

Rules for Managing Your Family

Slide1 FIVE FAMILY RULES

This seminar is to all the parents who are looking for a simple way to manage their family. The Scripture says, "Train up a child in the way that he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." (Psalm 32:8)

But, in our search by this time we wondered if there really was an easy way to raise children. We were asking just one question — "How do you provide children with a set of rules they can easily remember, understand, and follow?" We wanted rules that were so simple, even the little children could know them. We wanted our children to be taught of the Lord and have great peace. We knew that godly, consistent discipline would bring peace to our children. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isaiah 54:13) Even though we may not have felt like it at times, we also knew that we had a special anointing from the Lord to raise our children. (Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 in the Amplified Version for more on family anointing). So we did what 1 Corinthians 14:15 and James 1:3 tells us to do, pray for wisdom and discernment in this area.

A lasso can be used to capture something wild. It can be used to rescue something or someone in harms way. It can be used to remove something out of an area.

The Five Family Rules are designed to protect and / or rescue our families and children.

Slide2 RULE NUMBER ONE "LOVE" After much prayer and searching, the Lord gave us the first family rule. We were to discover later that this rule sets the standard for all the other four rules, as well as attitudes, character qualities, and communication. It is a simple, one-word rule: LOVE! Everything else fits under this rule! 1 Corinthians 16:14 says, "Let all your things be done with love."

Agape LOVE is defined as, "Giving to other's basic needs without having as my motive personal reward." Agape Love gives without any expectation of gain. Just look at John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son..." Remember that 1 John 4:8 says that God is Love. So, we could read John 3:16 this way, "For LOVE so loved the world..." Everywhere you read "God" in the Bible, for a deeper understanding of His Love for us, you can substitute the word "Love." John G. Lake quoted Amy Carmichael saying, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

When a household, beginning from the parents down to the pets, operates in love, there is an incredible sense of peacefulness and security in the home. It is like Heaven In The Home! After all, love is the atmosphere of heaven.

This rule especially applies to parents in regards to discipline. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath punishment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love". If your children are afraid of you, especially during times of discipline, then you are probably not operating in Love. Stop and pray about what YOU can change in your life. Godly discipline has to start with the parents. If you discipline in anger it will have a destructive or detrimental effect on your children, producing fear in them. Never discipline your children out of anger, fear, selfishness, or any other negative character quality.

Remember, discipline is more than just correction or punishment. Love is the foundation of godly discipline. Love is the key. The purpose of discipline is to build godly character in our children and in us. The purpose of correction is to restore the relationship. We want to help our children to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way to effectively do that without

any fear is to have love as the motivation. When we do things in love, we will earn the right to be heard and are not likely to wound the spirits of our children. .

Godly discipline consists of three things: Instruction, Warning, and Correction. In order to teach discipline and earn the right to be heard, we as the parents should always demonstrate, by example and life-witness, how we want our children to live. If we show inconsistency between what we say and what we do, we will lose their respect and our children will tend to discount our words.

Instruction should be clear and understood at the child's level. He or she has to know what is expected and what are the consequences of not doing what is expected.

Warnings need to be clear, reminding the child what is expected and what happens if he or she does not do what is expected. Of course, expectations need to be godly and age appropriate. If possible, warning should be given in private. Only give ONE warning. Teach your children to immediately obey the first time. This training could literally save their lives.

It is vital that correction be done in love and honor. Never correct in public. Always correct in private. Remember, the purpose of correction is not just to punish. Its purpose is to restore the relationship and bring desired results.

Now, back to the application of the first rule. If the children fight, hit, argue, or envy, it all falls under the failure to follow the Rule Of Love. If they don't help each other, if they don't want the best for each other, if they don't say nice things to each other. or if they call each other names, they are breaking this rule.

Healthy family life occurs under the Rule Of Love. The goal is to make this the foundation of all we say and do with each other, with our extended family members, and with others outside the family.

As parents, we are to lead by example. In the Army, I learned to be skilled in leadership. Be — Know — Do. BE what you are expecting from your soldiers. KNOW what you are doing by being tactically skilled and technically proficient. And, DO what you are expecting your soldiers to do.

In a healthy family system, parents understand and know the rules, follow the rules and teach them by example. Some parents tell their children, "Do as I say, not as I do."

II.

