



# The Path to Redemptive Discipline



**O**ne morning, I was seeking a new experience for my exercise routine. I had heard of the trail, cutting through blackberry thickets and upward through manzanita and ponderosa pine. The most difficult section was said to be a long, steep climb known as “Cardiac Hill.”

Fortunately, the trail was well-marked, and the early section an easy uphill slope. I rounded a bend and there, on a weathered post with an ominous tilt, I spotted the sign. Perhaps it had been carved by someone in a whimsical mood, or maybe

it was a Freudian slip. But the sign read “Trial.”

What did I learn? To be certain, not all trails lead easily to one’s destination. Along many of the paths of life, we encounter a variety of challenges. The way in which we view these trials, however, may determine whether or not we reach our destination.

Of all the paths of experience, one of the most difficult seems to be that of discipline. This article attempts to provide a signpost that points the way toward a Christian view of discipline.

### Discipline, a Problem?

Findings from the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll indicate that discipline, or the lack thereof, is one of the greatest challenges facing public schools in the United States.<sup>1</sup> This has a dramatic effect on education. Studies indicate that 14 percent or more of public school teachers in the United States leave the profession after their first year, with almost half of beginning teachers exiting within the first five years.<sup>2</sup> Of those who drop out, significant proportions do so because of classroom management or discipline problems.<sup>3</sup>

Even students recognize that their teachers’ approach to discipline has a significant relationship to their effectiveness in the classroom.<sup>4</sup> Across a variety of settings, young people agreed that their worst teachers were those who were either coercive or soft on discipline, while their best teachers were those who were both demanding and caring.

This issue of discipline is not unique to the modern era. History reveals that parents and teachers have long searched for solutions to student misbehavior. Rousseau, for example, an early theorist of adolescence, observed that a young person can be “almost ungovernable.”<sup>5</sup> From the Old Testament comes the query, “How shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?”<sup>6</sup>

### What Is Discipline?

Discipline can be viewed from two opposing perspectives. The first is that of *punishment*. For many, in fact, punishment and discipline are synonymous. The focus is on external behavior—primarily in the areas of symptoms and control. Discipline deteriorates into a conflict, with teachers and students engaging in a battle of wills.

Discipline, however, is not simply the act of punishing sinners, correcting wrongs, or even preventing naughtiness. In the school setting, true discipline endeavors to help students internalize biblical principles and achieve the abundant life that God has promised.<sup>7</sup>

This takes us to the second perspective, that of *instruction*. Here discipline is seen as a journey on which young people are nurtured and where character is formed. Teachers view their roles as developing potential and helping young people to successfully navigate turbulent waters. In this model, discipline is taught, rather than merely administered.

In its broadest sense, discipline is a tangible expression of love. It involves all that educators are and do, not so much *to* the child, but *for* the child. It becomes a process whereby they

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**Figure 1**

	<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Permissive</b>	<b>Bombastic</b>	<b>Democratic</b>	<b>Redemptive</b>
<b>The Context</b>	Severity	indulgence	Anger	Reason	Compassion
<b>The Will</b>	Attempts to break the child's will	Permits the child's will to rule	Threatens the child's will	Focuses on internal controls and decisions	Prepares the child for moral self-government
<b>The Law</b>	Imposes the law without explanation	There is no law or moral standard	"The law" is inconsistently applied	The law is simply a statement of cause-effect realities	The law reflects the character of God
<b>The Student</b>	Treats the student as an ornery beast	Allows the student to do whatever makes him or her happy	Treats the student as a little devil	Treats the student as an intelligent being	Treats the student as a candidate for heaven
<b>The Message</b>	"You do it because I said so!"	"Do it, if you like."	"If you don't do it, I'll, I'll. . . you'll see!"	"We do it because it makes sense."	"I love you too much to let you unknowingly destroy yourself and others."
<b>The Punishment</b>	Abundant punishment remedies all evil.	Abundant "love" makes punishment superfluous	Punishment is the gauge that "I've had enough!"	Punishment is jointly determined with those involved	Punishment is the positive message: "That you may grow."
<b>The Metaphor</b>	The iron rod	A lollipop	Heat lightning that sometimes strikes	A well-coached team	A garden, carefully tended

guide development and destiny, helping young people grow into the fullness of the person that God wants them to be.

