

It takes diligence to train our children in good character and praise them each day. However, the end results are worth every sacrifice. This letter has tips to help you at home as you reinforce the character training that your child is learning in our karate classes.

1. If you invest a few minutes a day and implement some of the ideas in this monthly letter at home you will help your child get SO MUCH MORE out of the time you spend at our school as well as establish patterns for successful behavior as adults.
2. If you do not have interest or time to read this entire newsletter. We encourage you to please take a few seconds and just scan through the different topics.
3. Try it for a month! Print out this newsletter, and then each day pick something to discuss and practice with your children.

Here is an idea: We have five 'I wills', one scripture, and one definition. That is seven things total. What I try to do is take one of those seven things and discuss it, explain it, and catch my child doing it and applying it that day. Or, if they missed an opportunity to apply it I try to show them how they could have used it. So after one week, I will have reviewed all seven and I repeat it each week of the month.

I take very seriously the opportunity you give me by allowing me to partner with you to teach your child the things of God. So, I ask and encourage you to help me with your prayers. Please join us in prayer every class your child attends for God to open his or her eyes, ears, and heart to understand and apply His truth that we will be sharing that day. Also, please pray for us that we would be good stewards of the time you have given us with your child and we would be faithful witnesses of our Lord and His word. Every class, every time, please join with us in prayer. No Prayer – No Power. Much prayer – Much Power.

The Power of a Partnership and Consistency

I hope for the chance to expose your child to sound Biblical Character Training over a long period of time. And Lord willing, the longer the term of exposure to this curriculum the BIGGER the impact will be on your child and what he or she can achieve in life... **keeping in mind that life is all about the glory of God.**

And your child will be exposed to this character building curriculum everyday you visit our school!

Enjoy the Parent preview below:

DISCERNMENT vs. SHORTSIGHTEDNESS Parent Preview

Definition for Class:

DISCERNMENT is understanding the deeper reasons why things happen..

Other definitions:

- The ability to see the hand of God in every circumstance and to trust His intentions through each one.
- Observation becomes Shortsightedness when there is no desire to provide a loving solution.
- Discernment is God's call to intercession, never to faultfinding – Oswald Chambers
- Truth and love must always be combined with discernment. Truth without love is harshness. Love without truth is compromise.
- Beware of allowing the discernment of wrong in another blind you to the fact that you are what you are by the grace of God – Oswald Chambers
- The ability to distinguish between good and evil, in order to make wise decisions.
- Spiritual sight that is not dimmed by lack of faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, or love.
- The power to interpret what we see and hear.

Application for Home and Life Skills Development:

WHY TEACH DISCERNMENT? Some have referred to common sense as the least used of all senses. Children who find themselves in trouble usually get there because they don't consider the cause-and-effect patterns of behavior.

1. I will ask questions.
2. I will not judge hastily.
3. I will learn from experience.
4. I will not repeat mistakes.
5. I will trace problems to their causes.

Scripture Memory for class:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Proverbs 3:5-7 (ESV)

- **Biblical Commentaries on DISCERNMENT at bottom of this letter**

Discernment vs. Shortsightedness

1. One who discerns examines his own life. One who is shortsighted overlooks similar faults in himself.
2. One who discerns checks out all the facts. One who is shortsighted forms opinions and then looks for supporting evidence.
3. One who discerns deals privately with another person's failures. One who is shortsighted condemns publicly.

The Concept of DISCERNMENT

Like a detective, discernment looks beyond obvious signs to deeper reasons why things happen. It causes one to ask questions, observe history, seek counsel, examine details, and learn from past experience. Before making a choice, discernment waits to get all the facts. It learns from past mistakes and traces the cause-and-effect sequences which bring about the consequences of actions.

Praising Character vs. Achievement!

To praise character, teachers and parents must discern the reasons why children act the way they do and commend the inward attitudes which produce outward achievement.

Praise vs. Flattery!

Praise acknowledges the cause of a person's success and is given with unselfish motives with no strings attached.