This undermines and destroys the very thing parents want to accomplish. The human mind will ignore the "Don't" command and focus on the negative thing you are trying to avoid. If I told you, for example, -Whatever you do, don't think of pink flying pigs." What happened? In your mind's eye, you saw the very things I didn't want you to see.

Instead, focus on the positive things you are to do or not do. The best way to do this is to model the behavior. When you lead by example, you earn respect. Your children will want to please you and be just like you. As Christian parents, we want to be like Jesus because our children want to be like us. Paul wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). The Greek word for followers means "exact copies" or "imitators." Paul also wrote in Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear [beloved] children [who are the apple of their father's eye]. And walk in love, as Christ [the Anointed One and His Anointing] also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." One-way to maintain an attitude of love at all times with your family is to treat each person with honor. You dishonor your child if you cut him or her down; use put-downs, shaming, name-calling, or exposing mistakes or weaknesses. Never try to motivate them by guilt manipulation, cut-downs, or denigrating jokes. Never correct or discipline in public.

Always try to reward them in public. Praise their godly character qualities. Speak well of them to others, especially when they are nearby and can hear your conversation. Be loyal and dependable to them.

By putting God first, then your spouse, then your children, then your job or ministry, you are honoring God and your family. (And for clarification purposes, if you are in the ministry as a volunteer or a full-time minister, your personal relationship with God is your priority. Your ministry is NOT the same thing as your personal relationship with Him. Don't use God as an excuse to be disloyal to your family. Don't allow your ministry to come before your family). One of the most important ways to love God is to love yourself, your spouse, and your family. You and your spouse are God's gifts to each other and to your children. So, treat each other and them with honor.

There are four relationships we have: 1) Our relationship with God, 2) With ourselves, 3) With others, and 4) With creation. The most important relationships we have with others are our covenant relationships we have with our spouses and with our family members. Remember, when we love our family, we love God. Our families are God's gifts to us and we should always be honoring (respectful) and loyal to them.

Honor is a special way that we can show Love to each other. We honor what we value. Jesus valued our family members so much that He went to the cross to pay the price for them to go to heaven. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

One time when I was about eight years old, I went with my grandmother to an estate sale. I had \$5 in my pocket and I was looking to find a treasure. But, the only thing I found that I was interested in was an old violin with the strings broken off and no bridge. Not wanting to go away empty handed, I went ahead and bought the violin for \$5. I thought, at least I could hang it on the wall or something. It didn't even come with a case.

Years later, after I was married for about a year, my wife shared with me that she had always wanted to learn to play the violin. Then, I remembered about that old violin in the garage that I bought years ago at the estate sale. So, I found a place that repaired violins and took it in to see if it was worth fixing. Well, it wasn't a Stradivarius, but after they looked it over they said, "Yes, it is well worth fixing." They told me that it was made in Germany in 1911 and only had a little crack at the base. They also said that for a mere \$100 or so, they could fix it up, give me a case and a new bow. After doing a bit more research, they gave me a certificate of appraisal for the old violin for \$1,100!

Suddenly, that old violin that seemed almost worthless to me became quite valuable in my eyes. I no longer kept it in the garage, but in its own special case. And, it made a wonderful Christmas gift that year to my precious sweetheart. If only I could do that with every \$5 bill.

How much more valuable and precious are the gifts of our family relationships that God has given us. Treat them with honor and handle them with care. It is the Rule Of Love.

Slide3 IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY RULES

Each of our Five Family Rules has many Scriptures to back it up. And, every rule has many godly character qualities that fit under it. Honor and loyalty are a couple of character qualities that fit under the Rule Of Love. I encourage you to find more Scriptures for this rule on your own. That way you can know and understand them even better. When you do this research as a family project, each family rule becomes more meaningful to you, becoming your own and not just someone else's procedure.

For example, read 1 Corinthians chapter 13 as a family, make a list of each point, and think of ways to do each one with each other in a positive way. In other words, when Paul says, "charity

(agape love)...seeketh not her own," think of ways that you can be servants to each other. Think of ways to esteem (consider) each other more highly than yourselves. And, think of things you can do for each other. Apply and live the rule by being Scripturally sound and spiritually sensitive.

