

ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL CONCEPTS IN
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

by

Christy E. Hill

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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April, 2014

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study examined biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management in two Christian schools in Virginia. Items examined included which biblical components were being utilized and how teachers are utilizing them. Determining factors influencing the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management and teachers' perceptions of their utilization were also explored. The study used teacher interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. Data analysis was conducted through the use of interview and focus group transcriptions along with an analysis of pertinent documents. Significant statements from the data were coded into themes. Findings included biblical concepts were being incorporated in the classroom management of these schools along with the Bible being a foundational component with each teacher and school studied.

Descriptors: biblical concepts, classroom management, discipline, learning environment, biblical worldview, biblical integration

Dedication and Acknowledgements

“For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe even if you were told” (Habbakuk 1:5).

With love and gratitude I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my husband, Tim, whose love and unending support has encouraged me and sustained me throughout this entire process. I would not have finished without his encouragement. To my children, Emily and Conner, who have loved, encouraged, and supported me, even when I was working and could not be with them. I owe Emily a fun run on the trail and Conner several games of Monopoly! To my mom, Shirley Evans, who has always believed in me and encouraged me. To my dad, O. T. Evans, while he is in heaven now, I know how proud he would be of me for this accomplishment. I love you all with everything I have.

I praise and thank my Heavenly Father, who gives His strength to me every day. I could not do anything without Him. He gave me the desire, passion, and focus to finish this process.

I thank my mentor and chair, Dr. Ellen Lowrie Black, who saw something in me and inspired me to be the best I could be. Her love and support have encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and to accomplish what I believed to be impossible. I am so thankful for her belief in me. She has told me countless times how proud she was of me . . . just at the time I needed to hear it the most.

I thank my committee members, Dr. Andrew Alexson and Dr. Matthew Towles, and my research consultant, Dr. Fred Milacci for their work on my paper. I also thank my editor, Deborah Hallgren, for her diligence and help. I am humbled and thankful for all of the countless people to have encouraged me along this journey.

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List of Abbreviations

Association of Christian School International (ACSI)

Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP)

Internal Review Board (IRB)

First Christian School (FCS)

Second Christian School (SCS)

New King James Version (NKJV)

King James Version (KJV)

New International Version (NIV)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Classroom management is a critical component of effective teaching (Garrahy, Cothran, & Kulinna, 2005). Teachers must create and maintain a classroom environment that promotes student learning. Effective classroom management can be difficult to achieve and maintain for both new and experienced teachers. Classroom management is defined as a set of procedures which will help the teacher maintain order in the classroom involving both proactive and reactive measures (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Evertson and Weinstein (2006) state classroom management has two purposes: “It not only seeks to establish and maintain an orderly environment so students can engage in meaningful academic learning, it also aims to enhance student social and moral growth” (p.4). Wong and Wong (1998) state, “the most important factor governing student learning is classroom management” (p.82). A significant component of classroom management is the promotion of positive behavior. An effective plan for discipline along with good classroom management enables teachers to run their classrooms with a well-ordered learning environment which will in turn promote student achievement.

Historical

In the beginnings of formal schooling in the United States, schoolmasters demonstrated authoritative control over multi-grade classrooms and exemplified moral order (Butchart, 1994). A shift occurred in the 19th century, where the role of the teacher transformed into more of an object of affection in self-contained, graded classrooms. In the past 40 years, teaching became more progressive and flexible, allowing the classroom to become more child-centered. The structure and meaning of authority began to be questioned which resulted in a form of rebellion. The results indicated less teacher control and less student compliance (Butchart, 1994).

Christian school movement. The Christian school movement developed as an alternative to secular American education (Gangel, 2003). Christian schools began to increase across the country in the mid to late 1960s. Christian educators taught from a biblical worldview in an attempt to teach the whole student, academically and spiritually.

Christian school education can be defined as “a Bible-based teaching and learning process that seeks to guide individuals to all levels of growth...to lead individuals toward knowing and experiencing God’s purpose and plan through Christ” (Joob, n.d., p.7). This definition involves learning, working with individuals, and developing purpose. The emphasis shifts from simply academic knowledge to helping individuals learn their purpose through a biblically-based process.

Christian education begins with a Christian worldview, which in turn begins with a foundation on the Word of God (Gangel, 2003). The Bible is the foundation on which the framework of Christian education is built. Gangel (2003) states, “Christian teachers must have a highly developed biblical awareness, enabling them to integrate scriptural truth with the realities of contemporary life” (p. 60). It is this awareness which enables Christian school teachers to teach their students. The Bible becomes the pathway to academic and spiritual knowledge in the Christian school. Black (2003) adds, “academic and spiritual truths go hand in hand” (p. 148). Cates (1975) emphasizes the importance of having a sound biblical philosophy of education by placing the emphasis on the Bible as the integrating factor which all other subject matter is applied.

Societal

In a study by Rosas and West (2009), classroom management has been ranked as one of teachers’ highest concerns. Disruptive behaviors such as inattention, overactivity, and non-

compliance are commonly cited as complaints by teachers. These complaints make classroom management a primary factor in effective instruction (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Because classroom management is directly tied to student involvement, academic achievement is impacted (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008). Disruptions in the classroom take away valuable teaching and learning time which impacts student academic performance. These disruptions may also inhibit teachers in what they can actually teach the students. Through teacher planning, classroom organization, and student engagement, fewer disruptions are likely to occur during instructional time which increases student achievement (Freiberg, Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009).

Teachers have considerable influence over student behavior, so it is essential teachers determine why the misbehaviors are occurring and teach the students to replace these misbehaviors with appropriate behaviors (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005). Poor classroom management leads to student misbehaviors which not only interfere with teaching and learning, but may produce stress leading to teachers leaving the profession (Rosas & West, 2009). According to Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008), difficulty with classroom management is one of the primary reasons teachers leave the profession.

Theoretical

Gibbs and Haddock (1991) state, “A clearly defined, biblical philosophy of discipline is the first step to effective classroom discipline” (p.18). In the Christian school setting, a biblical approach to classroom management supports the school’s biblical worldview. Christian school teachers can effectively manage their classrooms and impart biblical concepts by taking on a biblically integrated view of classroom management and discipline. Christian school teachers using a biblical approach to classroom management create a classroom environment which

fosters effective learning, positive relationships, and God-pleasing behavior patterns (Gibbs & Haddock, 1991).

Christian school education seeks to educate the whole child, both academically and spiritually on a biblical foundation. Edlin (2003) states, “besides using the Bible in a devotional and foundational ways, the Christian school will subject all its relationships and activities to the critique of Scripture to ensure that everything done is in accord with a biblical understanding of the world and our place and task in it” (p.71). Uecker (2003) adds, “for the Christian school, moral and character education is inseparable from spiritual formation” (p.224).

Biblical concepts defined. The Bible is “the central book of all Christian education and essential for the determining of what is truth” (Joob, n.d. p.11). biblical concepts in classroom management therefore are any concepts, values, principles, guidelines, or truths outlined in Scripture, either directly or indirectly. While not an exhaustive list, the following are specific examples of biblical concepts which teachers may utilize in classroom management. Specific Scripture references may be utilized in classroom situations. biblical principles such as the Fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, the Lord’s Prayer, etc. may be utilized in classroom situations. Specific biblical people and their stories may be utilized when teaching a certain character quality or addressing a certain behavior. The teachings of Jesus may be used when dealing with certain behaviors or situations. Teachers may also wish to use verses as a classroom motto. Teachers may use Bible verses to support classroom rules. These concepts can be taught directly or indirectly throughout the school day. Van Brummelen (2002) states, “both the planned and the hidden curricula develop attitudes, foster the acceptance of certain values, instill dispositions, and encourage certain commitments” (p. 258). Utilizing any of these biblical concepts may be planned or unplanned. Teachers may take advantage of the teachable moments

that arise throughout the school day to utilize biblical concepts with their students.

Identifying and analyzing the biblical concepts elementary Christian school teachers currently use in the classroom could provide other Christian school educators knowledge and an understanding on how to incorporate biblical components in their own classrooms. This study discovered what biblical concepts select elementary Christian school teachers are currently using, how they are using these concepts, the teachers' perceptions of effectiveness, and factors influencing elementary Christian school teachers' utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. The Christian school community may benefit from this knowledge to help train their teachers in utilizing biblical concepts into their classrooms. Beyond Christian schools, educators in other types of schools may use the results of this study by substituting character concepts in place of biblical concepts with similar results.

Situation to Self

Being a product and proponent of Christian education, it is my desire to study and learn the best practices of Christian school educators. Beyond this desire, I want to encourage and equip Christian school educators with the knowledge and tools to be the most effective teachers possible. As a former elementary Christian school teacher, I desire to build off my experience of striving to utilize biblical concepts in classroom management to determine what other elementary Christian school teachers are achieving in this area. I am motivated by God's Word which states in I Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (NIV). If I do everything to the glory of God, I will pursue excellence.

I believe in the inerrancy of God's Word. It is the guiding force of my life. I filter everything through God's Word before accepting anything as truth. This belief is foundational to my study. Taking the best practices of classroom management and laying them on the

foundation of God's Word will enable Christian school students to not only achieve in the classroom academically, but more importantly, spiritually.

My study is based on the assumption that Christian school teachers are already merging biblical concepts and classroom management together. It is my goal to discover and explore what these teachers are doing and identify what is working in this area. The study may be beneficial to other Christian school teachers who need more help in the area of biblically integrated classroom management, but also desire to pursue excellence.

Problem Statement

Classroom management is an area of teaching which many new and experienced teachers struggle (Atici, 2007). Zuckerman (2007) states, "The ability to prevent and manage discipline problems is what principals, in-service supervisors, and the public focus on when assessing the effectiveness of any teacher" (p.4). While student discipline is a large component, classroom management encompasses a broad range of components within the classroom beyond discipline. Christian school educators need to not take for granted the opportunity they have to teach biblically-based principles in their classrooms (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008). Eventually, the goal is to move students from teacher discipline to self-discipline (Rigby, 2006). Edlin (2003) adds, "discipline will go beyond mere behavior modification and will address the heart" (p.77).

Teachers are the leaders of the classroom. With this leadership comes responsibility. Maxwell (2007) defines leadership as influence. Stein (2009), notes, all teachers have influence, but Christian school teachers have the ability and responsibility to establish high moral and ethical standards in their classrooms based on God's Word. Taking the leadership role in the classroom, the teacher accepts the responsibility to instill these spiritual principles into their

students. Black (2003) adds, “as a spiritual leader, the Christian school teacher accepts the authority of God’s Word, and God’s Word is relevant for all aspects of school life” (p.149).

