single parents (especially moms), do not become discouraged. These biblical principles are important to learn. God knows your situation and is faithful to help you.
- Cover your family in prayer. And ask for protection from the attacks of the Enemy.

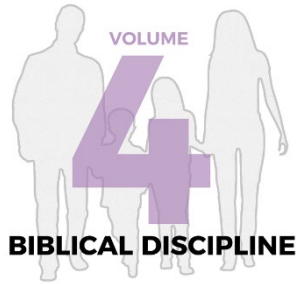
Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 3, *Train Up Your Children*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 6—Teaching Biblical Truth
Lesson 7—Discipling Your Children
Lesson 8—Principles for Discipling
Lesson 9—Having a Godly Home
Lesson 10—Be Unified

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 8

Biblical Discipline, Volume 4

Part 1: Understanding Discipline

Leader Prep

Review volume 3, lessons 6–10 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons dig deeper into how to disciple our children. Be praying for the disciples: that God would bring them peace as they learn specific principles to disciple their children. Ask God to keep Satan from discouraging them as they learn these principles.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 3, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices D, K, L, T
- Watch volume 4 video (28 minutes)
- Discuss video 4 questions
- Assign volume 4, lessons 1–5

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 6–10 in volume 3, *Train Up Your Children*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—Teaching Biblical Truth

- We disciple our children by providing spiritual instruction and biblical truth.
- A disciple is an apprentice who learns facts, attitudes, and philosophies from the teacher.
- Parents make disciples of their children by introducing them to Jesus, encouraging a relationship with Him, teaching them how to submit to His authority in their lives, and helping them become an imitator of Christ.
- Discipleship is a way of life, not just a series of steps to complete. Parents disciple through example and then instruction.

Discussion Questions

- Have you viewed discipleship in the home as optional, assuming your children would pick up these principles at church? If so, what have you learned about your responsibility?
- What is your current example to your children, and how does it need to change?
- In what areas might your children see hypocrisy in your home?
- Consider the quote by President Wilson spoken more than a hundred years ago (page 53). How does this apply to parenting today?

Lesson 7—Discipling Your Children

- Parents must be committed to disciple their children diligently.
- Parents are to equip children to influence their world for God.

Discussion Questions

- How are your children growing spiritually and from whom?
- How are you equipping your children to overcome the temptations and worldly influences around them?
- How is your abiding relationship with Christ? How has it changed since you started this study?

Lesson 8—Principles for Discipling

- Deuteronomy 6 contains five principles for discipling our children. The first four are discipling inside the home, discipling outside the home, discipling in the morning and evening, and discipling by personal example.
- Parents disciple either directly, through intentional time set aside, or indirectly, through unplanned discussions or opportunities.
- We must continually be open to the Holy Spirit as He leads us in parenting through everyday activities, prayer, and our personal example.

Discussion Questions

- How do you make time to directly disciple your children?
- Share an unplanned opportunity God provided to disciple one of your children.
- What does your personal example teach your children about putting God first?

Lesson 9—Having a Godly Home

- The fifth principle from Deuteronomy 6 is having a godly home.
- Parents must beware of worldly influences that are subtle and not so subtle.

Discussion Questions

- What does your home environment reveal about your relationship with God?
- How aware are you about what your children do in their rooms and outside your home?
- What changes need to be made in your home to put God first?

Lesson 10—Be Unified

- The unified family has a strong home.
- Prayer and instilling God's Word are fundamental to discipleship.

Discussion Questions

- How unified is your home, and how could you improve?
- What has been a roadblock for discipleship in your home?
- Share something about your weekly Bible study. Or what are your plans for starting a weekly Bible study?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix D: Recommended Books

- Share anything you've learned from one of the recommended books.
- Which book do you plan to begin on your own or with your children? Ask someone to hold you accountable to this.

Appendix K: Leading a Child to Christ

- Share your experience of leading your child to Christ.
- Discuss the reasons this has been difficult for you before now.

