

*The Concept of School Discipline: and a Christian Interpretation*

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(This article outlines five logical components of school discipline)

(This is the fourth in a series of articles featuring excerpts from past numbers of the Journal of Christian Education (JCE) and featuring fundamental teaching about Christian education).

(1) Discipline involves *some limitation of behaviour*. A disciplined person or class does not do certain things, which it is perfectly capable of doing, might do or may even want to do.

(2) *Some degree of self-direction which in turn implies some freedom of choice in the limitations imposed on behaviour*. Constraint, conditioning, coercion, taken to the point of no self-direction or choice is possible, may bring about a tyrant's coveted result but it can hardly be called discipline.

(3) *The limitation is for some common purpose, goal or principle*.

The limitation of behaviour in school discipline, as in all group discipline, must be in accordance with some common purpose, goal or principle.

(4) *Good behaviour*. Limitation of behaviour, even when self-directed and for a common purpose, is not sufficient. People may refrain from good acts as well as bad. But refraining from goodness is never regarded as discipline.

(5) *Permanency or consistency of behaviour*. If good discipline is only intermittent, the class is considered not to be disciplined. Lapses occur of course and are accepted as normal but they are regarded as lapses *from* discipline.

True discipline then is learned not imposed and the absence of discipline is the result of a failure to learn and in the context of education and the school, the result of a failure to teach.

(MORE NEXT MONTH)

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