Flattery feeds another's ego by praising false achievements with the motive to win some favor or gain some form of advantage. It always contains hidden or ulterior motives.

Praise only True Character!

Even character can harbor hidden motives. If you see that your child has selfish motives for doing good, complimenting them on their character would only gear selfishness. Likewise, as parents we must consider the deeper reasons why a normally attentive child might suddenly show signs of inattentiveness. To correct a child without looking for the underlying causes is as irresponsible as praising a child for wrong motives.

We must guard against encouraging children to pursue character only for praise or an award. Character should be an end goal in itself. Discerning parents must distinguish between the demonstration of character in order to be seen, and character that is inconsistent, even when no one is looking.

Ways to Praise DISCERNMENT

PRAISE CHILDREN FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- When they are recognizing and praising character in others.
- When they are asking questions about the causes of situations or problems.
- Not repeating a previous mistake.
- Reacting sensibly to a disappointment by seeing the deeper reason why it happened.
- Solving a problem by tracing it back to the root cause.

Illustrations Used in KK4C Class

- Along with teaching and expanding on the above definition, the ‘I Wills’, and scripture, **DISCERNMENT** will be illustrated using:
- **The Character Card of the Month – DISCERNMENT in nature with the BOBCAT.** The bobcat patiently stalks its intended prey, discerning its movements, its path, and the best direction from which to approach.
- **Hero’s of Character with WILBUR and ORVILLE WRIGHT** – To build their final masterpiece, Wilbur and Orville Wright focused upon the cause-and-effect relationships in their many experiments. When met by failure, they discerned the reasons why their tests didn’t work and learned what to do better the next time. Who would have thought that two brothers working in a quiet bicycle shop could change the course of world history. They learned as much as they could about flight from every possible source. They studied nature, gathered the experiences of others, and tested the information they collected. When they finally finished their work, the world became a much smaller place to live.

Character Card Tips

Character is useless unless it is a part of everyday life. Use the character cards and join with us in teaching your child the ‘I wills’ by saying, “Here are ways you can practice **DISCERNMENT**.” Then read the “I wills” on the back of the card.

Then elaborate on each one from your own life sharing personal illustrations of when you did what was right or did something that was wrong. Be sure to emphasize that there were benefits to right choices and consequences to wrong choices.

Personal Evaluation – How MUCH DISCERNMENT do you have?

1. Do you ask God for an understanding heart to discern between good and bad?
2. Do you pursue holiness by rejecting all forms of uncleanness?
3. Do you dedicate your body to God as a temple of the Holy Spirit?
4. Do you ask God to remove anything in your life that would hinder you from hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit?
5. Do you listen to both sides of a story before making conclusions?
6. Do you evaluate the benefits of God’s letting something happen?
7. Do you consider a person’s life and background before making a judgment?

8. When you see someone making a wrong decision, do you desire to help?

DISCERNMENT in the Home Includes:

- Perceiving that selfishness leads to a breakdown in relationships.
- Realizing that rebellion in children may come from an unmet need for parental approval and acceptance.
- Knowing when it is wise to pay a large sum for an item.
- Understanding that addictions, wrong friends, suicide, and violence can be caused by unresolved bitterness, guilt, and lack of purpose in life.

Rewards of DISCERNMENT

- **DISCRETION** – Understanding the root cause of a family crisis will enable families to have the foresight to avoid wrong attitudes and actions in the future.
- **PEACE** – Focusing on building good character and meeting the needs of each other brings peace instead of conflict.

Biblical Commentaries on DISCERNMENT

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Proverbs 3:5-7 (ESV)

To **trust in the LORD** wholeheartedly means one should **not** rely (**lean**) on his **understanding**, for human insights are never enough. God's ways are incomprehensible (Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-34); yet He is trustworthy. All the wisdom a person may acquire can never replace the need for full trust in God's superior ways. **Heart** in Hebrew refers to one's emotions (Prov. 12:25; 13:12; 14:10, 13) but more often to his intellect (such as understanding, 10:8; discernment, 15:14; reflection, 15:28), or will (5:12).