Gibbs and Haddock (1991) recommend, “A clearly defined, biblical philosophy of discipline is the first step to effective classroom discipline” (p.18). Christian school teachers should have a clear biblical philosophy of classroom management in their minds well before school begins (Gibbs & Haddock, 1991). In order for biblically based management to take place in the classroom, teachers must become students of the Word of God. The principles of an effective classroom management program involve teaching and instructing the students in a proactive manner, rather than simply punishing them in a reactive manner. Teachers must know how to deal with these situations on a regular basis. They must know where to point students in God’s Word to help them learn from their choices.

Jeynes’ (2009) study indicates, “Student religiosity had a positive influence on educational outcomes” (p.36). Jeynes also adds there is little recent research linking biblical literacy to behavioral outcomes of students. Because of the lack of research, this study aimed to examine the biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management as well as understand the perceptions and characteristics of the teachers utilizing these concepts.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine biblical concepts identified by elementary Christian school teachers utilized in classroom management in two Christian schools in Virginia. Biblical concepts in classroom management were generally defined as any biblical integration into the general classroom management of a particular classroom. Biblical integration included but was not limited to referencing specific scripture, prayer in class,

referencing biblical character traits such as obedience, kindness, love, etc., or referencing specific instances in the Bible.

Research Questions

This qualitative study utilized the phenomenological research design. Moustakas (1994) defines a transcendental approach to phenomenology. This approach attempts to provide a description of the experiences of the participants.

1. What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?
2. How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?
3. What are elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?
4. What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers' utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because of the enhancement of the components of effective classroom management in Christian schools. Combining the cognitive and affective domains in classroom management may enhance the learning of the Christian school student. The affective domains include attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and emotions. In a study by Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004), combining cognitive and affective teaching styles resulted in a decrease in negative behavior and an increase in positive behavior. For example, rules and expectations may be impacted by the teaching of the Old Testament rules of the tabernacle. Classroom procedures may be impacted with the concept of orderliness found in I Corinthians 14:40 "Let all things be

done in an orderly way” (NIV). Rewards and punishments may be impacted with the biblical concept of sowing and reaping found in Galatians. Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008) studied the effectiveness of specific praise on student motivation. Christian school educators relating human praise to the praise one reserves for God may enhance this concept and reinforces the biblical concept of praise.

One of the benefits of effective classroom management is a more positive classroom environment (Pedota, 2007). Christian school educators desire to maintain a Christian atmosphere in their schools as an extension of Christian homes (Schultz, 2007). Combining the classroom management benefit of a positive learning environment with a Christian environment provides Christian school teachers a way to incorporate both to further enhance their classroom environment.

My study addressed the combination of biblical concepts with classroom management and how this combination is being done. Examining elementary teachers’ perceptions of their incorporation of biblical components with classroom management was beneficial to my study.

The value of my study is twofold. First, Christian teachers wishing to incorporate biblical concepts into classroom management may be able to see the “what” and “how” of implementation. Second, factors determining effectiveness will allow current and future teachers a model and guide to successfully implement these concepts together.

It is my hope this study will add to the limited amount of studies specifically examining how biblical components are weaved into Christian education. The field of general education may benefit with substituting character concepts in place of biblical components. The two concepts are similar, due to the fact character concepts are inevitably based on biblical principles.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

This study was limited to Christian schools due to the specific reference of biblical concepts. Schools of differing religions may view biblical concepts differently. Keeping within Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) schools, the likelihood of similar beliefs and Christian worldviews was strong. Due to the nature of qualitative research, thorough examination of each participant called for a smaller sample of schools (two) and teachers per school (three) aided in the depth of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). The locations of the schools were in one geographical area and centrally located to the researcher for ease in travelling due to on-site visits.

Another limitation of the study was found in the use of school site administrators to choose specific teachers for the study. School site administrators know the teachers on a personal level and would understand who would be beneficial to the study. Administrators would also know if there were teachers who would not be able to handle participation in the study at the given time due to personal and/or professional reasons.

The study was also limited to elementary teachers to aid in data collection and analysis. Considerable time is spent at the elementary level in classroom management. Students are taught what to do in the classroom because they are newer to the school situation and require more direct instruction in rules, procedures, and routines of classroom life (Brophy, 1987). Brophy further adds, “teachers in lower grades spend all or at least most of their day with the same class of students and where many of the students will look to them routinely for guidance, support, limit-setting, and other parent surrogate functions” (p.22). This component of classroom management added depth and meaning to the study of how biblical concepts are

intertwined with classroom management.

Limitations

Schools with similar backgrounds and populations presented some limitations in diversity. This study was limited to one geographic region, which limited diversity rather than having a sample from other geographic areas. The study was limited to elementary teachers, so further research would be necessary to see the utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management in other school levels. Possible limitations may also occur with the participants willing to take part in the study. Efforts by school administration will be made to find diverse teachers to participate, but limitations may be seen if the participants' diversity does not occur. Bracketing was utilized due to the researcher's personal viewpoints of the importance of integrating biblical concepts into all areas of education.

Research Plan

A qualitative approach was used for this study to fully delve into the nuances and intricacies of incorporating biblical concepts into classroom management. As the researcher, I am bringing in my own Christian worldview into the study. It is my Christian worldview which drove the conduct and writing of this study, which validates the choice of a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological method was chosen to understand the meaning of biblically incorporated classroom management from Christian school elementary teachers. Max van Manen (1990) states, "Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (p.9). The purpose of the study was not to simply explain biblically incorporated classroom management, but to gain insights from the teachers who are currently experiencing the phenomena in their classrooms. Insight about an experience is gained rather than a simple analysis of the experience. Moustakas (1994) utilized Husserl's

epoche or bracketing approach to allow the researcher to bracket out his/her own experience to develop a fresh perspective on the phenomenon being researched. As the researcher, I bracketed out my experiences with incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. I taught in elementary Christian school classrooms for sixteen years in second and third grade classrooms. My classroom management style was structured. Early on in my teaching years, I was focused on managing my classroom, but did not have the know-how to incorporate biblical concepts into my classroom management style. I utilized Wong and Wong's (1998) methods of procedures and rules in my classroom, but no emphasis or focus on incorporating biblical concepts. As I gained experience, I attempted to utilize certain aspects of incorporating biblical concepts, such as using Bible references during behavioral situations or integrating biblical concepts into my subject matter. After moving into administration, this concept of incorporating biblical concepts into classroom management interested me as I noticed teachers in my school who were more adept in this area. As I entered my doctoral studies, this phenomenon intrigued me and I considered it an area of study. With the limited experience of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management, I was able to include some items I had experienced in my classroom to my original inquiries of teachers, but utilized interviews and focus groups to fully explore how this phenomenon was being experienced by other teachers.

Once the data was collected, common themes were identified. It was my hope to discover and describe many different elements and gain further insights into the meaning and essence of biblical incorporation into classroom management to equip other Christian school teachers in their desire to educate their students with a biblical foundation.

The research plan was to select three elementary teachers at two different ACSI Christian schools in Virginia by their respective school administrators who incorporate biblical concepts

into classroom management. The smaller number of teachers allowed me to identify an “object of human experience” (van Manen, 1990, p.163). Upon their consent, these teachers were interviewed to further determine what biblical concepts they are incorporating into classroom management and how they are implementing them. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded into emergent themes. The small participant size allowed me to develop a “description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals” (Creswell, 2007, p.58). Studying several individuals with the same experience assisted the researcher in describing the essence of how elementary Christian school teachers incorporate biblical concepts into classroom management.

Focus groups were utilized to allow for dynamic interactions between teachers. I was the moderator of the groups to allow for the participants to fully discuss the nuances and aspects of their specific experiences of biblically incorporated classroom management. Creswell (2007) explains focus groups allow for rich interaction which will yield the best information about a situation. The focus group sessions were audio recorded for transcription.

A document review was also conducted to determine what biblical concepts were woven into the school and each specific teacher’s style and method of classroom management. Items reviewed included school mission statement, discipline policies, faculty training, lesson plans, communication home, and other pertinent information. Concepts gained from the document review were coded into themes.

After all data was collected, significant statements were highlighted to determine if any similarities were discovered horizontally. Clusters of meaning were developed from the significant statements into themes. A textural structural description of the participants’ experiences was written to determine which biblical concepts are being utilized and if there are any commonalities among the teachers. These findings were also coded according to concepts,

frequency, duration, effectiveness, and results. A structural description was written to determine the contexts that influenced how the participants experienced biblical incorporation in classroom management. Once all data was collected and the descriptions were written, a composite description was written to attempt to capture the essence of the experiences of all the participants (Creswell, 2007).

Definition of Terms

Biblical concepts are defined as ideas in accord with the Bible (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). biblical concepts in classroom management may include but not be limited to using Scripture in behavioral situations and classroom rules, prayer, biblical principles such as Fruit of the Spirit, etc. in classroom and behavioral situations, and citing specific people or situations in the Bible when dealing with student behavior.

Classroom management is defined as “practices and procedures that a teacher uses to maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (Wong & Wong, 1998, p.10).

Discipline is defined in the classroom as managing student behavior (Bear, 2005).

Learning environment is defined as a classroom conducive to learning.

Biblical worldview is defined as the framework from which we view reality and make sense of the world. A biblical worldview is based on belief in the Bible.

Classroom organization is defined as the manner classroom teachers organize their classrooms for instruction.

Positive classroom environment is defined as a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe and experience success (Ackerman, 2007).

Classroom procedures are “methods or processes for how things are to be done in the classroom” (Wong & Wong, 1998, p.20).

Instructional time is defined as time spent on instruction.

Biblical Integration is defined as integration of biblical concepts to help students think biblically and critically about every subject.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review of the literature summarizes the conceptual framework of the study, current research, components of classroom management, and summaries of classroom management programs. Classroom management was analyzed and grounded in a biblical worldview for Christian educators which provided the conceptual framework of this study. Using God's Word as a guide, Christian teachers can learn the benefit of good classroom management.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was built on the purpose of Christian education to equip students to establish a relationship with Jesus Christ and to fulfill their God-given purpose for their lives (Bartlett, 2007). A Christian school education is laid on the foundation of God's Word. Gangel (2003) states, "any foundation for a Christian worldview must begin with Scripture" (p.56). God's Word is incorporated into every aspect of education, including classroom management. Gibbs and Haddock (1991) state, "effective classroom management is the outgrowth of a personally developed, biblical philosophy of discipline" (p.4). This biblical philosophy and foundation provides "the most internally consistent system on which to build a moral and purposeful life" (Gangel, 2003, p.56).