In essence, Christian discipline is "disciple-ing," the winning of thoughtful loyalty to right principles. Jesus called a number of men to be disciples, individuals who, along with strengths and talents, had perverse habits, distorted temperaments, and selfish pride. Christ took them as they were, and through example, encouragement, and loving correction shaped them into

committed, God-centered persons who, in turn, transformed their world.<sup>8</sup>

**What's Our Aim?**

A century ago, Ellen White wrote, "The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control."<sup>9</sup> Consequently, discipline should focus on internal rather than external restraint, on en-

abling rather than controlling. Discipline, therefore, is not so much actions that an adult performs, but rather something he or she helps children and youth learn to do for themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Why should self-discipline be the target? Self-government implies the presence of a personal decision-making process and a framework that provides stability in a person's life. Young people thus equipped grow into adulthood with definite goals, rather than aimlessly wandering through society because they never learned to make moral decisions.

The goal of discipline, then, is to develop in students the ability and inclination to take responsibility for their own lives. They learn to think and act for themselves,<sup>11</sup> to consciously endeavor to know God's will and to live in keeping with His principles.<sup>12</sup> In the process, they learn self-restraint and self-reliance—the *stop* and *go* signals in life. In fact, disciplined living is but the external expression of love and respect for God, for others, and for oneself.<sup>13</sup>

Educators' success in helping their students achieve the goal of self-management, however, depends on the way they approach discipline. There are a number of perspectives, which yield varying outcomes. We will consider five—authoritarian, permissive, bombastic, democratic, and redemptive discipline. (See Figure 1 on page 6.)

### The Authoritarian Approach

In 1831, Jacob Abbott, in an address before the American Institute of Instruction, advocated that students should be subject to the will of their teachers, who were obligated to rigorously enforce obedience.<sup>14</sup> We have surely come a long way from that philosophy. . . or have we?

Authoritarian discipline may be described as autocratic—demanding, commanding, and restrictive. It seeks to achieve control and to compel compliance. Little attention is given to the needs of the student, who finds himself or herself forced to conform: “You obey or else!” The authoritarian adult relies heavily on punishment.

Early research conducted by Lippitt and White<sup>15</sup> analyzed the behavior of young boys under an authoritarian system. They found that the youngsters' response was either cringing submission or blatant aggression. Furthermore, the boys worked effectively only when the leader was present.

The deficiencies of this approach soon become evident. While an authoritarian teacher may produce well-drilled students, when they grow into adulthood, such rigidly controlled people often lack the ability to decide or act for themselves. They are unprepared for life and often flounder along to the wrong destination.

The teacher who seeks to develop his or her students' capacity for self-government must not shatter their will or dwarf

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their decision-making capacities. To do so defeats the goal of Christian discipline. These individuals will subsequently fall easy prey to the coercive power of people with ulterior motives.

Character must be guided, but not rigidly confined. In the Middle Ages, St. Anselm said it well: “If you were to plant a tree in your garden, and were to enclose it on all sides so that it could not extend its branches, what would you find when, at the end of several years, you set it free from its bands? A tree whose branches would be bent and crooked; and would it not be your fault, for having so unreasonably

confined it?”<sup>16</sup>

The Creator did not intend the human spirit to be splintered and scarred. A crushed or battered spirit reacts with distrust and evasiveness, and may harbor a burning hatred for authority.

“But we are only trying to protect our students from evil influences because we love them,” educators may protest. Over-control is very subtle. It creeps in when adults over-protect, react with rigidity, or overuse corrective measures without showing tender regard for students and attempting to guide them toward self-government.