3 Now, before we go further I will point out that we have rules for our Family Rules. We do not just arbitrarily follow the rules when it is easy or convenient. In order to be effective and achieve their purpose, we choose to apply the rules wisely and in specific ways. That is why we have the Guidelines For Family Rules.

Slide4 GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY RULES

Family Rules Should Be:

1. FOLLOWED IN LOVE. Remember,

the first Rule is the Rule Of Love and the first

Guideline for Family Rules is Love. I Corinthians 13:13 says, "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity (love); but the greatest of these is charity (love).

2. TAUGHT IN LOVE. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." (Psalm 32:8) We cannot expect our children to follow the rules if they don't know what they are or what they mean. Children think and see things differently than adults. They can memorize Ephesians 6:1, but they also have to know what "obey" means and what "parents" are. Also, one-word rules can be very broad in their interpretation. You must be very clear on what they mean, what is expected, and what happens if they are not followed.

3. TAUGHT LOVINGLY BY EXAMPLE. Paul said, "Be followers (imitators) of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Let's be examples of the love of the Lord to our families.

4. UNIVERSALLY APPLIED IN LOVE. Joshua said, "As for me AND MY HOUSE, we shall serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) If we are watching TV and have to change the channel because a younger member of the family comes into the room, we have no business watching that in the first place. TV is a great example of the need for universal application, even the secular world says that most of the shows are bad for younger children. Many of the prime time TV shows on the major networks are rated TV 14. Parents who choose to watch PG13 rated movies, R-rated movies, or TV14 shows at home with younger children would be wise to consider that. Ask yourself, "What are we, as Christians doing watching such shows that even the world says are NOT APPROPRIATE?" The truth is, we must not allow anything into our homes that debases, corrupts, demeans, belittles, or goes against Biblical principles and God's Word and call it entertainment. That includes, newspapers, magazines, video games, Internet web sites, etc. (Proverbs 4:23; Mark 4:24)

5. CONSISTENTLY WITH LOVE. We have to be consistent and loving in defining the rules and applying the consequences. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (James 3:10) People in dysfunctional families are not consistent and they produce rebellious children with personality disorders. Consistency is important because it provides security to the children. They know what is expected and what will happen if they disobey. It may take more time at the moment, but in the long run it makes a major difference. You cannot be arbitrary on what the rules mean or when they are enforced. It is better to be late than to be inconsistent. Inconsistency creates mistrust and insecurity. Such behavior from people, especially ones in authority, is often referred to as "crazy-making." Parents should avoid all forms of inconsistency and incongruity in their words and behavior.

Slide 5 # 5 RULE NUMBER TWO ASK

The second family rule is the RULE OF ASK! We are stewards of what God has given us. Before we borrow or play with something that belongs to another, we ask permission. Before we go somewhere or do something, we ask permission. God wants us to ask Him for wisdom (James 1:3) and for the things of the Kingdom we desire (Matthew 7:7). Think of all the troubles Israel could have avoided if they had first asked God. (See Joshua 9:7-14; Jeremiah 10:21; and Hosea 4:6 for a few examples.)

We have found that whenever possible and appropriate, we show honor and respect to the children when we ask them their opinion before we do something. It is also empowering to them that they can sometimes make choices for the family. For example, when we are out driving around in the family van and it is time to eat, we might ask them if they want to eat out or wait until we get home. We might ask one of the children where he or she wants to eat and let that be the decision for all of us. Sometimes the other children try to influence the decision — especially when it is one of the younger children's turn to decide. Sometimes they may be disappointed if it is not where they wanted to go. But, when Rule Number One (the Rule Of Love) prevails, we then look for ways to honor and encourage one another.

Before borrowing or using something that belongs to one of our children, we make a point to ask first. For example, when I was teaching family systems at the University of North Texas, I liked to use my children's toys to represent different family members. The little Disney movie characters from fast food restaurant kid's meals made the best examples for teaching. But, I did not just take the toy bag from my son's room without asking him first if it was OK. I told him what I planned to do with them and asked if it would be OK. He almost always said yes. But, had he said no, I would have just used something else or drawn them on the chalkboard. Not only did I want to follow the Rule of Ask, but also by asking him to use one of his possessions, I was empowering him by letting him know that he had control over his own things. It even subtly encourages him to take better care of them and keep his room clean and pick up after himself. Once the rules are taught and put into practice, they become natural for all of us. Our eldest, Jonathan, is often asked by one of the six younger children to borrow or use something. It is amazing how the younger children catch on to the Rule Of Ask. By asking first, we honor the one who is the trustee (steward) of God's possession. By saying yes, he or she demonstrates trust. It all goes back to Rule Number One — The Rule Of Love.