The definition of classroom management identifies the broadness of the term and sets the teacher as the driving force of the classroom environment. "Christian school teachers in partnership with the home and church, play an integral role in obeying the command to teach all day long the truths found in the Scriptures" (Black, 2003, p.148). This role of the teacher is found in Scripture in Deuteronomy 4:9, "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you

live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (NIV). Haddock (2003) adds “a Christian teacher’s biblical framework of discipline is foundational to everything that happens in the classroom” (p.242). A positive classroom environment will then lead to student achievement. Furthermore, effective Christian school teachers who integrate biblical concepts into their classroom management will not only be impacting the students’ academic component of their education, but the spiritual realm as well (Gibbs & Haddock, 1991).

Definition of Classroom Management

Emmer and Evertson (1981) define effective classroom management by teacher behaviors. They state, “Effective classroom management consists of teacher behaviors that produce high levels of student involvement in classroom activities, minimal amounts of student behaviors that interfere with the teacher’s or other students’ work, and efficient use of instructional time” (p.342). This threefold definition consists of the teacher’s ability to create an environment where students are engaged in their classwork without many disruptions, therefore increasing instructional time.

Anderson, Evertson, and Emmer (1979) added to the definition of classroom management to include more than just discipline and enforcement of rules. Anything the teacher does to organize students, space, time and materials so that instruction and learning can take place incorporates an element of proactivity on the part of the teacher.

Brophy (1987) and Good (1981) also emphasize the teacher as the main component in classroom management. Teacher behavior influences student behavior and achievement. Effective teachers create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning. This emphasis defines classroom management as more than simply student discipline, rather all things teachers do to involve students and create a productive learning environment

becomes the main thrust of classroom management. Sanford, Emmer, and Clemments (1983) add, “A well-managed classroom is a task-oriented, predictable environment where children know what is expected of them and how to succeed” (p. 56). Again, the teacher is the focus on creating and maintaining this task-oriented, predictable environment.

Maag (2001) adds to the importance of teachers’ responsibility to pour into their students in more than the academic realms.

Students spend more time in school outside the home and have the most consistent and extensive contact with teachers who deal with their behavior on a consistent basis. The structure of the classroom provides the opportunity for teachers to apply a variety of techniques based on positive reinforcement that have empirical support regardless of student characteristics or home situations (p.181).

The importance of the teacher in classroom environment allows Christian school teachers to incorporate biblical concepts in classroom management.

While the teacher is the center focus of classroom management, other definitions add to the concept. Brophy (1987) further adds to the definition of classroom management as “actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to attainment of the goals of instruction” (p.8). These actions include the arrangement of the physical classroom, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining attention to lessons, and engagement in academic activities.

Evertson and Weinstein (2006) propose a two-fold definition of classroom management, “It not only seeks to establish and sustain an orderly environment so students can engage in meaningful academic learning, it also aims to enhance student social and moral growth” (p.4). Brophy (1987) refers to this social and moral growth as student socialization, which “refers to actions taken with the intention of influencing students’ attitudes, beliefs, expectations, or

behavior concerning personal or social (including moral and political) issues” (p.8). These meanings encompass both cognitive and affective realms of the students. For the Christian school teacher, social and moral growth would be grounded in the Bible.

Classroom management is a multidimensional component of effective teaching. Jones (1989) classifies classroom management as a broad, comprehensive set of skills rather than a narrow definition. Five key assumptions provide the framework for classroom management:

1. Classroom management is based on a solid understanding of students’ personal, psychological, and learning needs.
2. A positive teacher/student relationship must be established to meet students’ needs.
3. Classroom organization and group management methods must be employed to increase student on-task behavior.
4. Instructional methods may promote optimal learning by responding to the academic needs of students.
5. A wide range of counseling and behavioral methods must be employed to involve the students in examining and correcting inappropriate behavior.

These assumptions incorporate the whole student into classroom management including personal relationships, classroom climate, classroom organization, instruction, and discipline. Jones further defines skills teachers need to develop to make them effective classroom managers: correction, prevention (including organization, instruction, and interpersonal relationships), and a theoretical foundation of understanding students’ personal and academic needs.

Biblical Approach to Classroom Management

Christian school teachers adhering to the Bible as the foundation of Christian education and classroom management as the foundation of a successful classroom environment would benefit by correlating the two foundations together. Christian school teachers hold students accountable both spiritually and academically. A biblical approach to classroom management implemented into the Christian school teacher's classroom yields positive results in affective learning. Emmer and Evertson (1981) found more effective teachers exhibited high affective skills, especially in the areas of listening and expressing feelings. Teachers who listen to their students can better meet student concerns, while teachers who can express their feelings tend to be more predictable and send clearer signals to their students.

Christian school teachers utilizing a biblical approach to classroom management may be able to use this opportunity to shape students according to God's Word. Brophy (1987) views student shaping as a basic teacher function. Classroom management and instruction should be considered simultaneously to be the most effective. Adding student shaping to this concept allows the Christian school teacher to seamlessly blend biblical concepts into everyday life for their students, further enhancing the opportunity for student shaping. Rather than simply focusing on a list of rules to be followed, teachers utilize biblical concepts into their classroom management plans. Teachers may discipline more effectively when they take the time to understand why a student is motivated to misbehave instead of simply punishing the behavior (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 2000). Many Christian teachers believe Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NIV). Humans have a sinful nature, but students must learn how to make wise choices in light of God's Word.

Christian school teachers should take advantage of every teachable moment when it comes to the behavior of students. Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) challenge, “without deliberate instruction, moral messages may not become embedded into the fiber of children’s lives and personal constructs. The intentional transmission of character within the education process is, in fact, the essence of true education” (p.184). Chemlynski (1996) adds, “Discipline means to teach, not to punish” (p.42). Discipline is teaching students how to behave rather than simply punishing misbehavior. There is a proper place for punishment in a classroom discipline plan, however. Punishment has its place, but it is most effective when the punishment is the natural consequence of misbehavior (Wasicsko & Ross, 1994). Ephesians 6:4 warns “Do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (NIV). The beginning of this verse refers to the frustration resulting from simple punishment without teaching and explanation. Children who are punished without understanding what they did wrong may get frustrated. The latter part of the verse refers to true disciplining.

A primary goal for Christian school teachers is to train and instruct their students to make good choices based on biblical truths. Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) advise, “teachers must take active roles in guiding students toward moralistic life decisions – decisions based on traditional, Judeo-Christian principles” (p.191). When students make poor choices, training and instruction must be a part of the corrective process. Students need to know why their choices were wrong. Instead of restating the misbehavior, teachers should ask questions of their students. The questions should help the student discover why the choice was wrong. They need to understand what they did and how they can avoid this behavior in the future. This model of discipline takes more time, but it gets to the heart of the matter.

Discipline involves much more than administration of punishment, rather; it is a total system to develop a well-ordered environment for instruction (Alderman, 2001). Christian school educators need to take this extra step and to train and teach students in matters of the heart. Eventually, the goal is to move students from teacher discipline to self-discipline (Rigby, 2006).

Christian school teachers should have a clear biblical philosophy of classroom management in their minds well before school begins. In order for biblically based discipline to take place in the classroom, teachers need to become students of the Word of God. The principles of an effective discipline program involve teaching and instructing the students, rather than simply punishing them. Teachers need to know how to deal with these situations on a regular basis. They should know where to point students in God's Word to help them learn from their choices. These scenarios must be thought out and well planned before the students arrive on the first day. Gibbs and Haddock (1991) recommend, "A clearly defined, biblical philosophy of discipline is the first step to effective classroom discipline" (p.18).

Finally, Christian school teachers should evaluate their core values and biblical concepts about the educator's role in reaching their students (Ackerman, 2008). Utilizing prayer for guidance and wisdom for how to deal with their students, along with working in their own hearts is a key component for the Christian school teacher. The mission of the Christian school teacher is to deal with their students in a sincere and meaningful manner, empowering them to manage their own behavior on the precepts of God's Word. While this management is a continuous struggle because of the sinful nature of humans, the Christian school can help students work through by teaching them how to manage and control their own behavior. For the Christian school teacher, the pattern of a Christian life is mirrored in classroom management. The Bible

becomes intertwined in classroom management existing together, not as separate components, but as one wonderful system.

Review of the Literature

John Dewey (1915) in his pedagogical creed called moral instruction a part of a teacher's calling. Fogt and Piripaval (2002) contend that what we believe about behavior affects how we handle behavior. Behaviorists advocate human behavior is learned as a result of consequences. These consequences could come in the form of positive and negative reinforcement, punishment, stimulus control, and the modeling and shaping of behavior.

William Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory is based on the belief behavior is voluntary but driven by basic needs such as survival, love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Glasser's work includes influencing others in positive ways than coercive techniques to control behavior.

Historical Background on Classroom Management Research

Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) state, "The research over the past 30 years indicates that classroom management is one of the critical ingredients of effective teaching" (p.6). One of the first major studies on classroom management was conducted by Jacob Kounin (1970). Kounin established a paradigm for conceptualizing classroom management. In his study, videotapes of first and second graders were analyzed according to student and teacher behavior. Students were videotaped for a full day and the behavior of selected children were coded based on their work involvement and deviancy. From the analysis, Kounin identified several critical components of classroom management: withitness (awareness of potentially disruptive behavior), smoothness and lesson momentum (teacher's movement through different activities while avoiding behavior to slow down activities), students' knowledge of expectations, and variety and challenge in student work. From these results, Marzano, et al. (2003) state that

of the four identified components, “withitness is the one that most consistently separates the excellent classroom managers from the average or below-average classroom managers” (p.5).

Another study on the effectiveness of the contingency management theory was conducted by Thompson, Brassell, Persons, Tucker, and Rollins (1974). Contingency management involves teachers emphasizing and reinforcing appropriate behavior while downplaying inappropriate behavior. Teachers who had been trained in contingency management showed improvements in classroom management. The study concluded contingency management would work well for many grade levels.

Ayllon and Roberts (1974) conducted a study of fifth grade boys which indicated strengthening academic performance resulted in decreased discipline problems. This study showed reinforcement of academic skills in combination with a token system motivated the students to do their work. An increased time of on-task behavior caused a decrease in inappropriate behavior. Interestingly, this study also showed trying to decrease inappropriate behavior does not necessarily reinforce academic skills. Ayllon and Roberts point this finding as a contradiction to the traditional stance of behavior. Rather, the findings point to a “teach them better and they may sit still” position (p.75).