Over-control is dangerous. Ellen White notes, “If you wish to ruin your family [or classroom, we might add], continue to govern by brute force and you will surely succeed.”<sup>17</sup> While teachers and administrators do possess authority, they must judiciously assert their power, keeping in mind the eternal welfare of their students. Without love, authority develops into oppression.

How should the educator use his or her authority? To guide, mentor, and develop. Every true teacher will feel that should he err at all, “it is better to err on the side of mercy than on the side of severity.”<sup>18</sup>

### The Permissive Perspective

Permissive discipline is not so much a method of discipline as the lack thereof. James Dobson notes that perhaps the greatest social disaster of the 20th century was the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary.<sup>19</sup>

This concept, however, is foreign to God Himself. The Bible reveals that God loves human beings with a love that is greater than death, and yet those whom He loves He corrects.<sup>20</sup> In His infinite wisdom, God understands that human beings, unless they have a sanctified will, inevitably choose a sinful path.<sup>21</sup>

Permissiveness is based upon a false concept of freedom and love. Not wanting to make students feel restrained, teachers instead make them miserable. They allow students to carve out a self-centered life, which inevitably bears fruit in restlessness and discontentment. Students need boundaries.<sup>22</sup> They search for order and appreciate justice. The chaos of permissive discipline is difficult for young people to understand, and its lack of limits

makes them feel insecure.

When teachers require neither responsibility nor respect in their interaction with students, this sets the stage for a society that is lacking these virtues.<sup>23</sup> Even a cursory evaluation of the contemporary societies where permissiveness has been so much in vogue reveals that it has been a disaster.<sup>24</sup>

A corollary of permissive discipline is the teacher who is overly anxious to spare students the consequences of their choices. This does a disservice to the child, who is placed in an artificial and unrealistic environment, and is thus unprepared to face the “real world.” Character, however, is developed through hardship.<sup>25</sup> The objective of the Christian educator is not to teach students how to escape difficulties, but to help them transform trials into steppingstones.

Another variant of permissiveness is when educators coax, bribe, compromise, or put off dealing with misbehavior until a “convenient time.”<sup>26</sup> This approach shows sentimentalism, not

Many children have been reared on this “thunder and lightning” approach to discipline. Nothing, however, grows in a lava bed fueled by violent eruptions. To discipline while overcome by rage is actually a type of over-control, which quickly degenerates into permissiveness. The undesirable behavior is not remedied, only scattered and multiplied.

Students who experience inconsistent discipline never know what is expected of them. They become convinced that it is senseless to even try to follow the rules.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps, even more tragically, the adult’s inconsistencies provide no moral frame of reference. Young people need the guidance, peace, and security that come from adult predictability.

Ellen White observed, “Sharp words and continual censure bewilder the child, but do not reform him.”<sup>29</sup> Educators must not make rash statements before truly understanding a situation. It is altogether too easy to pronounce threats which one cannot or would not want to carry out.<sup>30</sup> Avoid threats. Act!

But act with intentionality and sensitivity. When you feel inclined to be passionate, be *compassionate*. There is a difference.

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### **A Democratic Dimension**

If discipline is to train for self-government, it must incorporate democratic elements. In many respects, democratic discipline is superior to the approaches that we have discussed above. In the classic study noted earlier,<sup>31</sup> boys under an authoritarian system worked actively only when the leader was present. When supervised by a democratic leader, however, the boys displayed cooperation and en-

hanced productivity, even when the leader was not physically present.

love. Furthermore, when teachers “make deals” in order to “gain control,” the results are only temporary. How does permissiveness align with the goal of self-government? Like the child under coercive discipline, the indulged youngster has little opportunity to learn how to make right decisions and fails to develop the bedrock of personal morality. Adult forbearance has degenerated into tolerance of the young person’s deficiencies. Whatever is, is right, or at least tolerable. This failure to instruct actually constitutes a form of child abuse.<sup>27</sup>

In summary, permissive discipline is the downward path of least resistance, a trail whose end causes great damage to the child’s character, self-worth, and future.

