

**BRINGING**  
**PEACE & HARMONY**  
— TO THE —  
**BLENDED FAMILY**

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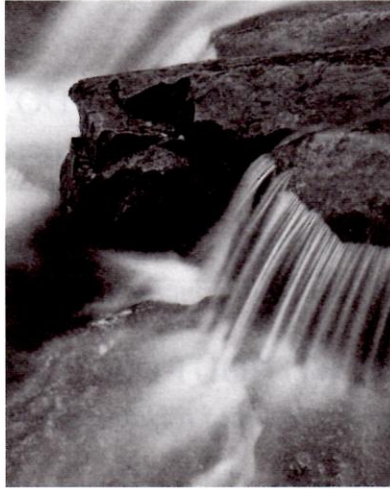
*WHERE EVERYBODY  
FEELS AT HOME*

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**DR. KEVIN LEMAN**

**WORKBOOK**

**W O R K B O O K**



# **BRINGING PEACE & HARMONY TO THE BLENDED FAMILY**

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*WHERE EVERYBODY FEELS AT HOME*

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WITH

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## Lesson 3

# BLENDING WITHOUT COLLIDING

*Working Together to Build a Home Where Everybody Wins!*

### **SCRIPTURE**

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

*--Ephesians 6:1-4*

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

#### **I. Understand the emotional struggles that family members bring with them.**

- A. Blended families are formed out of \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Adults and children are afraid of getting hurt again.

#### **II. How to avoid unnecessary collisions between parents and kids**

- A. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." – Ephesians 6:1-3*
- B. *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. – Ephesians 6:4*

#### **III. ABC's of self-image**

- A. A \_\_\_\_\_ your children for who they are.
- B. Make sure your kids BELONG to the family.
- C. Help children develop COMPETENCE.

#### **IV. Use teachable moments with love and respect.**

#### **V. How to implement reality discipline to create loyalty to the home**

- A. Stay in healthy \_\_\_\_\_.

- B. Hold children accountable for their choices.
- C. Let reality be the teacher.
- D. No one member of the family is more important than the family.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ come before rules.
- F. Stand shoulder-to-shoulder as parents.

<b><i>DISCUSSION GUIDE</i></b>
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1. Many Americans were caught up in the “Survivor” television series during the summer of 2000. Many news and talk shows discussed the surprising attraction to a show that centered around survivors voting members off the island one by one until only one person was left. Two tribes merged into one tribe halfway through the series. Some alliances were formed and broken and promises were made and broken—people behaved in extreme ways. Do you see any parallels between the dynamics of this series and those of families that are coming together? What challenges do blended families face in the way of agreements, promises, and understandings before and after marriage that they must survive?

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2. We are reminded that members often bring emotional struggles with them into the new home. What are some examples of emotional issues that might surface in blended families?

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3. Blended families can avoid the unnecessary collisions between parents and children by walking on the “balance beam of life.” Read Ephesians 6:1-4 to discover Dr. Leman’s “balance beam of life.” Write the message you think God has for children in this passage. Share your suggestions with the group.

CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Write the message you think God has for parents in this passage. Share your suggestions with the group.

PARENTS \_\_\_\_\_

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5. God commands children to obey their parents, and He commands parents to discipline their children. How did you develop your particular style of disciplining your children? Did you learn from your parents, attend a seminar, read books, etc.? Discuss as a group.

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6. Read the following definition of *reality discipline*.

Reality discipline is an action-oriented way to make your children accountable for their actions. The ultimate goal of reality discipline is to get the child to be able to deal in practical ways with the reality of the authority of God, established in and through Jesus Christ.

Note that reality discipline is action-oriented. Discuss some ways we send our children the wrong message when we warn them four or five times instead of taking immediate action. For example, most of us have caught ourselves telling child four or five times to go to bed before there is any consequence to their disobedience. We are really telling them we don't mean what we say until we warn them several times. Share your ideas with the group.

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7. While it is true that you may not be able to love your spouse's children at first, you can accept them and respect them. One way you can accept them is to recognize and encourage their character traits instead of just their outward appearance or performance. For example, instead of focusing on how good or bad your child performs in soccer; tell the child how proud you are to see how well he gets along with the other players. Brainstorm things parents might say instead of simply focusing on a child's outward performance.

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8. Discuss how you think focusing on internal characteristics might lessen the heightened sibling rivalry that takes place in blended families? Share your ideas with the other parents.

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9. Imagine that you were writing a note to one of your spouse's children whom you may be finding it difficult to love right now. List phrases that show how you accept the child as he or she is. Share your note with the group. Consider writing a note of acceptance to each child in your family.
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10. Review the reality discipline principles below. Which principle do you think is hardest for you to practice consistently? Why? Share your thoughts with the group.

- Stop repeated warnings and take immediate action.
  - Stay in healthy authority.
  - Hold children accountable for their choices.
  - Let reality be the teacher.
  - No one member of the family is more important than the family.
  - Relationships come before rules.
  - Stand shoulder-to-shoulder as parents.
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11. As a group, discuss how you would apply the reality discipline principles in each of the examples below. Write your suggestions to the right of each example.

Nathan screams, "I'm not going to sit by you!" to his stepsister at the dinner table.	
"If you hadn't divorced Mom, I wouldn't have to share a room with a new sister!"	
Garrett seems upset after reading the letter he got from his dad when he got home from school.	
"You're not my mother, and you can't stop me from wearing what I want to the party!"	

Benjamin and Rhonda are fighting over who gets to use the family car Saturday afternoon.	
“Wait until I tell my real mother you make me wash dishes!”	
“He only has one child. Why can’t they move in with us? I don’t want to move to a new neighborhood.”	

***PERSONAL APPLICATION***

12. Read Romans 12:1-2. Paraphrase these verses as a commitment to build Christian homes where parents have the courage to discipline their children.

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13. Write a prayer sharing your concerns about how to discipline children in the blended family. Thank God for providing the ultimate model of discipline in the way He loved us in spite of our sins. Pray for the other participants in your group.

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Remember, blended families often bring emotional struggles with them to the new home. Parents have an awesome responsibility to guide and nurture children. You can know you are serving under the authority of God as you make the best decisions possible when you discipline children in your family. Dare to be different from the world. Working together is the key to building a home where everybody wins.

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