Other times it may not be appropriate to ask. For example, we as parents can make family decisions without the permission of our children. On those occasions it is important for us to tell them in advance. This still shows honor and love, but from the imperative (telling) side instead of the interrogative (asking) side. In other words, we are telling them ahead of time so they can be prepared for the parental decisions we have made. They are much more receptive to things if we tell them before hand.

If we forget, some of the children may have a negative response even to things that are fun and exciting for them to do. Suddenly, you may find they have a bad attitude about doing something you know they usually like to do, just because you didn't tell them in advance. When children are uninformed, even about little things, they often feel demeaned or disrespected. They can internalize these feelings by thinking "my parents do not care enough about me to tell me anything." You know things are bad in the Family Communications Department when your child answers a call from your adult friends confirming a dinner invitation and that is the first time he or she heard about it. The child may feel he or she is the last one to know what's going on in your family.

Asking first also provides the security of protection and authority. We as parents are responsible to God for raising our children to love and serve Him. By loving, we must also protect. If children are in the habit of asking before they do something, it adds an additional level of safety. When they ask before they go outside, we know where they are. When they ask before they get something to drink, we know what they are intending to drink and that it is safe.

Children innately know that the rules are like fences to keep them safe. They are secure in knowing the fence is there. Inside the fence they are loved, protected, and provided for. They are free to be creative under their God-given authority. You will not be wondering where they are or if they went outside without you knowing about it. You show them respect and they show respect to you and to others.

I like to teach our children by reading or telling them stories. Many times I use dog stories, since I grew up with Shelties. If the dog stays inside the fence, he can run and play all he wants. He will get love, grooming, baths, food, water, treats, and even doggy toys. He is protected from bugs, poisons, cars, other animals, and bad people. Sometimes, when he's on a leash, he can even go out of the yard and explore with the fun and fellowship of his owner.

But, if he ever started thinking it was more fun to be outside the fence on his own and found a way to get out, we could no longer protect him or provide for him. He could then be attacked or get into trouble. It could even cost him his life. So, our children understand that family rules are not to cause them burdens or limit their freedom. They are not a list of do's and don'ts. They are rules to teach them to be more like Jesus providing them with protection and provision in love. Again, there are many Scriptures and godly character qualities you can put under the Rule Of Ask. By implementing the Rule Of Ask, children will not be taking toys away from each other or borrowing each other's clothes and things without permission. You will not have to wonder where they are or if they went outside without you knowing.

Slide6 # 6 RULE NUMBER THREE SHARE

This takes us to the next rule, which is the RULE OF SHARE. When someone asks to borrow something or play with the toy that another is playing with, the children know they are supposed to share the things God has given them. By doing this we still LOVE and we love one another as ourselves. Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)

Many times we hear this Scripture as it is applied only to tithing or giving to the church. Sharing and giving are a lifestyle. God has given to us everything we have. (James 1:17) When we realize this truth, we are then more willing to share what He has given us and even give things away (or sow as seed into His Kingdom as He leads us to give). Jesus said in Matthew 10:7, "...Freely you have received, freely give." Even if it is some THING of great value to us, when we have the Rule Of Share in our hearts, we will be willing to share or give as the Lord leads or as someone asks, or as we see a need. It becomes part of our character. God gave His most precious gift—Jesus! (John 3:16 and Romans 8:32)

We have found that all the Five Family Rules are interrelated. The Rule Of Ask and the Rule Of Share both tend to go together with the Rule Of Love as the foundation. If the Rule Of Love is working, a child will ASK and the other child will SHARE. The child who borrowed demonstrated responsibility by taking care of the toy and the child who lent it knows this because both are living together in the Rule Of Love.

There are many Scriptures on sharing and Matthew 5:42 is our primary Scripture on sharing and says that we should. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

There are some additions to the Rule Of Share that we have found helpful. We started working with our seven children (who are now ages 3 to 16) as soon as each was able to talk and understand. By the time we had our second child, we realized the need for a "one day exception" for younger children. The first day of a new purchase, toy, gift, or surprise, the child has control of whether he or she wants to share it. If he or she chooses to play, enjoy, and experience it alone, that is fine. Usually; however, within the very first hour (and sometimes a few minutes) of playing alone with the new toy, brothers and sisters are invited to join the fun.