### **The Bombastic Barrage**

The bombastic method of discipline rains down a torrent of angry words and threats. Sometimes dramatic action follows, but more often than not, it only stimulates a new deluge of empty threats. The students become so accustomed to the noise that they ignore the teacher’s threats. The teacher must then work up to a screaming frenzy in order to produce any reaction, since he or she can never count on instant obedience.

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The democratic method is based on internal controls. This requires that the principles that govern life be explained to the young person in such a way that their logic and the interplay of cause and effect are clearly seen. This will enable students to identify positive values and use them to make personal decisions.

In the democratic system, students can help to establish the rules of the classroom.<sup>32</sup> This makes them participants in governance and decision-making. They begin to recognize and accept the consequences of their behavior, and thus assume responsibility for their lives.

Democratic discipline seeks to make obedience attainable. This may require adjusting the requirements to the student’s ability. Acceptable performance and right action are placed within the realm of possibility, and the child’s self-esteem is enhanced as the teacher provides him or her with opportunities for success.

While the democratic view is one of the more favorable in secular settings, there is an added perspective within Christian education—that of redemption, which transforms the school’s approach to discipline.

## God Demonstrates a Method

Children and youth learn about God's character by observing its reflection in those with whom they associate. As educators, we need to understand how God disciplines,<sup>33</sup> and then illustrate through our interactions the divine model of discipline.

God does not compromise with evil,<sup>34</sup> yet He loves the sinner.<sup>35</sup> He becomes intimately involved with humankind,<sup>36</sup> taking the initiative to bridge the gap between Him and us. His guidance and reproof are tangible expressions of that love—"I correct and discipline everyone I love."<sup>37</sup> God gives us the freedom to make mistakes; and then transforms our failures into learning experiences.<sup>38</sup> He does not abandon us if we choose unwisely. He is the "Great Recoverer."

God focuses on transformation, rather than censure and condemnation. On one occasion, the Jews brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery, urging that she be stoned. After addressing the accusers' hypocrisy, Jesus spoke to the woman, "Neither do I condemn you." He then added, "Go now and leave your life of sin."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus clarified, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."<sup>40</sup>

God sees us, not as we are, but as we can become, by His grace. He does not give up on us when the results are not immediate. Indeed, He runs the risk of "looking bad," while we struggle to accept His power to become inwardly good. He trusts the untrustworthy, and keeps on doing so. There is a higher goal to God's method that outweighs any risk. By allowing us the freedom of choice, God provides the foundation for obedience based on love, which is itself the expression of self-government.<sup>41</sup>

God combines discipline and instruction. "Joyful are those you discipline, Lord, those you teach with your instructions."<sup>42</sup> He also praises and encourages. Of Job He said, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth."<sup>43</sup> God's purpose is to bring about good. "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness."<sup>44</sup> "Blessed is the one whom God corrects."<sup>45</sup>

### A Biblical Foundation

Redemptive discipline is founded on biblical principles. Proverbs, for example, includes at least 20 passages about discipline.<sup>46</sup> Depending on the translation, the terms *to discipline*, *to correct*, *to nurture*, and *to instruct* are often used interchangeably. This is fitting, considering the context of the original language, as well as the perspective in which discipline and instruction are elements of the total educational process.<sup>47</sup>

A comprehensive passage appears in Hebrews 12:5-13, from which we can glean a number of key concepts:

- *Love motivates true discipline* (vss. 5, 6). Even when students are corrected, they must sense that the penalty has been imposed because they are loved.

- *Discipline is based on relationship* (vss. 7, 8). It is a declaration of belonging, an evidence of concern and caring.

- *Discipline must incorporate respect* (vs. 9). It should teach respect for others, for self, and for those in authority.<sup>48</sup> Respect, however, must be mutual. Adults cannot expect a young person to treat others with dignity unless they model this virtue themselves.

- *Discipline has a high purpose* (vs. 10). It helps to prepare the student for godliness, for God-likeness.