Appendix L: Inappropriate Entertainment

- Share your experience with eliminating inappropriate entertainment in your home.
- Discuss if this was a difficult topic for you and why.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 4 (28 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. What is our job as parents?
To love our children, to train them, and to instill mature character.
2. What is the difference between discipline and punishment?
Discipline is corrective, used for foolish behavior. Punishment is a measured amount of pain to motivate the child to yield to authority and discipline. God doesn't punish us unless we don't yield to His discipline.
3. What are we saying to God when we get angry about the foolish behavior of our kids?
We are saying: I don't accept your perfect plan of giving me this child. You messed up. I don't accept this personality You gave my child. You made a mistake. You are asking me to do something beyond Your ability to do in me. Your grace is not sufficient.

4. What is the difference between foolishness and defiance?
Foolishness is natural. Parents are to expect it and use it as an opportunity to train their children. Defiance is when children refuse to accept authority and yield to the predetermined discipline, which is when to use punishment.
5. What are the traits of a mature adult?
Personal responsibility, self-control, and morals and values.

If you have time, ask your own questions or let them pose questions that relate to the material.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, just like the umpires can't change the rules during a football game, parents can't create rules based on what the kids do and how the parents feel. In these next lessons, we will learn how to create a plan for discipline in our homes.
- We learned this last week about discipling our children, which is the first step in the training process. Know that God blesses your obedience. As you seek to disciple your children, He will honor your commitment and provide opportunities for learning and growth.
- Commit to learn God's Word together. Discuss as a couple how to plan your weekly Bible study. You will present the principles to your children during your family meeting (after the final lesson). But begin to lay the foundation now.
- Pray for your family by name each day.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—Introduction to Discipline

Lesson 2—Mature Character

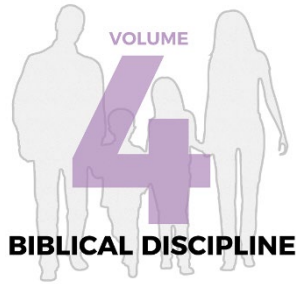
Lesson 3—Why Discipline?

Lesson 4—Four Tools of Training

Lesson 5—Training without Compromise

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 9

Biblical Discipline, Volume 4

Part 2: Training Your Children

Leader Prep

Review volume 4, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons introduce discipline and the four tools of training. Be praying for the disciples: that God would bring wisdom as they learn how to discipline with loving correction.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 4, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices as needed
- No video
- Assign volume 4, lessons 6–10

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—Introduction to Discipline

- Parents must focus on discipleship before discipline.
- Failing to discipline prevents maturity.
- Proper training focuses on growth, not control, much like the farmer straightens a tree or the coach builds the muscles of his team.
- Childish behavior can be classified in three ways: foolishness, disobedience, or defiance. But there are critical differences between the training of each behavior.

Discussion Questions

- Where are you on the goal graph (page 3), and is it where you are supposed to be at this stage of your child’s growth?
- In what ways do you control your children or place unrealistic expectations on them?
- How has learning the differences between the three childish behaviors affected the way you parent?

Lesson 2—Mature Character

- Parents are to equip and train their children to be more like Christ, the perfect example of a mature adult.

- To reach maturity, children must be taught morals and values, personal responsibility, and self-control.
- Parents must focus on changing the way the child thinks (through discipleship) and training their behaviors (through discipline).

Discussion Questions

- Share an example of when your child questioned biblical morals and values, how you handled it, and what happened.
- Share a behavior from your child that shows personal responsibility. How did you instill that?
- Share an example of when your child did or did not exhibit self-control, how you handled it, and what happened.
- Have you been more focused on correcting how your child thinks or what your child does?

Lesson 3—Why Discipline?

- Parents must discipline because God commands it, it demonstrates love, it produces mature adults, and it keeps peace in the home.
- A child's heart is changed through love and discipleship, then corrected through discipline.
- Proper training includes clearly defined rules based on God's Word, clearly defined consequences when rules are broken, and corrective punishment when children rebel.

Discussion Questions

- How does discipline demonstrate your love or create peace in your home?
- What principles of discipline from your parents did you bring into your home?
- How are your rules currently defined in your home, and what are they based on?

Lesson 4—Four Tools of Training

- The four tools of training are rules, corrective consequences, punishment, and consistency.
- Just like God communicated in the garden, there are conditions for blessings and consequences for disobedience in our homes.
- Corrective consequences and punishment must be used appropriately for different reasons, but both are predetermined.

Discussion Questions

- Which of the four tools has been most lacking in your home?
- Do your children understand the rules in your home, and could they define them?
- How do you use corrective consequences and punishment in your home, or have they been considered the same until now?
- By a show of hands, how many of you have been going straight to punishment in your home before learning these principles?

Lesson 5—Training without Compromise

- Consistency in training is what creates growth and change. Without it, the first three tools are ineffective.
- God’s view of discipline is love in action.
- Parents must be willing to adapt to each child’s personality.
- Bad attitudes and wrong behaviors must be dealt with differently.

Discussion Questions

- Do you discipline each of your children with the same rules, consequences, and punishment? Why or why not?
- Which of the three doors are most used in your home and why?
- How do you struggle to change attitudes and behaviors?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Although no appendices were referenced in these lessons, ask the group if they completed any appendices or referred to the glossary. Discuss what they learned. Answers will vary.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 4. Use this time for additional discussion.

Additional Activity

- If time permits, do this activity as a large group or break into smaller groups.
- Define and discuss each of the four tools of training from lesson 4.
- Share examples of previously implemented rules, consequences, and punishments and how they work.
- Share suggestions for rules, consequences, and punishments not yet tried.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- Consider how your definition of a mature adult has changed through this study, and be intentional this week to train your children to be more like Christ, not like your expectations or ideas.
- As Craig said in the video last week, many parents are flippant about parenting, reckless, with no plan, no unity, and no consistency. They let the mood determine the discipline. This is destructive to our children and our home.
- Do not be discouraged that you are just learning these principles now. Be encouraged that you have the tools to teach your children to become mature adults and the understanding of how to create a godly home.
- Pray for your children by name each day.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 6—Stay the Course

Lesson 7—Training for Toddlers

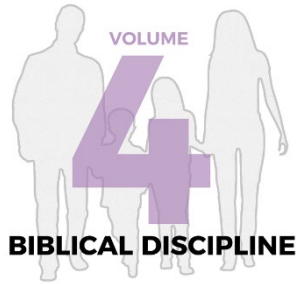
Lesson 8—Principles of Spanking

Lesson 9—Positive versus Corrective

Lesson 10—Training through Adolescence

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 10

Biblical Discipline, Volume 4

Part 3: New Family Dynamics

Leader Prep

Review volume 4, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons dig deeper into specific aspects of discipline for different ages. Be praying for the disciples: that God would provide new insights into their children as they train them to maturity.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 4, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices M, N, O, P, Q, R, T
- No video
- Assign volume 4, lessons 11–14

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—Stay the Course

- Parents must not allow their children to manipulate them or wear them down.
- Reacting in the flesh to a child’s attitude erodes parental authority. Children know when parents are motivated by revenge.
- Parents must work as a team to follow the predetermined plan of discipline.

Discussion Questions

- Share an experience when your child tried to (or did) manipulate you, and explain how you handled it.
- How have you reacted in the flesh to your kids, and what are you doing to change that?
- How well do you and your spouse work as a team to parent your children?
- How has your approach to parenting changed since you began the course?

Lesson 7—Training for Toddlers

- The first five years are critical to establishing authority and instilling boundaries.
- Dads must be involved in all aspects of discipline.

- Parents must love their toddlers and stay calm, expecting them to fail and act their age.
- Even young children must be taught to respect and obey their parents.

Discussion Questions

- How did you do in the first five years (or how are you doing now)?
- Dads, how involved have you been in discipline, and what do you need to change?
- Share a time when you apologized to your child and their reaction.
- What do you need to change in your home to make it more appropriate for your young children (childproofing)?
- How consistent are (were) you with bedtime, cleaning messes, saying no, time-outs, and spanking?

Lesson 8—Principles of Spanking

- The Bible commands parents to discipline their children and not be passive.
- Ten principles of spanking provide the proper attitude and process.
- Parents must not be manipulated not to spank or allow excessive crying.
- Alternative punishments may or may not be effective.

Discussion Questions

- How do you feel about spanking?
- How has this lesson changed your mind about or approach to spanking?
- Which of the ten principles has been (or is) hardest for you?
- What alternatives have you tried, and how effective were they?

Note: Do not allow this discussion to be about who spanks and who doesn't, a debate on spanking, or personal views on the methods. Keep the conversation on track, positive, and not divisive.