As our children get older and understand the foundational principles of the rules, they are generally willing to share and include the others right away. This simple rule has taught them the joy of including one another and putting others first, especially their younger brothers or sisters. While they may be bothered or frustrated from time to time (since they are still children after all), we seldom see them angry when, for example, the little ones come in and mess up their homework or Lego projects. Do the other children ever break things? Sometimes they do. Does the owner of the broken toy cry? Sometimes he or she does. But, they are also learning to value EACH OTHER more than THINGS! They are learning to ask forgiveness and to forgive.

Sharing is an excellent way we can show people how much we love them and care for them. We value them more than the things we are sharing. It all goes back to the Rule Of Love!

Slide7 # 7 RULE NUMBER FOUR "ORDER"

The next rule is two sided and it is the Rule Of Order. Two sided means that it includes more than one concept. The Rule Of Order has to do with the Principle Of Design and the Character Quality Of Orderliness. The Scripture says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." (I Corinthians 14:40)

Orderliness is defined as, "Preparing myself and my surroundings in order to achieve maximum efficiency." In other words, we have a place for everything and everything goes in its place. For the children it means that they get only one toy out at a time. When they are finished playing with that toy, they put it up before getting out another toy (or group of toys) or going to do something else.

It also means that when doing chores (which we call CBEs — Character Building Exercises), we are to put up all the tools, brooms, etc. Even if we are tired from working outside all Applying the Rule Of Order means leaving places better than when we found them. It means we pick up trash outside the office or restaurant we are visiting. It means straightening up in the public restrooms. If we miss the trashcan when throwing something away, we pick it up and put the trash in the can.

The other side of the Rule Of Order is the Principle Of Design. Beds are designed for sleeping. They are not trampolines to jump on. Toys are designed to play with, not throw at other children. This is a very helpful concept for parents when it comes to dealing with creative children.

As necessary and as children get older, you can introduce other concepts and character qualities under the Rule Of Order. Respectfulness and good manners at the table, peacefulness, no yelling in the house, and no loud music are just a few examples.

Slide8 # 8 We now come to the fifth rule, which is the RULE OF OBEY. As you have already seen, all the rules are interrelated, but the first and most important one is the Rule Of Love. It has

to be the foundation for everything we do. And, the last rule is probably the second most important — that is, the Rule of Obey.

If we are living the Rule Of Love, it is easy for our children to follow the Rule Of Obey. 1 Corinthians 13:13 says that the greatest is Love. That is because in order for us to have faith in God and believe in the hope of His promises (His Word), we have to know His love. Then, His commandments are not burdensome to us. We can trust Him and know

When it comes to obedience, it is easy to obey when everything is done in love. We want to obey because we know that the rules are there for our good, not for our harm... to give us a future and a hope. We want our children to obey the rules, not out of fear of punishment, but because they love us and want to please us (and the Lord). They follow the rules because they are the right things to do.

We train our children that in order to do the Rule of Obey, they have to cheerfully obey immediately. We call that "Obey The First Time." If the children do not obey the first time we ask or tell them to do something, then it is actually disobeying. Immediate obedience can save their lives. One example might be when they are about to join you across the street at the neighbor's house and a car is coming that they did not see. You tell them to STOP! If they are not trained in what my father called "Instant Obedience," they could get hit or run over because you do not have time to yell a second time, count to three, or explain why. Of course, that is only one example of how obeying immediately can save lives.

The Rule of Obey also has a principle that goes with it. That is the Principle of Authority. God has a chain-of-command in families that is designed to bring orderliness and eliminate confusion. Each of us as Christians has a personal relationship with Jesus. We can pray directly to Him. But, when it comes to authority, there is always a chain-of-command. In the family it goes from God to the Father to the Mother to the Children and to the pets.

The children have a birth order that is designed to allow for the older children to have greater responsibilities, freedoms, and to help with the younger children. The older children have delegated training responsibilities, but not correction. They can only remind the younger children of the parent's instructions and warn them. They cannot bring correction.