Brophy and Evertson’s (1976) comparative study of exceptional teachers to average teachers is another important research discovery in the area of classroom management. The teachers identified as exceptional all possessed the element of exemplary classroom management, allowing classroom management to surface as a critical component of effective teaching. Exceptional teachers were more effective managers, individualized student work, intervened before behavior declined, and had short transitions between activities. If reprimands were needed, these teachers delivered in a calm and controlled manner. Brophy and Everston

(1976) state, “classroom management skills are of primary importance in determining teaching success, whether it is measured by student learning or by ratings . . . thus, management skills are crucial and fundamental” (p. 27). These findings supported Kounin’s (1970) prior research.

Anderson, Evertson, and Emmer (1979) conducted a study in 27 third grade classrooms. Their findings added to the research on classroom management. Three important elements of effective classroom managers were cited. First, effective teachers displayed behavior which conveyed purposefulness, meaning teachers were ready with supplies and materials ahead of time. Students were held accountable for their actions. There was little time spent on procedural tasks and more time spent on instruction. Second, effective teachers taught students how to behave appropriately. Rules and procedures were taught and reinforced at the beginning of the school year. Consequences for misbehavior were delivered consistently. Both positive and negative feedback was given to the students. Finally, effective teachers displayed skills in diagnosing students’ focus of attention. Teachers monitored behavior and stopped inappropriate behavior quickly. Discovering why students were not on task was observed. These teachers also strived to keep and maintain their students’ attention.

Four studies in classroom management were completed at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education in Austin, Texas (Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Anderson, Evertson, & Emmer, 1980). Kounin’s findings were once again supported by identifying teacher actions associated with student on-task behavior. A significant conclusion from these studies found that the attention to classroom management at the beginning of the school year was a critical component to a well-managed classroom.

In a study by Wright, Horn, and Saunders (1997) it states, “effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels regardless of the levels of heterogeneity in their

classes” (p.63). The results of this study indicate the intense impact the effective teacher can have on student achievement. Determining teacher effectiveness may be categorized by making wise choices regarding the best instructional strategies, designing the best curricular choices to maximize student learning, and effectively using classroom management strategies (Marzano, et al., 2003).

Borg and Ascione (1982) followed with a study on the Utah State University Classroom Management Treatment Program (USUCM) for teachers. This study included classrooms from third through sixth grades. Thirteen methods of improving classroom management were noted with six being strongly correlated with effective classroom management. These six methods included positive questioning techniques, alerting cues, peer involvement, academic and non-academic specific praise, and general praise.

In the 1990s The Classroom Strategy Study was conducted by Brophy (1996), involving in-depth interviews and observations of 98 teachers. Some of these teachers were identified as effective classroom managers, others were not. Teachers were presented with scenarios of different types of students and different behaviors (hostile and passive aggressive, hyperactive, etc). Findings concluded effective classroom managers treated students differently with different strategies, while the other teachers used the same strategies, regardless of the student or the situation. One conclusion of this study was teachers should develop a set of “helping skills” to use with different situations and students.

In another comprehensive study by Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993), a combination of previous studies on classroom management was analyzed to develop a comprehensive list of 228 variables impacting student achievement. A second study was conducted to have educators rate

in importance the 228 variables based on their impact on student achievement. The results indicated classroom management was rated first in terms of impacting student achievement.

Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) conclude from the 30 years of research on classroom management that effective classroom management is a skill that can be learned. It takes awareness and training in classroom management techniques to change teacher behavior, which then changes student behavior. The changes in teacher and student behaviors benefit both the teacher and the student.

Components of Effective Classroom Management.

There are several components to effective classroom management, many of which begin long before students enter into a classroom. Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson (1980) stress the key to organizing and managing the classroom for instruction begins with preparation before school ever begins. The first day of school is important in determining the success of the school year. A good, solid foundation must be laid. Marzano, et al. (2003) state, “virtually all of this research points to the beginning of the school year as the linchpin for effective classroom management” (p.92). Teachers should be proactive in their thinking about classroom management and prepare before school starts to create and maintain effective classroom environments. Being proactive versus reactive in the area of classroom management is essential (Ackerman, 2008). Specific components of classroom management include behavior management, classroom organization, curriculum and instruction, positive classroom environment, and positive teacher/student relationships. In a study by Eisenhart (1977), teachers who were considered effective classroom managers devoted the beginning of the year to the physical classroom arrangement, establishment of a schedule of routines, and a system of rewards and recognition. These components when consistently utilized in a classroom will

enable teachers a greater chance of success in the area of classroom management. Maag (2001) emphasized this element of proactivity by stating, “teachers should spend as much time developing positive, proactive behavior management plans as they spend developing instructional lesson plans” (p.182). This statement reinforces the concept that classroom management is an integral component of teaching.

Once the plans for the school year are in place, teachers should then take class time at the beginning of the school year to communicate and teach management activities to their students. Effective teachers were found to spend time ensuring the management activities were understood and accepted by their students and practiced until they became routine (Marzano, et al., 2003). Taking the time at the beginning of the year to make classroom management activities routine ensure the classroom runs smoothly throughout the school year.

Behavior management. A major component of classroom management is the behavior management of students. Maag (2001) defines behavioral management as “analyzing behavior, deciding what to change, collecting information on the behaviors of concern, using schedules of reinforcement, and monitoring progress” (p.181). Teachers are consistently having to deal with student behavior in classroom management. Marzano, et al. (2003) states, “teachers generally believe that they are not only unprepared to deal with disruptive behavior, but the amount of disruptive behavior in their classes substantially interferes with their teaching” (p.27). With this emphasis on behavior management, teachers need to be thinking of how they are going to deal with this issue. There are several components of behavior management including rules and expectations, rewards, and consequences, and student feedback.

Rules and expectations. Palumbo and Sanacore (2007) suggested students are more likely to work harder and produce higher quality work when teachers are organized and maintain

consistent standards (rules) and expectations. Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2003) explain rules, “. . .vary in different classrooms, but all effectively managed classrooms have them” (p.17). These standards and expectations must be communicated to the students to enable them to be successful in the classroom. Emmer and Evertson (1981) warns about uncertainty about teacher expectations leading to a wider variety of student misbehavior. The lack of vigilance regarding expectations on the part of the teacher increases inconsistency of applying consequences.

Effective teachers integrate rules and procedures into a workable classroom system (Emmer & Evertson, 1981). Rules should be simple, specific, clear, and measurable, but broad enough to include all desired behavior (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005). Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008) also suggest rules be stated positively, posted in the classroom, and systematically and explicitly taught to the students. Frequent review should also be a component to teaching rules. Simonsen et al. (2008) also encourage feedback for students in the area of rules. This feedback is associated with decreases in off-task and disruptive behavior, increases in academic engagement, and leadership and conflict resolution among students. To maximize the effectiveness of rules, teachers should integrate them with a comprehensive behavior management plan. This integration allows the rules to be connected with consequences, therefore maximizing their effectiveness (Little & Akin-Little, 2008).

Rules and procedures typically are categorized by behavioral expectations, beginning and ending the class day or period, transitional times, classroom materials, group work procedures, and individual and teacher-led activities (Marzano, et al., 2003). On the elementary level, rules typically fall into the categories of dealing with other students, respecting others and their property, teacher and/or student interruptions, and physical contact (Good & Brophy, 2003).

Teachers may consider having student input on the establishment of classroom rules (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Students working together with teachers on establishing rules enhances the partnership between teachers and students and allows students more “buy-in” on the rules themselves. Marzano, et al. (2003) state, “. . .well-articulated rules and procedures that are negotiated with students are a critical aspect of classroom management, affecting not only the behavior of students, but also their academic achievement” (p.17).

Emmer and Evertson (1981) add that better classroom managers set clear expectations for behavior, academics, and classroom procedures at the beginning of the year. Stewart, Evans, and Kacynski (1997) state, “One of the most important teacher effectiveness factors is high expectations, a belief that all students can learn” (p.56). Students should receive specific, frequent feedback from teachers (Stewart, et al., 1997).

In a study by Anderson, Evertson, and Emmer (1979) the better managers of the classrooms viewed cooperative behavior as a set of skills that had to be taught. The teachers communicated to their students appropriate behaviors and would not tolerate inappropriate behaviors. Expectations were clear and expressed in behavioral terms for the students. Students knew what they should be doing as well as what they should not be doing.

Rewards, punishments, and consequences. Classroom management programs consist of rewards (also known as reinforcers) and punishments (also known as consequences). A healthy balance should exist between these two components (Pedota, 2007). Consequences can be positive or negative (Wong & Wong, 1998). According to Wong and Wong, rewards are positive consequences which result when students abide by the rules and penalties are negative consequences which result when students break the rules. Emmer and Evertson (1981) strongly suggest consequences should be quick and consistent, not general reminders or empty threats.

Natural rewards are encouraged in classroom management (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). These natural rewards are reinforcers relating to choice theory in which students who make positive choices receive positive rewards. Little and Akin-Little (2008) also contend that consequences should be selected and explained to students prior to student misbehavior. Rewards and punishments should be consistently incorporated into classroom rules and expectations (Wong & Wong, 1998).

Stewart, et al. (1997) suggest using a variety of interventions with students to manage behavior. These interventions should be based on individual student needs. Interventions may include designing and implementing a number of incentives and rewards for appropriate behavior. Individualization allows the teacher to target specific behaviors with students.

Maag (2001) studied components of elementary teachers' use of positive reinforcement in their classrooms. Elementary teachers were seen as having an advantage in using positive reinforcements because they interact with mostly the same students every day. Maag also warns not to confuse positive reinforcements with discipline. Discipline and punishments are not necessarily synonymous. Discipline refers to training to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, while punishment is utilized to decrease a particular behavior. Discipline can refer to a moral or behavioral improvement. A decrease in a certain behavior does not always mean improvement in appropriate behavior. Positive reinforcements and punishments are effects to increase or decrease a behavior. Maag further contends rewards are a "thing" to be given to acknowledge achievement. Rewards naturally occur in classroom management. Some suggestions are to catch students doing the right things, setting small goals, utilizing a group management plan, and preventing behavioral problems. These suggestions allow the teacher to

give intermittent reinforcements which may maintain higher rates of students' appropriate behavior.

Classroom organization. Classroom organization refers to the physical arrangement and the organization of the materials in the physical room. Stewart, et al. (1997) state "It is in the classroom that teachers have the greatest control over conditions that affect learning and behavior" (p.55). The physical arrangement of the classroom can affect both student and teacher behavior (Stewart, et al., 1997; Weinstein, 1992). Wong and Wong (1998) also present the concept of teachers preparing the classroom for the first day of school and for every school day. This preparation includes the physical classroom, the teaching and learning materials, and the teacher.

Components of an organized classroom include clearly defined spaced used for different purposes. A well-structured classroom may lead to improved student achievement and behavior (MacAulay, 1990). Stewart, Evans, and Kacynski (1997) advocate keeping the classroom orderly and well organized to achieve maximum level of student participation.