Lesson 9—Positive versus Corrective

- Love is the most powerful motivator, not gifts of positive reinforcement.
- Praising children is not tied to performance but to their worth as defined by God.
- Compliant children and strong-willed children perceive reinforcement differently.
- The corrective consequence box and related consequences are effective ways to train children.

Discussion Questions

- How have you used positive reinforcement for specific circumstances, and how did it go?
- Is good behavior expected in your home because it is right, or is it rewarded to get something in return?
- What is your attitude toward your children's failures?
- What basic rules do you already have in your home, and are they being enforced?

Lesson 10—Training through Adolescence

- Teens will challenge their boundaries and test your values as they begin to think independently.
- Moving toward freedom and independence is the goal, but parents must not stop training until their children are mature.
- Do not allow teens to show disrespect or compromise your established morals and values.
- Teens must learn responsibility through wake-up times, schedules, curfew, and privileges. Failure in these areas allows for training and growth.
- Chores instill a work ethic and build character, responsibility, and self-control.

Discussion Questions

- Share an example of your teen challenging you and how you handled it.
- Share a positive example of your teen moving toward independence and responsibility.
- What creative punishments have you used with your teens?
- How have you handled shutdown versus restriction in your home?
- How do you handle chores or allowance?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of parenting changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix M: Disciplining Behavior

- What was your perspective of behavior and attitude before these lessons?
- Discuss the changes you have made after learning the difference.

Appendix N: Rules and Consequences

- Did you have a list before doing these lessons? What is written or assumed?
- Share a rule and consequence you recently established.
- Share a corrective consequence you recently established.
- How have your children responded to these new rules and consequences?

Appendix O: Positive Reinforcement

- Share your experience with using positive reinforcement.
- How have you changed your discipline with this new information?

Appendix P: Chore List

- Share a chore you recently established.
- How have your children responded to these new chores?

Appendix Q: Questionnaire for Teenagers

- Share your experience with this questionnaire and an example from your discussion with your teenager.

Appendix R: Questionnaire for New Adults

- Share your experience with this questionnaire and an example from your discussion with your adult child.

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 4. Use this time for additional discussion.

Additional Activity

- If time permits, do this activity as a large group or break into smaller groups. Consider discussions for parents with younger and older children if appropriate.
- Define and discuss corrective consequences and chores from lessons 9 and 10.
- Share examples of previously implemented (or suggested) corrective consequences and how they work.
- Share examples of previously implemented (or suggested) chores and how they work.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the last video, parents are to be faithful to use their authority over their children properly. Proper discipline is age appropriate and loving, not angry. Children are naturally foolish. They do not have the character of an adult.
- Character development is a process. We cannot expect our children to develop quickly, no more than we can expect them to bench press three hundred pounds without extensive training.

- Continue to work as a team to create a godly home. Help your spouse when you see them struggling. Encourage each other with these principles.
- If you are a single parent, remember that God is with you. He wants you to have a godly home and raise His children well. He knows your struggles. Go to God in your doubt.
- If these principles have been challenging because you are not sure how to move forward, let God bring you peace this coming week as you learn to implement these changes in your home. Perhaps you have a lot to overcome. Perhaps you need to start over, and you can't imagine the work to do so. Remember that God is faithful.
- Even if you've already implemented a new discipline system, it is still important to have a family meeting. We'll review the process this week. Don't miss this step to unify your family and help your children know you are serious about having a godly home.
- Pray for your family by name each day.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 11–14 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. We will review and discuss them next week in our final class.

Lesson 11—Starting Over
Lesson 12—Confession and Forgiveness
Lesson 13—Offering Forgiveness
Lesson 14—Family Meeting

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 11

Review and Reflection

Leader Prep

Review volume 4, lessons 11–14 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

These lessons describe how to implement the new tools of training and start over if needed. Be praying for the disciples: that God would help them implement all the principles they’ve been learning and that they would grow stronger as a family in Him.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 4, lessons 11–14
- Review appendices F, G, S, T
- No video
- No assignments
- Discussion and reflections

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 11–14 in volume 4, *Biblical Discipline*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 11—Starting Over

- God gives parents the strength and wisdom to start over when needed.
- Do not allow Satan to discourage you or guilt you in any way.
- Start over by confessing your sins to the Lord, asking for forgiveness, and forgiving others.