The Principle of Authority also protects the children from thinking they have to obey strangers or any adult or authority figure that comes around. That could be very dangerous. The children understand that outside authorities must go through their chain-of-command before they have to obey them. Biblically, even Jesus never ministered to children unless their parents brought them to Jesus and asked Him.

An example of this is something you learn in the military. Even if you are a Private and a General comes up to you and gives you an order, you are not to obey that order. You are to remind the General that he has to go through your chain-of-command. You only take orders from your Squad Leader or Platoon Sergeant. So, the General would need to go all the way down the chain-of-command to get to you. This is so that some foreign imposter or traitor cannot sabotage the mission or order you to do something contrary to the mission of the unit. It works the same way in a family. Even the police should go through the parents when dealing with children. This includes situations when the children might be doing something illegal and are arrested; the police still have to contact the parents.

This is just a brief overview of this principle, but it helps to give clarification to the Rule Of Obey so that everyone understands that it is not an unlimited power granted to just anyone. It is only the child's parents that have direct authority over them. And, the most common extensions to this are when the parents delegate some of their authority to teachers, children's ministers, and

pastors. Most importantly, parents must follow the Rule Of Love when enforcing the Rule Of Obey.

The parents are limited by Scripture to not tell their children to sin. Parents are also limited by the laws of the land to not tell their children to do something that is illegal. As Christian parents, we would never do such things on purpose. And, we must always remember that our purpose for having this rule is to provide and protect our children and teach them to obey God and His commandments.

Slide9 # 9 PERFECT WORLD

Some people may wish to argue that we are blessed and have perfect children. Indeed, we are blessed. But, our children are not perfect. We have made it a point to take time and special effort to discipline our children in the godly way as the Lord has shown us. Children are not innately good. It is a result of love, time, and training. Do you remember I said I grew up with Shelties? Since I am an only child, I did not have brothers or sisters to play with as I was growing up. My wife, Anita, was the oldest of six children and had a lot of brothers and sisters to play with as she was growing up. I spent almost all my free time with my Shelties training them, taking them to obedience training, and playing with them. They were very well behaved and extremely loyal. A family friend saw how wonderful my dogs were and wanted to get some Shelties for his children. Unfortunately, that family did not make the effort to take their Shelties to obedience school or discipline them in any consistent way. They did not even spend much time with them, quality or otherwise. As a result, those dogs grew up to be completely out of control. I think the family finally ended up giving them away.

Children are a bit like dogs in the sense that it is by discipline that they become "wonderful." It is by discipline that they learn to be disciples of Jesus and develop godly character in their lives. The Greek word for character means "image" or "follower." We are to be followers and imitators of Christ. Just as physical discipline will develop the body, mental, emotional, and spiritual discipline will develop character.

Others may argue that because our children are young children, we have not had the challenges of dealing with older children or teenagers. The Bible says that we are to "train up our children in the way that they should go." If we do that, the promise is that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

When we just had our first infant, people said, "Just wait for the Terrible Twos." Even now, when we go to a restaurant as a family, people say, "Are those all your children? You've really got your hands full!" They may mean well, but the truth is we DO NOT have our hands full. Godly, well-disciplined, obedient children are NOT a burden at all. Maybe those people have their hands full with one or two undisciplined children. But, we don't. Praise the Lord! And, we have not gone through any "Terrible Twos" stage or other "Rebellious Stage" at any age.

People justify their unruly children by saying, "Oh, it's just a phase. They'll grow out of it." If they are being rebellious due to lack of discipline, they will probably NOT grow out of it without some hard knocks in life. If the parents fail to discipline their children, the harsh reality is that the world will. That's why Jesus said in Revelation 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten..."

Solomon wrote, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Proverbs 3:11-12) (Another good Scripture, Proverbs 15:5, says, "if you do not like correction you are a fool", and none of us want our children to become fools.)

Therefore, rebellion is not inevitable at any age! We do not have to put up with it at two years old, at seventeen years old, or ever. Rebellion is a sin. God said through the prophet Samuel, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Samuel 15:23) All authority is from God, including and especially one's parents. Children are to obey their parents and parents are to love their children. (See Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; Exodus 20:12)

Slide10 # 10 EXCEPTIONS AND AGE CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, let's look at some exceptions and age considerations with the family rules. The good thing about simple, one-word family rules is that you can develop the definitions as your family grows up.