Student seating is another area of classroom organization. All students should have a clear view of the teacher. Seating should match lesson purpose. Desks in rows indicates individual tasks, clusters of desks indicate group work and more social environments. Desks should face work areas and the board to allow students to stay focused on instruction (Bettenhausen, 1998). Students who need help with attention should be seated in specific areas in the classroom. Highly distractible students should sit away from distractions such as the pencil sharpener, trashcan, and windows. Students who are seated in the front, center of the room tend to have more interaction with the teacher (Stewart, et al., 1997). Teachers should rotate students to ensure everyone has an opportunity to sit in these areas.

Wong and Wong (1998) summarize the concept of classroom organization with three directives to teachers.

1. Prepare the classroom for effective work.
2. Maximize proximity to the students.
3. Maximize proximity to materials.

The effective teacher is a prepared teacher. This preparation in the area of classroom organization allows teachers to maximize student achievement by minimizing student misbehavior.

Curriculum and instruction. Another component of classroom management is found in the actual curriculum and instruction taking place. Curriculum is mainly mandated by the school or district, but teachers need to present the content in meaningful ways to help students learn more effectively. Weade and Evertson (1998) defend effective classroom management and instruction are intertwined and in a continual dynamic relation. They are not separate domains. Students and teachers work together. Lessons are constructed to reach instructional goals. Classroom management and instruction are occurring at the same time.

Effective teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to teach students. Schussler (2009) states, “. . .when students perceive they have opportunities to succeed on authentic tasks through the flexible instruction of their teachers, they are more likely to engage” (p.118). These strategies may include cooperative learning, implementation of effective homework, best questioning practices, and activities which enable students of all modalities to grasp the material being taught. Teachers also know when and how to use such strategies with different students. Schussler (2009) adds, “teachers manage classrooms to facilitate student engagement when they demonstrate enthusiasm for authentic content and purposely use instructional strategies to

capture students' interest (p.118). Bettenhausen (1998) suggests teachers use a wide variety of learning activities with a multi-sensory approach. When needed, teachers should adjust assignments by breaking down tasks into smaller segments. Allowing students to use their best mode to take tests and complete assignments allows students to use their stronger learning modalities to complete classwork. Another strategy Bettenhausen offers is to teach students how to do certain tasks without assistance while waiting on help or after completing other assignments.

Brophy (1987) adds to this concept of curriculum as a part of classroom management in suggesting that successful classroom management involves preventing problems by planning, curriculum pacing, and engaging instructions. Effective teachers are not bound by the scope and sequence of a particular textbook or series. The needs of the students are considered to determine the content which needs the most emphasis and the methodology of how to impart the content. Discovering new and fresh methods to teach curricular content is another important factor in teacher effectiveness. These components allow the instruction to keep students engaged in appropriate academic activities. "A strong case can be made that effective instructional strategies and good classroom curriculum are built on the foundation of effective classroom management" (Marzano, et al., 2003, p.4).

In the area of teacher instruction, Stewart, et al. (1997) suggest "The daily schedule should reflect the maximum time for instruction in the content areas" (p.54). Teachers should plan their instruction strategically to allow for the most time in the content areas. Teachers should also determine clear, short and long term goals for academics and behavior. Matching instructional needs to curricula is a critical step for teachers. A variety of instructional methods need to be utilized including small and large groups, one on one time with teachers and other

students, and individual instruction when appropriate. Altering the tone and speed of instruction is another skill effective teachers use to appropriately pace each lesson (Bettenhausen, 1998). Students who get off task should be redirected before losing their focus.

Instruction allows students to practice taught procedures (as mentioned in positive classroom environment). Brophy (1987) states, “Successful classroom managers maximize the time students spend engaged in academic tasks; they also maximize their students’ opportunities to learn academic content” (p.3). Effective classroom managers utilize the students being familiar with classroom procedures to gain instruction throughout the year.

Martin, Sass, and Schmitt (2012) emphasize the role of the teacher in utilizing instruction in classroom management. “The teacher’s approach to instructional management sets the tone for the overall classroom atmosphere and ultimately student behavior stressors” (p.547). Setting the instructional tone was also emphasized in the Anderson, Evertson, and Emmer (1979) study. They found effective managers demonstrated many behaviors which conveyed purposefulness and seriousness about school and learning. This purposefulness communicates the “why” cooperation and staying on task are important. Holding students accountable and systematically providing feedback will also enable students to comprehend the purposefulness and seriousness about learning.

Positive classroom environment. “Creating a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to encourage children’s learning and prevent problem behaviors from occurring” (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009, p.18). Brophy (1987) also emphasized the need for teachers to create and maintain a positive classroom environment to support student learning. One way to create a positive classroom environment is to provide structure to the classroom. Simonsen et al. (2008) defines

structure as, “the amount of teacher directed activity, the extent to which routines are explicitly defined, and the design or physical arrangement of the classroom” (p.323). Structuring the classroom environment consists of a combination of each component of classroom management to provide the best learning environment for students. Combining structure and fairness with clear expectations in caring environment are components of good teaching (Pedota, 2007).

Bamburg (1994) contends it is important to have a positive emotional climate in the classroom. Teachers’ attitudes significantly affect student learning. This idea of teachers adding to the positive learning environment supports Brophy’s (1987) study who found “teachers who approach classroom management as a process of establishing and maintaining effective learning environments tend to be more successful than teachers who place more emphasis on their roles as authority figures of disciplinarians” (p.7).

Teachers control the climates in their classrooms. Classroom climates do not happen by chance. Careful attention is necessary to structure the classroom environment. Structuring the classroom environment involves creating and teaching classroom procedures.

Classroom procedures. Procedures are different from rules and expectations. Wong and Wong (1998) define procedures as, “simply a method or process for how things are to be done in a classroom” (p.169). Teachers must prepare their classroom procedures to maximize instruction effectiveness (Pedota, 2007). Teachers solve problems by prevention. Emmer and Evertson (1981) concluded more effective teachers spent considerable time at the beginning of the school year teaching their students classroom procedures. These procedures must be well-planned and thought out before school ever starts. Schools may support teachers’ efforts by creating school-wide rules and procedures to provide a framework for individual classroom procedures (Sanford et al., 1983).

The creation of procedures in the context of an organizational system for time, materials, and student interactions will enhance the classroom environment (Freiberg et al., 2009). Effective classroom teachers devise procedures for activities such as collecting and distributing papers without wasting instructional time. A variety of pertinent activities and transitions must be carefully considered (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007). Sanford et al. (1983) suggest procedures for moving students in and out of groups, cues to signal student movement, and expected student behavior while in groups. Once the procedures are created and explained to the students, they must be rehearsed. Wong and Wong (1998) contend procedures must be explained, modeled, demonstrated, and practiced. These actions must be reinforced and retaught until the procedure becomes second nature to the students.

Safety and predictability. Bettenhausen (1998) advocate teachers providing a climate of safety and predictability for their students. Keeping a high ratio of positive attention to negative attention helps teachers with this environment. Structuring the learning environment adds to the safety and predictability level of the classroom. Sewall and Chamberlin (1997) confirm safety in schools are a major concern for parents. “Effective prevention involves the establishment of predictable, positive environments that support students’ behavioral and academic needs” (Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010, p.177).

Positive teacher/student relationships. Finally, building positive relationships between teachers and students is a key element in effective classroom management. Marzano et al. (2003) state, “teacher-student relationships are the keystone” (p.41). Teachers become models for their students. Sheets and Gay (1996) propose many behavioral problems are caused by a breakdown in the teacher/student relationship. Haim Ginott (as quoted in Sprick, 2006) states,

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized (p.2).

Dynamics of an effective teacher/student relationship have been defined by Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk, and Admiraal (1999). The dynamic can either be dominance versus submission or cooperation versus opposition. Dominance refers to clarity of purpose (both academic and behavioral) and content and expected behavior. Submission refers to lack of clarity and purpose. Cooperation refers to concern for the needs and opinion of others, or a team player spirit. Opposition refers to active antagonism towards others. The authors suggest the best teacher/student relationship has an equal balance of dominance and cooperation.

Sheets and Gay (1996) contend "the quality of personal relationships between students and teachers has a significant influence on classroom conflicts and disciplinary actions" (p.84). There may be teachers who do not realize or understand the connection between behavioral problems in the classroom and their own personal behaviors. Often times teachers remove students from the classroom rather than working to solve problems.

For the Christian school teacher, looking towards biblical concepts in the teacher student relationship is expected. Knight (1998) explains, "healthy relationships . . . stand at the heart of both Christ's teaching ministry and Christian teaching methodology" (p.236). Tyson (2006) adds guidelines for effective communication are relational, calm, positive, mutually beneficial,

and constructive. These guidelines are based on God's Word, but are beneficial for teachers in all schools.

Specific, contingent praise. Praise is defined as “a positive statement by the teacher when desired behavior occurs, informing the students what they specifically did well” (Simonsen et al., 2008, p.362). “Teachers regularly use praise as an instructional strategy to increase the occurrence of children’s positive social and academic behaviors” (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, & Vo, 2009, p.18). While praise can be considered a reward for positive behavior, there are implications of specific, contingent praise which relates to the motivation of students. Simonsen et al. (2008) further adds, “the effect of praise is bolstered when specific and used in conjunction with other strategies” (p.363). Further support of praise is seen in increased correct responses, work productivity, accuracy, and academic performance. Reese (2007) explains the one-on-one connection between teachers and students often involves praise. This praise is a powerful tool in establishing an environment of respect in the classroom. Maag (2001) contends “teacher praise has been supported as one of the most empirically sound teacher competencies” (p.182).

Bartholomew (1993) defines four purposes for effective praise: a) recognizing and showing interest, b) encouragement, c) describing what is seen in behavior, and d) evaluating performance. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack (2001) remind that praise is most effective when related to a specific accomplishment, and verbal affirmation is more effective than tangible rewards.

Conroy et al. (2009) identify seven essential characteristics to enable teachers to utilize praise successfully in their classrooms.

1. Praise should include specific statements about the desired behavior.

2. Praise should be provided immediately following the behavior.
3. Provide frequent praise when students are acquiring an instructional skill, but change to intermittent praise as the skill is learned.
4. The teacher is to initiate praise.
5. Focus praise on student improvement and effort.
6. Praise should be appropriate and sincere.
7. Praise should avoid comparisons among students.

Teachers implementing praise with the above characteristics are more likely to improve student learning and achievement.

School-Wide Management

Marzano, et al. (2003) state, “school-level management and classroom –level management have a symbiotic relationship” (p. 103). Schools support the efforts of the teacher by providing the larger context of classroom management. The school provides the overall environment in which the classrooms exist. Combining effective management of each classroom to adds to students’ perception of the school itself (Marzano, et al., 2003). It is this perception which allows schools, Christian schools in particular, to communicate the same management message to their students.

Benefits of Classroom Management

While the benefits of classroom management may seem obvious, there are several specific benefits teachers will be able to reap when effectively managing their classrooms. These specific elements include positive classroom environments, increased instructional time, and decreased risk for teacher burnout. These benefits ultimately reap a harvest of increased student achievement.

Increased instructional time. Classroom environment also contributes to maximizing instruction by the utilization of structure. Wong and Wong (1998) state, “increase the amount of time the student is working, and you increase learning” (p.204). Simonsen et al. (2008) adds, “Students in high structure classrooms exhibited greater task involvement, friendlier peer interactions, more helpful behaviors, more attentive behavior, and less aggression” (p.357). Engagement refers to how a student participates in classroom instruction. This engagement is the best mediating variable between instruction and academic achievement. Little and Akin-Little (2008) further recommend, “If possible, 70% of classroom time should be devoted to academic activities. If students are engaged in interesting academic activities, disruptive behavior will be less likely” (p.228). The utilization of peer tutoring and cooperative learning activities helps to achieve this goal. Students who are more engaged in learning are less likely to participate in inappropriate behaviors (Simonsen et al., 2008). Brophy and Evertson (1976) state, “Teachers who have few discipline problems therefore have most of their time available for teaching and are more likely to teach successfully compared to teachers who spend significant amounts of time fighting for attention or trying to deal with severe disruptions and discipline problems” (p.54).

The intertwining of classroom management concepts is seen in the final component of increased instructional time. Classroom organization and environment helps increase instruction time. Teachers provide activities that begin students working immediately and ensuring there is enough work for students the entire period. Establishing, explaining, reviewing, and modifying the rules, routines, and procedures will help teachers devote the maximum amount of time to instruction (Pedota, 2007). Instruction time also helps decrease problem behavior and promotes a positive classroom environment. This classroom management matrix supports and depends on

each particular component. Each component is essential for classroom management to operate to its fullest potential.

Decreased Teacher Burnout

Teachers who are consistently stressed in the classroom from poor classroom management are more likely to burn out than teachers who learn how to manage their classrooms effectively. Chang (2009) indicates student behavior stressors from students' inappropriate behavior are a leading cause of teacher burnout. McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, and Melendres (2009) state, "teaching is widely considered to be a demanding profession with an attendant high risk for stress and burnout" (p.282). Martin, et al. (2012) state "efficacy in student engagement and instructional management appear to be salient predictors of classroom interactions that influence teachers' stress from student behaviors as well as their sense of personal accomplishment, job satisfaction and ultimately their intention to leave" (p. 548). Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnell, and Wang (2009) add, "teachers experiencing high rates of stress and burnout may be less capable of creating positive social environments for children and may even become role models for negative social behaviors" (p.986). This modeling of negative social behaviors is especially critical at the elementary level because of social development. Modeling negative behavior may have a domino effect as students may exhibit more negative behavior in the classroom, which in turn may cause teachers more stress and burnout more quickly.

Increased Student Achievement

Walker (2009) states, "the best teachers don't simply teach content, they teach people" (p.122). Teachers should always be thinking of the students and what is best for them. Increased student achievement is a direct benefit of effective classroom management. Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy (1979) determined more effective teachers in classroom management accomplish

more instructional time, more content covered, and greater student participation. Evertson and Harris (1992) further add the amount of instructional time spent is often associated with student achievement. This connection adds to the benefits of classroom management. With the first benefit of good classroom management follows the next of increased student achievement. Brophy (1987) adds the key to successful classroom management is the teacher's ability to maximize the time the students are actively engaged in meaningful academic activities. These activities are supported by classroom management and will result in increased student achievement. Wong and Wong (1998) add, "if the student cannot demonstrate learning or achievement, the student has not failed, we have failed the student" (p.197). It is this statement which implicates the teacher as the driving force in the classroom.

Classroom Management Programs

There are many different approaches to classroom management. These approaches can be classified as low, medium, and high control (Burden, 2010). Another manner of classification is teacher-directed or person centered. Traditional approaches are based on behaviorism and are teacher-directed or high control. These approaches utilize fixed rewards and consequences (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009). Person-centered or low-control approaches promote students as the controlling factor in classroom management. Trust is built through shared responsibility for managing the classroom. Another new psychological approach that influences the behavior related to the academic environment is emotional intelligence theory (Hoffman, Hutchinson, & Reiss, 2009). Emotional intelligence is defined as, "the self-perceiving ability to identify, assess, and manage emotions to better communicate, solve problems, and build relationships" (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995).

Carpenter and McKee-Higgins (1996) state “effective behavior management programs that are responsive to individual and group behaviors for classroom or school interactions and participation are proactive in nature” (p.196). These proactive behavior programs use instructional techniques to develop desired behaviors, allowing students structured opportunities to learn and practice appropriate behavior. Objectives are taught, procedures are explained and practiced while providing students reinforcement, feedback and monitoring. Students learn and understand desirable behaviors and how to perform them. These proactive programs also build a positive learning climate. Academic and behavioral techniques and support are incorporated to create a positive and rewarding environment for students. The learning environment is structured with an emphasis on desirable aspects of student behavior and positive interactions with all students.

One of the most well-known and researched classroom management programs is the Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP) developed at Vanderbilt University (Evertson, 1995; Evertson & Harris, 1999). Rules and procedures are emphasized along with classroom organization, teacher planning and pacing, student accountability, and starting off the school year right. Evertson (1995) reviews studies where the COMP program decreased student misbehavior and increased student achievement. Teachers undergo six to eighteen weeks of inservice training by learning how to analyze their classroom management and utilize the COMP strategies. Teachers also examine their effectiveness of their implementation of the COMP strategies.

Assertive Discipline (Canter, 2009) is another widely used classroom management program. This program is based on traditional behavior modification. Misbehavior results in specific consequences. Assertive Discipline has undergone several revisions, especially in the

light of criticism (Marzano, et al., 2003). These revisions have resulted in a more positive approach to classroom management rather than a punitive one.

The Child Development Project (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991) is a program which emphasizes student responsibility. This program follows a constructivist approach and is designed to develop pro-social behavior of students. It decreases the use of rewards and punishments of other classroom management programs. Intrinsic motivation of students is utilized to enable them to succeed in the classroom. Conflict resolution and problem solving skills are also developed.

While each of these approaches is linked to human theories of how students best learn, a Christian educator would be remiss if not filtering these theories through God's Word. A distinctively Christian worldview and calling to Christian education calls for passion about bringing the excellence God requires to Christian schools. Looking to Jesus as the Master Teacher, Gregory Carlson (2006) summarizes Jesus' role in the following manner, "Jesus epitomizes the definition of Bible teaching: one hand on the student, the other on the Word of God, bringing them together for life change" (p.9).

Glenn Schultz (1998) describes Christian education as kingdom education because God's kingdom is a present reality. Kingdom education is defined as "a life-long, Bible-based, Christ-centered process of leading a child to Christ, building a child up in Christ, and equipping a child to serve Christ" (p.29). Deuteronomy 6:7-9 describes the approach Christians are to teach their children about God's commandments. "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (NIV). Schultz (1998) adds, "When education is built upon a biblical foundation, it cannot be shaken by the winds of change that occur within any given society" (p.30).

There are criticisms about differing classroom management programs. Emmer and Ausikker as quoted in Evertson and Harris (1992) raise concerns over Teacher Effectiveness Training, Reality Therapy, and Assertive Discipline. These programs provide methods for dealing with misbehavior, but fail to adequately address the “complex preventative and supportive functions necessary for effective management and discipline” (p. 76).

Summary

There are various philosophies and styles of classroom management for teachers to utilize. Classroom teachers need to decide their philosophy of classroom management to choose the best type of program for their classroom in order to reap the benefits of effective classroom management. Learning the various philosophies and the programs to match these philosophies will enable teachers to discover the best method of classroom management for their particular teaching style. Christian school teachers should also consider the school’s philosophy and mission when deciding on the best method for their classroom.

What is lacking in classroom management research is the link between biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management and the effectiveness of their incorporation. The underlying use of character traits/concepts is subtly seen in various school programs. However, purposefully applying biblical concepts into Christian schools’ classroom management programs and the effectiveness of this application must be studied and examined to determine the value of integrating these concepts.

For the Christian school setting, the existence of biblical components incorporated into classroom management will enable the students to not only learn about biblical concepts in theory, but enable them to practice these concepts in daily living. This study addresses the limited amount of research on the effectiveness of integrating biblical concepts in the Christian

school classroom. A goal of the research was to determine biblical concepts are not simply a part of the Christian school curriculum and experience; rather they become the Christian school curriculum and experience.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to examine biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management. Examples of biblical concepts included but was not limited to referencing specific Scripture, prayer in class, referencing biblical character traits such as obedience, kindness, love, etc., or referencing specific instances in the Bible.

This study was guided by four research questions. The questions are as follows:

Research question one. What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?

Research question two. How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?

Research question three. What are elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?

Research question four. What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

This chapter begins with the research design of the study and the researcher's biography. The participants and sites of the study are then stated. Data collection and analysis procedures are described in detail, along with addressing trustworthiness and ethical issues. All pertinent documents are found in the appendices.

Research Design

The research design is qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative studies focus more on illumination and understanding of situations while quantitative studies focus on causes, predictions and the generalizations of findings (Hoepfl, 1997). Qualitative research seeks to

observe the ordinary to determine what ordinary means (Stake, 1995). This study specifically seeks to illuminate and understand the utilization of biblical concepts by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management.

Transcendental phenomenology was chosen because of its emphasis on discovery and meaning. “Phenomenological human science is discovery oriented. It wants to find out what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced” (van Manen, 1990, p.29). This study researched the phenomenon of biblical concepts incorporated into elementary Christian school teachers’ classroom management by delving into the nuances of their experiences.

Researcher’s Biography

I was born and raised in a Christian home with loving Christian parents. We faithfully attended our family’s Baptist church each Sunday and Wednesday. Our church had a Christian school where I attended pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Upon graduation, I attended a Christian university and received my elementary education degree. It was my desire to give back to Christian education and become a highly qualified and certified teacher and to teach in a Christian school. Because of this goal, I requested my student teaching placement to be in one of the area Christian schools.