Discussion Questions

- What is the most overwhelming thing about starting over?
- How has God brought peace in your decision to start over?

Lesson 12—Confession and Forgiveness

- The three essentials of confession are receiving forgiveness from God, repenting and walking in obedience, and then being accountable to someone.
- God places a high priority on relationships and expects humble and expedient reconciliation, asking forgiveness of both Him and the offended.
- Change takes time.

Discussion Questions

- Which principle of confession is the most challenging for you and why?

- Briefly share an experience when you reconciled with someone you offended.
- What has God laid on your heart about the process of change?

Lesson 13—Offering Forgiveness

- The measuring device for forgiveness is how much Christ has forgiven us.
- Forgiveness is a choice, an act of obedience to God, not a feeling.
- Forgiveness does not keep a record of wrongs, eliminates gossip, does not dwell on offenses, and is granted without limitation.

Discussion Questions

- What issue with your child are you still holding onto, and how can you release it today?
- What conditions have you placed on your forgiveness, and how can you let that go?
- Share an experience when you chose to forgive your child and how it strengthened your relationship.

Lesson 14—Family Meeting

- The family meeting is the beginning of reconciliation, the establishment of rules and consequences, and the opportunity for God to create a solid, loving home.
- Parents must prepare for the meeting by creating written rules, corrective consequences, appropriate punishment, and chores. And they must agree on the plan before presenting it to the children.
- Begin the meeting with prayer, apologize to your children, give them an opportunity to voice their feelings, and then introduce the new plan for discipline in the home.

Discussion Questions

- Share your definition of morals and values, personal responsibility, or self-control.
- What have you prepared for your family meeting so far?
- What issues came up where you didn't agree as a couple, and how did you resolve it?
- Briefly share your experience with your family meeting if you already did it.

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix F: Effective Listening Self-Evaluation

- What did this evaluation reveal about your ability to listen to your children?
- Which questions were most difficult or surprising?
- What can you do to improve your listening level?

Appendix G: Improving Your Loving Communication

- How did your loving communication improve after doing this worksheet?
- Share your experience with reconciliation in your home.

Appendix S: Parent Self-Evaluation

- Share what God is putting on your heart to change within yourself.
- How often do you think you should evaluate your progress?

Appendix T: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Group Reflection

Take some time as a group to reflect on what you learned throughout the series. The purpose is for disciples to share their praise reports, as well as their struggles, and to encourage one another.

Begin with a refresher. Review the basic principles in each volume.

- What is *Transformational Parenting*, and why is it important in your home? (volume 1)
- Explain how *Loving Communication* creates a godly home. (volume 2)
- How will you *Train Up Your Children* differently from the world? (volume 3)
- Why does *Biblical Discipline* work in the home? (volume 4)

Discuss specific principles by volume.

- From volume 1, your strong foundation in Christ is the only way to receive the wisdom and strength to persevere through the seasons of parenting. How has your relationship with Christ impacted your parenting?
- From volume 2, loving your children involves seeing them as unique gifts from God, knowing how to respond instead of react, and spending quality time building relationships with them. How has your new understanding of what love is and is not influenced your parenting and changed your relationships with your children?
- From volume 3, God's management style includes distinct roles for parents, teamwork, training first through discipling, and living out what you profess about God's Word. How does your family environment exemplify these biblical truths?
- From volume 4, mature character is developed through consistently using the four tools of training through each stage of growth and starting over as a family when necessary. How have these principles changed your home and family?

Ask the disciples what they learned during your time together.

- How do you feel at the end of this study? Did you learn what you hoped to learn?
- Share one or more of the promises God has given to you personally throughout this class.
- Share how your commitment to learning God’s ways has changed during this class.
- What has He revealed in you that He wants to change?
- How has God transformed your family over the last eleven weeks?
- How have others noticed a change in you or your family relationships?
- How has your view of parenting changed throughout this study?