As a person trusts in the Lord and acknowledges Him (this is not a nod of recognition but an intimate knowledge of God) **in all his ways** (cf. **all your heart**, 3:5), he finds that God makes his **paths straight**. This means more than guidance; it means God removes the obstacles, making a smooth path or way of life, or perhaps better, bringing one to the appointed goal. Proverbs teaches that those who follow wisdom have an easier, less problematic life (e.g., 3:10, 16, 24-25).

THE COMMAND TO FEAR THE LORD AND NOT ADMIRE ONE'S WISDOM (3:7-8)

Young people who acquire wisdom need to remember that they did **not** become **wise** by themselves; wisdom comes from God (2:6). This reminder is similar to 3:5b. A heart awareness of and proper response to God help prevent the **evil** of pride (cf. Rom. 12:16). (On shunning evil; cf. Prov. 8:13; 14:16; 16:6; Ps. 97:10.) As a result God gives **health** and vigor (cf. Prov. 4:22).

1

¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:911). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

DISCERNMENT - Tough-Minded Believers

Christianity has rightly been characterized as a religion of love, but it's important not to take that emphasis to an unhealthy extreme. If, in the name of love, we uncritically accept every idea or value of others, we open ourselves up to error. God never asks us to put our brains in neutral when it comes to matters of faith.

John repeatedly appeals for love (1 John 2:10; 3:3, 10–24; 4:7–12, 16–21), but he also places a premium on truth—not the wishy-washy opinions that pass for “truth” in our society, but the absolute, eternal truths of God’s Word. For example, John challenges us to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1) and learn to discern between truth and error (1 John 4:6). He calls for us to avoid sin, which requires that we discern what is sinful (1 John 2:1; 3:4–10). He tells us to distinguish between the things of the world and the will of God (1 John 2:15–17), and he appeals for us to identify deceivers and avoid them (1 John 2:18–29; 3:7).

Paul echoes this appeal to be tough-minded when it comes to our faith. To be spiritual, he writes, means to be able to “judge” (discern or test) all things (1 Cor. 2:15). Likewise, we are to have the mind of Christ: tough in discernment, loving toward all, and fearless in the face of judgment (Phil. 2:5–11, 17–18).

Are you discerning on issues of faith and spirituality? If not, consider starting your own study of the Scriptures to understand what they say and mean, or perhaps enroll in a Bible class where you can learn more about God’s truth in a systematic way.

2

DISCERNMENT

Moral insight and application of knowledge.

Phil 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, **To differentiate between good and evil.**

Heb 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

A plea to know.

Prov 2:3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, *And* lift up your voice for understanding,

Regarding false doctrine.

1 Thess 5:21–22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. **22** Abstain from every form of evil.

Rev 2:2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

Believers have, regarding spiritual truth.

1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Gift of.

1 Cor 12:10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

3

Discernment Spiritual gift that enables a believer to distinguish between good and evil and between right and wrong, and to recognize what is hidden or obscure to the spiritually immature.

²Thomas Nelson Publishers. (2001). *What does the Bible say about-- : The ultimate A to Z resource fully illustrated*. Nelson's A to Z series (108). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson.

³MacArthur, J. (1999). *The MacArthur topical Bible : New King James Version* (323). Nashville, Tenn.: Word Pub.

Discernment, spiritual

Requested by Solomon 1 Kin. 3:9–14

Prayed for by the psalmist Ps. 119:18

Sought by Daniel Dan. 7:15, 16

Denied to the unregenerate 1 Cor. 2:14

Necessity of 1 John 4:1–6

5

Character First! Education Series 3, Booklet 7, Oak Brook, IL;
International Association of Character Cities. (2000). Achieving True Success.
Institute of Basic Life Principles. (2001). The Power of True Success

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⁴Kurian, G. T. (2001). *Nelson's new Christian dictionary : The authoritative resource on the Christian world.* Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Pubs.

⁵Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index.* Nelson's Quick reference (179). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers.