

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

*WHERE EVERYBODY
FEELS AT HOME*

DR. KEVIN LEMAN

WORKBOOK

W O R K B O O K



BRINGING PEACE & HARMONY TO THE BLENDED FAMILY

WHERE EVERYBODY FEELS AT HOME

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WITH

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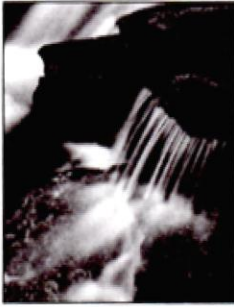
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Lesson 4

SURVIVING THE BIRTH ORDER BLENDER

How Your Unique Birth Order Affects Your Relationships!

SCRIPTURE

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

--Psalm 139:13-14

LESSON OUTLINE

I. Recognize the changes each new child brings to the family because of his or her birth order.

- A. Everybody has a birth _____.
- B. Different roles and distinct personalities will emerge in families.
- C. First born personalities of _____ or children work against blended families.

II. Birth order personalities

- A. First born child
- B. Middle child
- C. Last born child
- D. Only child

III. Have family meetings that clear the air, not the house.

- A. A _____-based home is a must.
- B. Communicate!
- C. Back off and let the kids work it out.
 - 1. Encourage cooperation—not competition.

2. Keep the ball in their court.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Fill in the missing pair from the following:

Peaches and _____ Oil and _____

Nuts and _____ Night and _____

Share your missing pairs. Some of these are opposites and some just seem to go together. Some participants might have said oil and vinegar. Others might have said oil and water. The oil and vinegar mix or blend, but oil and water don't. Some ingredients just seem to go together better than others. Share examples of personality types that may blend or may not blend. Share personal experiences, if appropriate, and how you have handled them.

2. Dr. Leman feels that families can facilitate the blending process by recognizing the different roles and distinct personalities that emerge in the family, especially in terms of birth order. He suggests there are certain characteristics people tend to have based on their birth order. Dr. Leman classifies the characteristics by birth order as seen on the chart below. Read the descriptions for your birth order. Circle or highlight any characteristics for your birth order you agree you possess.

Firstborn	Middle	Last Born	Only Child
Perfectionist	Feels squeezed	Attention getter	Perfectionist
Driven	Sociable	People person	Super Firstborn
Organized	Compromising	Charming	Hates failure
Scholarly	Compatible	Manipulative	Dependable
List maker	Mediator	Natural sales person	High expectations for self
Logical	Independent	Blames others	More older and younger friends
Leader	Noncompetitive	Precocious	Super organized
Compliant	Impatient	Engaging	Super achiever
Aggressive	Avoids conflict	The clown	"Adult" behavior

3. Look at the typical characteristics for all birth orders. Circle or highlight other characteristics from the chart even if they are not for your birth order. For example, if you are a middle child, but have characteristics of the firstborn, circle them. Don't fret over fitting the mold. Identify the characteristics that best describe your personality. Share some of your findings with the group.

4. Think about your spouse now. Use the chart to list the personality characteristics you think your spouse possesses. Write them below.

5. Compare your characteristics in number 2 with those of your spouse in number 4. Identify which characteristics you think may complement each other. Next, identify those you think may clash (potential problem areas). Keep in mind that these are not necessarily good or bad characteristics. Think about the ease or difficulty in blending. Share your opinions with the other participants.

Complementary characteristics of my spouse and me _____

Potential problem areas _____

6. Now think about the children in your family. Identify them by name on the chart. Circle the appropriate sex of each child and fill in the chart for all children in your family. Remember to use the birth order from the family into which your children were born. For example, your daughter may be a middle child now, but she was born into her original family as a firstborn, so place her as Mom or Dad's first. Use the same chart in number 2 to identify characteristics of each child. If you need more room, draw your own chart on another piece of paper.

Mom's Only	Dad's Only	Mom's First	Dad's First	Mom's Middle	Dad's Middle	Mom's Last	Dad's Last
M or F	M or F	M or F	M or F	M or F	M or F	M or F	M or F

PERSONAL APPLICATION

10. Define blend. You may want to look up the word in a dictionary and write the meanings below. Share your definition with the other participants.

Blend - _____

11. Think about the expectations formula again (Expectations – Reality = Disillusionment). Based on what you have discovered about understanding birth order, what unrealistic expectations are you hanging on to for you and your spouse?

12. What unrealistic expectations are you hanging on to that relate to the relationships between the children in your family? Jot them down.

13. Read Galatians 6:1-5 during the week as an encouragement to keep working toward the goal of bringing peace and harmony to your family.

Remember, God created each of us as special, unique individuals who are “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Psalm 139: 14). Your family ship has a new crew now. Commit to steer the ship toward the port of peace and harmony, even though the wind may try to blow you into the port of disillusionment. Learn to appreciate each other’s differences and commit to work through any unexpected challenges you may encounter along the way.

*Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
--Galatians 5:2*