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- Continue to abide in Christ through daily devotions and prayer to build your strong foundation and to receive His grace to love your children. To see Jesus work miracles, the disciples had to *follow* Him. In the same way, you abide in Him to see Him work in your life and your home.
- Transformation is a process, not an event. Trust in the power of Christ and in His Word in times of struggle.
- The transition to your new home management may be difficult—but persevere. Remember that God blesses obedience. And your children may thank you one day for establishing a godly home.
- If you are starting over, remember that God brought this new knowledge to you for a purpose. And the time is now. Be confident that you can implement these principles in your home through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let Him guide you.
- These principles were never designed to be in focus for only a short period of time. They are to be a new way of living according to the Word of God. It takes time and commitment to break bad habits. Refer back to your workbooks when needed.
- Reevaluate your plan as needed with periodic family meetings and personal examination of your progress.
- Continuous practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, when necessary, promotes unity. Review *Appendix E: Trust and Forgiveness* whenever hurts arise.
- Pray for wisdom in your marriage and parenting roles. Consider doing the *Marriage Is a Ministry* series to strengthen your marriage and home.
- Seek help from your pastor if you are continuing to struggle or think you have a special circumstance in your home.
- Pray for yourself, your spouse, and your children as you implement God’s plan for raising *His* children.
- More materials are available at FDM.world for discipleship, marriage, parenting, and family issues. You may also ask questions and provide feedback about this material or suggest other material you would like to see offered.

- Thank you for being a part of this class, and congratulations on completing the study. If you don't already have a support network, I encourage you to stay in touch with at least one other family from our group.
- Look for people who God has put in your life, or will put in your life, to be an example of what you have learned. He may be calling you to disciple them.
- If you are interested in leading a study about discipleship, marriage, or family, come see me.

Some parents may need some special attention due to a difficult situation or are simply having a hard time breaking their old habits. Encourage them to seek counsel as needed.

For strong parents who are interested in leading this study or another one from FDM, encourage them to contact the church office or FDM.world for more information. Offer to give them support as they lead their own study.

You have completed eleven weeks of study. Well done. Hopefully you have been implementing these principles along the way and seen God's amazing transformation in your home. But it's not over. A godly family, just like your walk with Christ, is a daily journey. We will continue to learn new things as God teaches us about ourselves through our spouses, our children, and our experiences.

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.

About the Author

A fool. A student with dyslexia. A high school graduate with a third-grade reading level. An ignorant husband and abusive father. All described Pastor Craig Caster at one time in his life, but God had a different plan for him. Despite Craig's fear of public speaking, God called him to full-time ministry in 1994. He stepped out in faith without formal education or a seminary degree. He was ordained in 1995 and has since written four books; disciplined many men; counseled hundreds; led countless to Christ; and taught thousands through marriage and parenting seminars, men's retreats, and pastors' conferences throughout the US and internationally. All by the grace and power of God.

Although Craig gave His life to Jesus in 1979, his transformation started when he began to abide in Jesus and His Word daily. He truly believes Jesus desires a close relationship with each one of us. His life is forever changed because he pursues this relationship and is completely dependent on Christ.

Be Encouraged

If you are struggling to trust that God can work in and through your life, be encouraged by Pastor Craig's story. Don't let your past sins, learning disabilities, fear of teaching or speaking, or lack of education stop you from being obedient to the call of God on your life. God desires to make you His disciple, and if you are married or have children, He wants to form you into a spouse and parent who honors Him. His grace is amazing and limitless. He loves you and desires to be glorified through you.

God's Promise to You

Thanks be to God for His abundant promises and provision. Meditate on His promises from the words of "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ."

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:1-8)

About Family Discipleship Ministries

Family Discipleship Ministries (FDM), a nonprofit ministry established in 1994 by founder and director Pastor Craig Caster, strives to support, educate, and train the body of Christ to minister to families. To accomplish this goal, FDM offers workbooks, supporting videos, and online materials for individual study, small groups, home-group study, and one-on-one discipleship. They conduct seminars on marriage, parenting, understanding teens, and church discipleship planning.

FDM's ministry goal is to exhort, train, and equip leaders of Christian churches to develop a vision for discipleship and provide biblically solid workbooks to help them minister to their church families. Since 1995, thousands of people have completed the marriage and parenting classes, and hundreds of churches within the US and abroad have ministered to their congregations using FDM materials. Their ministry also helps many families through free online resources found at FDM.world.

FDM actively ministers internationally in countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Cuba, Mexico, Africa, Singapore, Japan, and China. Find out more at FDM.world.