- *Discipline is forward-looking* (vs. 11). It takes eternity into account.

- *Discipline establishes clear boundaries and expectations* (vss. 12, 13). At the same time, it is also compassionate—nurturing, remediating, and strengthening.

Other principles of redemptive discipline may be found throughout Scripture. These reveal that discipline:

- *Functions within a context of love*: "Those who love their children care enough to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24 and 3:12; Revelation 3:19);

- *Involves self-government*: "The grace of God... teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12, NIV; also Philippians 2:12, 2 Timothy 1:7, and Titus 1:8);

- *Is time-sensitive*: "Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise, you will ruin their lives" (Proverbs 19:18);

- *Is personalized*: "On some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 24, 24, NKJV);

- *Relates to one's self-image*: "He who ignores discipline despises himself" (Proverbs 15:32);

- *Is centered on learning*: "To discipline a child produces wisdom" (Proverbs 29:15); also Psalm 94:12 and Proverbs 1:1-7, 12:1, 15:5);

- *Seeks long-term results*: "No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way" (Hebrews 12:11; also Proverbs 22:6); and

- *Focuses on destiny*: "Corrective discipline is the way to life" (Proverbs 6:23; also 5:23 and 10:17).

We conclude our exploration of biblical principles with Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Paul first provides a negative command, “Do not provoke,” “Do not exasperate” (NIV). This happens when adults are arbitrary and capricious, when they threaten and then act inconsistently, when they discipline in anger, and, perhaps ironically, when they provide no real guidance at all. The net result is that students lose their confidence in adults’ regard for their well-being, and despair of developing self-efficacy and self-government. They “lose heart.”<sup>49</sup>

The apostle now moves to the positive, “bring them up”—nourish them to maturity.<sup>50</sup> Notice that this occurs through two processes, discipline and instruction. The Greek word *paideia*,<sup>51</sup> translated as “discipline” or “training,” refers to the education of children and includes a balance of nurture and correction. In the context of Greek society, this process was to transmit culture and to prepare the individual for self-government. The Greek *nouthesia*,<sup>52</sup> translated “instruction” or “admonition,” means to counsel, to warn, or to advise. It implies the young person’s need for guidance, and the educator’s responsibility to mentor, direct, and encourage.

Paul concludes by highlighting the most important aspect of this experience, “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Redemptive discipline should provide students with a clearer picture of who God is and should bring them into a deeper relationship with Him.

### The Redemptive Remedy

Redemptive discipline is a joint venture with God. It seeks to help students know God more deeply, understand more clearly His design for their lives, and personally experience salvation. It involves not merely desire a change in behavior, but also in priorities and in allegiance—a life redirected toward God.

In redemptive discipline, it is God who changes the heart. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, human beings may be restored to the image of their Maker. Teachers provide a Spirit-filled environment in order that their students may know God experientially. As representatives of God’s character, they seek to make tangible His love and plan of salvation. As a result, young people are prepared for loyal self-government, both on earth and in heavenly places.

In a redemptive approach, discipline and love are not antagonistic. One is but a function of the other.<sup>53</sup> God knows that the absence of either love or justice will quickly bring disaster. Authority and affection must be blended. Justice must be tempered with mercy and compassion.

Love is, in fact, central to redemption.<sup>54</sup> When teachers mirror God’s love, they will give of themselves and unconditionally

Figure 2

## Ellen G. White’s Perspective on Discipline

- Recognize and develop the student’s potential (p. 294);
  - Focus on strengths rather than deficiencies (p. 294);
  - Provide students with a voice in making the rules (p. 290);
  - Have only a few, well-considered rules, consistently applied (p. 290);
  - Make compliance with the rules as easy as possible (p. 288);
  - Show that you trust the students (p. 289);
  - Ask, rather than command (p. 290);
  - Avoid an attitude of censure (p. 291);
  - Avoid reproving a student before his or her peers (p. 293);
  - Awaken in the student a desire for excellence (p. 297);
  - Appeal to the student’s desire to be logical (p. 287);
  - Appeal to the love of liberty (p. 291);
  - Appeal to the instinct of self-preservation (p. 287);
  - Teach the student the power that lies in his or her will (p. 289);
  - Show your students that you truly care (p. 293).
- (Education, chap. 34, pp. 287-296)

love the unlovely. The child who feels thus loved will live a secure and hope-filled life.