The fall after graduation with my teaching degree, I taught second grade in a small Christian school in Virginia. I was able to utilize many of the techniques I learned from college in classroom management. I had a desire to not just have the students obey rules, but learn the greater lesson of obedience to the Lord. I worked on this concept as I moved to a larger Christian school several miles away. I taught third grade there for three years before my husband and I moved several hours north to become a part of a large family-oriented Christian school. I taught second grade at this school for two years. We had our first child and the Lord

called us back to our original city for a ministry opportunity for my husband. God opened the door at my former school to continue teaching third grade. I taught third grade for eight more years and felt God calling me to move into administration. I went back to college to work on my master's degree in administration and supervision. I was given the first assistant principal's position for the elementary school. I have currently served in this position for the past seven years. God has called me to continue my education career and work on a doctorate in educational leadership.

As an administrator, I deal with student discipline regularly. When I work with individual students, I do my best to instill biblically based concepts through discipline. As I work with teachers, I encourage, offer assistance, and motivate them to use biblical concepts in classroom management. It is my hope and goal to one day create a biblically based classroom management plan for Christian school teachers of all levels to have at their disposal. This plan would help teachers disciple their students rather than simply disciplining them.

As the researcher, I took an active role in the research process. Holloway and Biley (2011) advocate qualitative researchers being interested and actively involved in studies. Pyett (2003) adds "the researcher's individual attributes and perspectives have an influence on the research process" (p.1172). I conducted all the teacher interviews. The pertinent documents were reviewed by me. My focus was solely on the utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. By taking an active role, I searched for meaning over measurement (Holloway & Biley, 2011).

I was the only person analyzing the data. I undertook strategies to keep any bias from influencing the study including member checks and peer review. I acknowledge I had certain attitudes regarding the importance of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management as a

former Christian school teacher. Holloway and Biley (2011) explain the process of researchers with experience in a particular topic of research as being able to “share the language of the participants and add data from their own experience” (p.972). Holloway and Biley further add researchers who can draw on their own experience and meanings are better able to understand the participants. I used the epoche method of phenomenology to bracket out my personal experiences of incorporating biblical concepts into my classroom management (Moustakas, 1994). It is possible my personal viewpoints regarding the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management could have been a factor when analyzing the data. Careful attention to the suggestions of my research committee curtailed this possibility. This consideration was a potential risk, but one well worth the extra care because “our own experiences and knowledge are a resource and a source for exploring the ideas of others” (Holloway & Biley, 2011, p.972).

I also acknowledge I have a vested interest in this study. As a former classroom teacher in a Christian school, I often searched for resources on biblically based classroom management. I was unable to locate many available resources. Pyett (2003) presents my personal viewpoint, “we seek not to measure but rather to understand, represent, or explain something” (p.1170). It was my hope to find a clear benefit as well as document the findings to help other Christian school teachers having the desire to incorporate biblically based classroom management techniques in their classrooms.

Participants

Approval was obtained from the Liberty University Internal Review Board (IRB) before I began my study (Appendix A). Research was conducted in two Christian schools in the central/southwest area of Virginia. Each school is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). ACSI, founded in 1978, is a Christian educational organization

which seeks to, “advance excellence in Christian schools by enhancing the professional and personal development of Christian educators and provide vital support functions for Christian schools” (ACSI website, 2012). There are nearly 24,000 ACSI schools in over 100 countries. The vision statement of ACSI states, “ACSI promotes Christian education and training and resources to Christian schools and Christian educators, resulting in educators who embody a biblical worldview” (ACSI website, 2012). One of the core values of ACSI is a biblical foundation on the inerrant Word of God.

Once superintendent/administrator approval was obtained for these schools (see Appendix B), three teachers were selected from each school by the school administrator. The number of schools and teachers selected were fewer in number because of the straightforwardness of the study and allowed for depth in interviewing and focus groups. Creswell (2007) states “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (p.57). Choosing two schools and three elementary participants from each allowed for differing views of the same experience. Qualitative research uses purposive sampling because the focus of the research is based on quality rather than quantity (Bowen, 2005). The issue of how Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management did not require a high degree of certainty (Yin, 2009). The same data collection procedures were replicated in both settings with all participants. To select teachers for the study, school site administrators were asked to choose elementary teachers who are currently utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. Based on their recommendations, six total teachers (three per school) were selected to participate in the study (see Participant Recruitment Letter, Appendix C and Participant Consent Form, Appendix D). Selected teachers filled out a Participant Profile Sheet (Appendix E) and data was collected using

the teacher interviews (see Individual Interview Template, Appendix F), focus groups (see Focus Group Template, Appendix G) and document reviews. Templates were used in the Individual Interviews and Focus Groups to provide structure while maintaining a high degree of flexibility (Patton, 2002). I created the Individual Interview Template and Focus Group Template and these templates were piloted before being used in the study.

School site administrators had preexisting knowledge of which teachers were currently utilizing biblical concepts. Selected participants were also analyzed according to a number of other factors. These factors included grade level, years and type of teaching experience, and level of education obtained. Differing factors were be utilized to provide variety. These differing factors helped to answer the fourth research question regarding factors influencing the utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management.

Setting

Research was conducted in two ACSI schools in the central/southwest region of Virginia. Each school ranged from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. School size varied from approximately 160 to 350 students. Each school is accredited through ACSI. Two schools in particular were chosen for this study based on ACSI accreditation, similar views on biblical worldview, differences in school sizes to provide variety, and distance from the researcher to aid in transportation.

“First Christian School”

The enrollment of First Christian School (FCS) is approximately 315 students. FCS was founded in 1973 and is located in the New River Valley of Virginia. The mission statement states that FCS “serves as a partner with Christian parents as they obey the command of God to train their children in truth” (FCS website, n.d.). FCS is a Baptist church-run school with a head

administrator and individual school principals located on one campus. According to their administrator, approximately 95-100% of their school families are regular church attenders – attending a variety of denominations. Students live in the five surrounding counties and three close-by cities. Parents do not have to be Christians, making FCS both an evangelistic and discipleship school. FCS is accredited through ACSI and AdvanceEd (formerly known as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). AdvanceEd serves public and private schools and districts through accreditation and school improvement (AdvanceEd website, 2011).

“Second Christian School”

Second Christian School (SCS) was the smaller school in the study with approximately 125 students. SCS was founded in 1989 and is located in central Virginia. The mission statement says that SCS “is dedicated to developing emerging servant leaders by providing the highest quality Christian education” (SCS website, n.d.). SCS is a nondenominational, board-run school with a head administrator who oversees the individual schools located on one campus. There are over 50 churches represented in their student body from different denominations, including Church of God of Prophecy, Pentecostal Holiness, Baptist, Conservative Baptist, Southern Baptist, and Non-denominational. The administrator approximates that nearly 60% of school families attend church regularly. Because of the difference in denominations, SCS includes in its handbook and policies guidelines regarding the teaching of Bible. The SCS 2013 Faculty Handbook states,

Our purpose is to teach the Bible, the living Word of God, presenting its historic facts, creating a thirst for its truth and showing its relevance for today, teaching the indisputable historic doctrines held in common by the major denominations. When issues concerning denominational distinctives arise, the teachers and staff are instructed, according to the

philosophy and policy of SCS, to tactfully emphasize that these are denominational distinctives and the student should talk with his/her parents about their personal doctrinal position.

Students come to SCS from mainly the county the school is located. Nearly 80% of these families live within a 15 mile radius of the school. SCS is also accredited through ACSI.

Data Collection Procedures

Given superintendent/administrator consent (see Appendix B), data was collected through three different methods: teacher interviews focus groups, and document reviews. Holloway and Biley (2011) relate qualitative researchers to artists and the data to wet clay to be shaped into something recognizable. These data were collected and analyzed with the goal of producing a recognizable outcome.

With school site administration assistance, three teachers per school were selected to participate in the study. The participants were chosen primarily based on their perceived utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. Other criteria factored in to the decisions were variety of gender, classroom management styles, grade level taught, and level of education. The participants were informed of their selection and informed of the specifics of the study. Upon agreement, the participants received a recruitment letter (Appendix C) and signed a teacher consent form giving permission to use them in the study (see Appendix D).

Teacher Interviews

Detailed interviews were conducted with each participant. Interviews allow the participants to have their voices heard in the study (Lather, 2009). Open-ended questions were specifically asked to determine methods and ways biblical concepts are utilized in classroom management. An interview template was followed to focus the content of the interview (see

Appendix F). These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher for data analysis. Research question one, “What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?” were answered through these interviews along with research question two, “How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?” Teacher interviews were used to research question three, “What are elementary Christian school teachers’ perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?” An analysis of each teacher’s answers was completed to include significant statements or quotes and then coded into themes.

Focus Groups

To further describe how biblical concepts are utilized by these teachers and their perceptions of their incorporation (research questions two and three), focus groups involving the participants from each school were organized to encourage a detailed discussion of incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management. These sessions were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Specific questions began the sessions using the Focus Group Template (see Appendix G) with the opportunity for spontaneous discussions to develop. This spontaneity allowed me as the researcher to analyze the discussion to gain a more precise insight into the essence of elementary Christian school teachers incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management.

Other factors explored (research question four) were grade level/subject taught, years and type of teaching experience, and level of education obtained. Data gathered in the Participant Profile Sheet (Appendix E), teacher interviews, and focus groups were used to answer research question four. This data was included in the coding method for examination and used to write textural and structural descriptions.

Document Review

A document review was conducted on school-wide and classroom policies which support the utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management along with teacher-specific documents. These documents were available publicly or used for specific classroom purposes. biblical concepts which are woven into school-wide and classroom specific policies and practices were analyzed and coded into themes and used in textural and structural descriptions. Documents reviewed included school mission statements, school handbooks, lesson plans, classroom communications home, and other pertinent documents.

Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting data through the Participant Profile Sheet, individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews the data was then analyzed. The information from each of the data collections methods were analyzed by reducing pertinent information into significant statements. According to Moustakas' (1994) method, the transcriptions from the interviews and focus groups were analyzed and significant statements, sentences, or quotes which provide an understanding of how the participants' experienced biblical incorporation into classroom management will emerge. "Clusters of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994) from these significant statements were categorized into themes and intertwined into information gathered from the document review. From these emerging themes, a textural description was written to determine what was experienced from the participants. A structural description was also developed to determine how the participants experienced the phenomenon. These descriptions were combined to capture the essence of the experiences of all the participants (Creswell, 2007).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was determined by several methods. These methods included member checks, peer review, and triangulation (Creswell, 2007).

Member Checks

Member checks were completed throughout the research process. Each participant was given a copy of the transcribed interviews and focus groups for review. The participants were able to read the interviews to determine if their answers were communicated as they desired. When needed, adjustments were made to the interviews. All reviewed documents were disclosed to the school and the selected teachers. Member checks provided credibility to ensure my findings accurately describe reality.