Here is an example for the Rule Of Ask:

Jonathan is now a teenager and does not need to always ask before he gets a drink or snack out of the refrigerator. If he did, it would be more annoying than it's worth. The same is becoming true for the other two older children. Even so, sometimes the older children need to ask before they eat a snack to make sure it is not part of a planned meal and make sure they are not setting a poor example for the younger children. On the other hand, the younger children are taught to ask because they would normally choose sugar-filled or caffeine-filled drinks that would not be good for them, especially before bedtime.

Another example might be for the Rule Of Order. Under that rule, we say, "no eating in the living room". The purpose for this is to keep the floor clean and to prevent spills. But sometimes, older children and guests can eat in the living room. The older children have learned that age brings both opportunities and responsibilities — the opportunity to eat in the living room and the responsibility to be mature enough to avoid spills.

There may be times when the definitions and applications of the rules change depending on the needs of the family. These changes are not to be arbitrary or just for the convenience of the parents. They are to be explained and discussed so that everyone understands the rule, what is expected, and what the special circumstances may be. The important thing here is that the expectations and consequences are clear and consistent.

Slide11 # 11 CONCLUSION

This has been a brief summary of the revelation the Lord gave us concerning our LASOO Five Family Rules. We hope that sharing them with you in this concise manner has been an encouragement to you. And, that if you chose to make these rules a part of your home, that they are a blessing to you and your family as well.

In conclusion, I would like to share testimony from my father concerning our children and the family rules.

One day, my parents were enjoying a day with the children and my dad decided to take all of them with him to the grocery store. So, it was just the granddad and six children. Briana was the baby and Samuel was not yet born.

They were all having a great time shopping when my dad noticed the store manager was following them. He thought it was interesting because none of the children were misbehaving or as typical with a lot of children, begging for things. They were just helping get things and put them in the basket while he was holding the baby.

The manager left, but came back later with several other employees. They formed a little huddle and continued to follow my dad and the children. Finally, the manager came over and asked if he could talk with my dad. He said sure. My dad knew what they might be thinking and explained that these were his only son's children and he was their granddad.

The manager and store employees were amazed at how well the children were behaving. They said, "We wish that you could teach our customers whatever you are teaching your grandchildren. We have some parents who come into the store with one or two small children and do hundreds of dollars worth of damage. We cringe when we see families with lots of little children coming in the door. Yet, here you are alone with six children shopping!" My dad thanked them for their compliments and briefly explained the "Five Family Rules." They said, "If only you could teach that to all our customers with children!"

The Five Family Rules are a revelation from the Lord specific to our family. They have really helped us and we believe they can help your family also. But, be open to God giving you your specific version for your family.

Just remember that you have a special anointing to be the parents to your children. And, please don't forget the Guidelines for Family Rules. Pray about what rules God has for your family. Slide12 # 12 FAMILY RESTORATION NETWORK, INC.

Our family founded and developed the concept of the 7LifeLanguages™ and the Kendall Life Languages Profile™ (KLLPTM). The 7LifeLanguages™ concept is amazing in how it opens the doors of communication for husbands and wives, and parents and children. When have seen that as people learn the 7LifeLanguages™ it has saved their marriages and even saved lives. By knowing your family's KLLPs™ you will learn to communicate in your mates and children's God-given Life Languages.

The 7LifeLanguages™ also reveal powerful character traits that are innate in you and your children. The Lord is calling parents to call forth and strengthen those godly character qualities. We have books on this topic for adults, the KLLPTM for adults, teenagers and young adults. Soon it will be available for children EAS0-0 FIVE FAMILY RULES 45 and even as curriculum for home schooling. For more information on the 7LifeLanguages™ you can contact our office, and be looking for more information specifically to strengthen your family in the areas of communication and character.

The whole ministry at Family Restoration Network, Inc. (FRN) is about:
CHARACTER — COMMUNICATION — EXCELLENCE.

There are also Five Attitudes for Families, 7LifeLanguages™, Kendall Life Languages Profile™, 56 Positive Character Qualities, and much more.

For more information and resource materials please contact us at:

Family Restoration Network, Inc. 2711 Valley View Lane, Suite 103 Dallas, TX 75234
(972) 406-1313 www.FRNINC.org