Redemptive discipline is distinct from the other methods discussed in this article. When compared with the authoritarian approach, for example, the redemptive adult exerts influence in place of coercion. Cooperation is won rather than demanded. Instead of a confrontational “You do as I say!”, the teacher says, “Let’s do it together.” Instead of defending fragile adult prestige, he or she reflects upon what the situation requires.

Redemption takes a whole-person approach and thus shapes the emotional and spiritual attitudes of the child, in addition to the cognitive and behavioral. It cultivates the affections and fosters trust, cooperation, and compassion.

Even when a young person’s behavior is unacceptable, adults must not make him or her feel rejected. At these times, through their actions, teachers must convey the message, “I love you too much to allow you to destroy yourself and others.” This preserves the student’s self-respect and revitalizes his or her courage. If the teacher traces the problem from cause to effect, this will enable the child to identify the root of the problem and predict future difficulties. While calling sin by its right name, the teacher must not confuse the sinner with the sin. When God disciplines His children, He does not banish them, but draws them closer to Himself. These students must be directed to God as the Source of pardon and help in overcoming destructive habits.

Discipline that focuses only on eradicating evil is doomed to fail. It may make a person *look* good, but, in reality, *be* good for nothing. The ultimate purpose of discipline is discipleship.<sup>55</sup> True

discipline not only guards, but guides. It overcomes evil with good.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, discipline focuses on positive development.<sup>57</sup> The truly disciplined individual is not one who only knows *what not to do*, but who receives instruction and practices *positive behavior*.<sup>58</sup>

Consequently, redemptive discipline focuses on positive observations—commendation, encouragement, and praise. While avoiding flattery, it liberally affirms positive attitudes and behaviors: “Well done, good and faithful servant!”<sup>59</sup> It deliberately seeks the opportunity to “catch students” doing things right and provides positive feedback, while recognizing that “every good gift. . . is from above.”<sup>60</sup> This perspective is biblical. Jesus, for example, commended Mary for having chosen the “good part.”<sup>61</sup> He recognized the widow who gave an offering of two small coins, the woman who timidly touched His garment, and the centurion who exclaimed, “Speak the word only.”<sup>62</sup> He praised the persistent widow, the tax collector who felt his unworthiness, the selfless service of the Good Samaritan, and the ministry of John the Baptist.<sup>63</sup> Each one, a convincing testimony to the role of affirmation.

As teachers seek to redeem, they must exercise tact and tenderness, respecting students’ feelings and developmental needs, and providing well-established boundaries and active guidance. By establishing a trust relationship, they will be able to reclaim through kindness and love. Embedded in every reproof should be the positive message “that you may grow.”

## To Arrive

Redemptive discipline is not an event, but a process. As teachers set out on this journey, they must have a definite purpose in mind: “May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. May our daughters be like graceful pillars, carved to beautify a palace.”<sup>64</sup> Christian educators must focus on eternal results—seeking to raise up a generation of young people who will exemplify the character of their Lord and Savior, both now and throughout eternity.

Not all trails lead us to this destination. The route may not be easy, but only God’s pathway can ensure success. I invite you to partner with God in the ministry of redemptive discipline and thereby transform lives through redemptive love.

By the way, when I reached the top of the ridge and glimpsed the snow-clad Sierras, I learned one more lesson—the destination can be worth it all. 🍃



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6. Judges 13:12 (KJV). Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible texts in this article and in the endnotes are quoted from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. Scripture texts credited to NASB are from *The New American Standard Bible* copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977. Scripture texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible*, *New International Version*, copyright © 1973, 1978, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.
7. John 10:10.
8. Acts 17:6.
9. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 287. Mrs. White’s perspective on discipline can be found in *Education*, chapter 34, pp. 287-296.
10. Proverbs 16:32.
11. White, *Education*, p. 17.
12. “It is better to request than to command; the one thus addressed has opportunity to prove himself loyal to right principles. His obedience is the result of choice rather than compulsion” (Ibid., p. 290).
13. 1 Peter 2:17.
14. Recorded in the *First Annual Report*, page 90. Referenced in P. E. Harris, *Changing Conceptions of School Discipline* (Norwood, Mass.: Macmillan Co., 1928).



15. R. Lippit and R. K. White, "An Experimental Study of Leadership and Group Life." In *Human Development: Selected Readings* (New York: Crowell, 1966).

16. Cited in Gabriel Compayre and W. H. Payne, *History of Pedagogy* (Boston: Cushing and Co., 1885), p. 77. Also cited, with slight variations in wording, in F. G. Williamson and J. D. Foley, *Counseling and Discipline* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), p. 42.

17. Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ. Assn., 1954), p. 252. White also notes, "The training of children must be conducted on a different principle from that which governs the training of irrational animals. The brute has only to be accustomed to submit to its master; but the child must be taught to control himself. The will must be trained to obey the dictates of reason and conscience. A child may be so disciplined as to have, like the beast, no will of its own, his individuality being lost in that of his teacher. Such training is unwise, and its effect disastrous. Children thus educated will be deficient in firmness and decision" (*Fundamentals of Christian Education* [Nashville: Southern Publ. Assn., 1923], p. 57).

18. \_\_\_\_\_, *Education*, p. 294.

19. James Dobson, *Dare to Discipline* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1979), p. 21.

20. John 3:16; Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6.

21. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, NKJV). See also Romans 7:18-24 and Proverbs 22:15. Texts credited to NKJV are from The New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

22. Some have suggested that children are like windup clocks—they must be allowed to run. While this concept has some basis in truth, it is also potentially dangerous. Children cannot be allowed to run wild. Scripture reminds us, "A youngster's heart is filled with foolishness" (Proverbs 22:15) and "A child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15, NKJV). For students to "keep time," their inner spring must be attached to something of fixed value.

23. Eli is an example. While he remonstrated with his sons regarding their contemptible behavior, he never took corrective measures. In the end, God rejected Eli's house specifically because he failed to follow through with disciplinary action (1 Samuel 2:22-25; 3:12, 13).

24. "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Timothy 3:2, NKJV). See also Romans 1:28-32.

25. Job 23:10; Proverbs 17:3; Zechariah 13:9.

26. Acts 24:25 (NKJV).

27. "Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24). As one young person stated, "My father doesn't care about me. He has never disciplined me" (Quoted in Reuben Hilde, *The Rod vs. the M&M's* [Mountain View: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1976], p. 50).

28. Perhaps this is why Ellen White wrote, "Rules should be few and well considered; and when once made, they should be enforced. Whatever it is found impossible to change, the mind learns to recognize and adapt itself to; but the possibility of indulgence induces desire, hope, and uncertainty, and the results are restlessness, irritability, and insubordination" (*Education*, p. 290).

29. Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1943), p. 195. White also wrote: "Sometimes they [the children] will have to be punished, but never do it in such a way that they will feel that they have been punished in anger. By such a course you only work a greater evil. . . . Discipline them only when you are under the discipline of God. . . . Do not let them have their own way until you get angry, and then punish them. Such correction only helps on the evil, instead of remedying it. To manifest passion toward an erring child is to increase the evil" (*Child Guidance*, pp. 244, 245).

30. "Short-tempered people do foolish things" (Proverbs 14:17, NLT).

31. Lippit and White, "An Experimental Study of Leadership and Group Life." In *Human Development: Selected Readings*, op cit.

32. Ellen White observes, "The rules governing the schoolroom should, so far as possible, represent the voice of the school. Every principle involved in them should be so placed before the student that he may be convinced of its justice. Thus he will feel a responsibility to see that the rules which he himself has helped to frame are obeyed" (*Education*, p. 290).

33. Deuteronomy 8:5. In exploring this topic of the divine approach to discipline, I am indebted to an insightful seminar on the topic presented by

Richard Winn, as well as subsequent conversations with my colleague Dennis Blum.

34. Jeremiah 30:11 and 46:28.

35. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV).

36. Luke 13:34; Mark 10:16; Hosea 11:3.

37. Revelation 3:19. Also, "The Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:12).

38. Psalm 16:11.

39. John 8:11 (NIV).

40. John 3:17 (NIV).

41. William Glasser, psychiatrist and author of a number of books on choice theory (e.g., *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*, Harper, 1999; and *Choice Theory in the Classroom*, Harper, 1998), maintains that personal choice is foundational to any relationship, including that of teachers and students. He notes that teachers often assume that people can be forced through threat, punishment, or reward to do things that they do not want to do, which reinforces their tendency to coerce and apply external control, producing frustration and misery. Choice, however, is consistent with the Golden Rule, in which we do to others as we would wish to have done to ourselves. In the classroom, this approach translates to team-learning, which emphasizes belonging, individual freedom, meaningful interaction, and personal satisfaction. In the book *Soul Shapers: A Better Plan for Parents and Educators* (Review & Herald, 2005), Jim Roy continues to develop the choice-based model in education, comparing the ideas of William Glasser with those of Ellen White. He observes, for example, that teachers can't control kids. They can only teach them how to control themselves. He then illustrates how a non-coercive approach leads students beyond grudging compliance to become committed and self-motivated individuals. See also JAE theme issue on Quality Schools (February/March 2007) and the article on page 20 of this issue.

42. Psalm 94:12.

43. Job 1:8.

44. Hebrews 12:10 (NIV); also 1 Corinthians 11:32.

45. Job 5:17 (NIV).

46. In the NLT, for example, the term *discipline* appears in the following passages in the Book of Proverbs: 1:2, 3, 7; 3:11; 5:12; 6:23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1, 24; 15:5, 10, 32; 16:22; 19:18; 20:30; 22:15; 23:13, 14, 23; 29:15, 17; 29:19. In the NIV, the term appears in 1:2, 3, 7; 3:11, 12; 5:12, 23; 6:23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18, 24; 15:5, 10; 15:32; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 23; 29:17.

47. Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:4-9.

48. Romans 13:7.

49. Colossians 3:21.

50. Greek *ektrepho*. Also found in Ephesians 5:29.

51. Also found in 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 12:5, 7, 8, 11.

52. Also found in 1 Corinthians 10:11; Titus 3:10.

53. "The Lord disciplines those he loves" (Hebrews 12:6).

54. John 3:16, 17.

55. Matthew 28:18-20.

56. Romans 12:21.

57. In his childhood, Timothy was wisely disciplined—his mind was filled with a knowledge of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15). At 12 years of age, Jesus had already committed himself to His "Father's business" (Luke 2:49, NKJV).

58. Jesus told a parable about a man from whom a demon was driven (Luke 11:23-26). The demon wandered in arid places and found no home. He finally came back to his former house to find it swept and redecorated, but still empty. He quickly sought out other homeless demons and invited them to live with him in the man's clean but empty life. Jesus said that the man's last state was worse than the first. See also Matthew 22:37-40, John 13:34, and Matthew 25:31-46.

59. Matthew 25:20-22.

60. James 1:17, NKJV. This balance is particularly illustrated in the following incident: When Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus affirmed Peter's response, but told him that the answer was revealed to him by the Father (Matthew 16:13-17).

61. Luke 10:38-42.

62. Matthew 8:8 (KJV).

63. Luke 18:1-8; Luke 18:10-14; Luke 10:30-37; Luke 5:33-35.

64. Psalm 144:12.