Peer Review

After themes were identified by the researcher, members of the research committee were given the transcribed interviews and the coding tables to determine if the discovered themes are legitimate. This process ensured the validity of the study and prevented researcher bias. Dependability was reached in the consistency of the context and setting of the study.

Triangulation

Triangulation was accomplished through the three forms of research utilized in the study. Participant interviews, focus groups, and document reviews allowed the research study to have more validity than just one method of research alone. Transferability was addressed through the substitution of character education concepts rather than biblical concepts in general education settings.

Ethical Issues

To ensure the validity of the study, several means of security were utilized. Pseudonyms were used for the names of the schools and the participants. This measure was used to prevent any negative findings from damaging the schools' or teachers' reputations. Informed consent forms were used to gain permission from each school and participant. The schools' superintendent/administrator signed the school consent form before teachers were selected. Once teachers were identified, they also signed an informed consent form. Selected teachers were asked to fill out a participant profile sheet. Each teacher was assigned a pseudonym for the duration of the study. Teacher interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The participant profile sheets, transcribed interviews, and reviewed documents were sealed in envelopes and locked in a cabinet. Any document with the school name on it was blocked out to maintain school anonymity.

To prevent researcher bias, several preventative measures were utilized. Member checks kept participants informed of the process of research. Peer reviews ensured the codes and themes discovered by the researcher were legitimate and not simply codes and themes the researcher desired to observe. Triangulation was reached through three methods of data collection.

Because of my position as a Christian educator and a proponent of Christian education, it was essential I take every measure possible to produce valid and trustworthy results. I aimed to err on the side of caution in every aspect of this study. It is my hope I produced a quality, useful study for both Christian and public educators to glean valuable insights in the area of classroom management.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management.

Phenomenology focuses on participants' common experiences. The essence of experiences is explored (Moustakas, 1994). Finding a "comprehensive description" of what an experience means is the goal for the researcher. The researcher seeks to "understand the world from the participant's point of view, by listening to or observing a person in a natural environment" (Miller & Alvarado, 2005, p. 348).

Using transcendental phenomenology, I studied participants who all experienced the phenomena of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. The voice of the participants was heard through the interviews and focus groups. Documents were purposely selected to obtain information-rich data which would provide in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). The underlying factors determining their experiences were also explored. Finding the essence of the participants' experiences was the goal of the research. In this chapter, the findings of the interviews, focus groups, and document reviews will be reported.

The research questions which guided the study are reviewed. A detailed description of how I bracketed out my experiences is explained. A summary of the participants' profiles are listed along with the procedures of their individual interviews follow. A summary of the significant statements and themes which emerged from the interviews are listed. The same format is utilized for the focus group procedures with the summary of significant statements and themes listed. The procedures utilized for the document review and the significant statements and emerged themes are also listed.

The composite textural description and the composite structural description are listed as part of the phenomenological method (Creswell, 2007). Finally, all four research questions are answered with specific aspects from the interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. All findings are summarized at the conclusion of this chapter.

Research Questions

This study was designed to fully explore biblical concepts being utilized in elementary Christian school teachers' classroom management. Four specific research questions guided the study.

1. What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?
2. How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?
3. What are elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?
4. What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

Personal Experiences with Phenomenon

Moustakas (1994) advocates the approach of describing personal experiences with the phenomenon studies. This description allows me as the researcher to set aside my experiences to direct the focus on the participants. I am a former Christian school elementary teacher with over 15 years of experience. It was my goal as to incorporate biblical concepts into every aspect in my classroom. While this was my goal, there were improvements that could have been made. After moving into elementary Christian school administration, I would look for teachers in my

school to also include biblical concepts in their classroom management. Conversations and discussions led to questions as to “what” and “how” to incorporate biblical concepts. It was my personal experience which led me to explore this topic in my course of study.

Throughout the study I kept a research journal where I recorded thoughts, ideas, and even prayers regarding this study. I would include Bible verses to encourage me on this journey and inspire me to keep working. The goal of exploring the topic and what elementary Christian school teachers were currently doing in their classrooms kept my focused on my goal. I was careful not to put words in the mouths of the participants. I designed the Participant Profile Sheet with several suggestions of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management as a basic level of incorporation as a starting point to spark ideas to begin the discussion in the individual interviews and focus groups. I made a point not to join in the conversation during the focus group sessions to ensure I was capturing the participants’ experiences and not my own. There are detailed descriptions of the participants’ interviews and focus groups which will allow their voices to be heard rather than my own.

Participant Summary

My initial contact with the schools and administrators was by telephone. In the phone conversation, I was able to describe my study and indicate the need to choose participants who were in the administrators’ opinion incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. Phenomenological studies utilize criterion sampling due to the necessity of all participants having the experience of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007). Administrators were to choose these participants because they had knowledge of their teachers and who had incorporated biblical concepts in classroom management. Having administrators choose the participants allowed for information-rich cases based on their experiences of the phenomenon.

For the study, six participants were selected by the two school administrators. All participants were elementary teachers at their respective Christian schools who, in the judgment of the administrators, had experienced the phenomenon of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. I sent each administrator the Participant Recruitment Letter (Appendix C) along with the Participant Profile Sheet (Appendix E) to give to the participants prior to my school visit. I met with each participant individually and answered any questions they had about the study. After answering any questions, they each signed their consent forms and gave me their completed Participant Profile Sheets, which I sealed in an envelope. I assigned each school and participant pseudonyms for reporting purposes.

Participant Profiles

Each participant completed a Participant Profile Sheet before my individual interviews. This sheet asked specific short-answer style questions to gain insight on practical items such as years teaching experience, years teaching in a Christian school, highest degree earned, etc. Teaching information was also given on the Participant Profile Sheet regarding nine specific biblical concepts being incorporated into classroom management. Participants were asked to determine whether they always, sometimes, or never utilized those biblical concepts in their classroom management. A final section regarding school information was completed on the profile sheet to determine their particular school's involvement in incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management.

First Christian School Participants

“Adam” was a kindergarten teacher with nearly 30 years’ experience. He had nearly 25 years of Christian school experience, but had also taught at in public schools. The highest degree he had earned was a Specialist’s degree. He also had received his teaching degree(s) at

both public and religious universities. Adam was soft-spoken and gentle with his answers in both the individual interview and focus group session. He thought through his answers carefully before answering and made sure he was clear in his understanding of the questions. He expressed passion regarding God's Word in his answers. He wanted to use Scripture throughout his classroom and with his dealings with students, but was careful to mention several times he never wanted to "twist" the Scriptures to make it fit what he wanted them to fit.

"Betty" was an elementary art teacher with nearly 20 years of teaching experience. All of her teaching experiences were in Christian schools. Her highest degree earned was a Master's degree. She earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degree from a private, non-religious university. Her sincerity was evident in her thoughtful answers. Betty had several negative personal experiences with her own children in public schools which inspired her to put her children in a Christian school and later teach in a Christian school. Betty left me with the impression she placed a high importance on discipline in the classroom by her references to structure and rules. Being an elementary art teacher, she was also careful to help students appreciate one another's work and not be critical of one another. She alluded to several instances of this practice during her individual interview and focus group session.

"Cathy" was a bubbly kindergarten teacher with nearly 10 years' experience in Christian education. Previously she had taught in Christian preschools. All of her teaching experiences were in Christian schools. She earned her teaching degree from a religious university. Cathy expressed a sincere desire to convey biblical concepts to her students, even at an early age. She quoted Scripture several times in the individual interview and focus groups while answering questions. Her answers were directly to the point of the importance of incorporating biblical concepts in every aspect of her classroom management. She used songs and chants with specific

Bible verses in her classroom daily. Cathy would have been a joy to observe teaching because of her personality and passion.

Second Christian School Participants

“Debbie” taught a combined third and fourth grade classroom. She had nearly 15 years teaching experience in Christian schools. She did have public school experience as a substitute. Her highest earned degree was a Bachelor’s from a religious university. Debbie was quiet and thoughtful during her individual interview. She seemed more comfortable in the focus group with her peers, as she joked a little and laughed about some of her answers. Throughout her interview and focus group, she would recall her previous experiences from when she attended Christian schools and how they influenced her teaching today. These influences were referred to in the data analysis of the study.

“Elaine” was a first grade teacher with over 30 years of experience. Nearly 25 years of that experience was in Christian schools, while she did teach 7 years in a public school. Her highest degree was a Specialist’s degree. She earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from public universities and her Specialist’s degree from a religious university. At the time of her interview, Elaine’s daughter had recently had a baby. She was so excited to tell me about her grandbaby and all the time she wanted to spend with her. Elaine was soft-spoken and conscientious with her answers. She asked for several clarifications and wanted to make sure she was on the right track with her answers. She seemed to have a sweet and nurturing spirit for first graders.

“Freda” taught fifth grade. She had nearly 25 years of experience, all in Christian schools. Her highest degree earned was a Bachelor’s, which was from a religious university. Freda was outgoing and kept a smile on her face throughout the individual interview and focus

group session. She laughed and joked with her peers and expressed a fun-loving personality. She referenced several times how she would talk to her students about biblical concepts. She would express how she wanted her students to really understand the biblical concepts on their level so they could apply them to their daily lives.

Each participant completed a Participant Profile Sheet (Appendix E) before the individual interviews took place. The Participant Profile Sheet asked specific questions regarding personal experience, teaching information, and school information. This profile sheet enabled me to collect specific data about each participant and allowed me to ask more open ended questions in the interview to gain deeper insight into each individual's experience. Participant information is found in the following tables. Participant Profiles are found in Table One. Participant Teaching Data are found in Table Two and Participant School Information are found in Table Three and Four.

Table 1*Participant Profiles*

Participant	Gender	Grade Currently Teaching	Years Teaching Overall	Years Teaching in Christian School Setting	Highest Degree Earned	Taught in Public School?	Religious or Public University?
Adam	M	K	36	23	Specialist	Yes 13 years	Both
Betty	F	K-5 Art	16	16	Masters	No	Public
Cathy	F	K	5	7	Bachelors	No	Religious
Debbie	F	3 rd /4 th	16	16	Bachelors	N	Religious
Elaine	F	1 st	32	25	Specialist	Yes 7 years	Both
Freda	F	5 th	21	21	Bachelors	No	Religious

Table 2*Participants' Teaching Information Data*

Biblical Concept	Always	Sometimes	Never
Prayer during class	Adam, Cathy, Debbie, Elaine, Freda		*Betty
Bible verses or concepts incorporated in classroom rules	Adam, Betty, Cathy, Debbie	Elaine, Freda	
Bible verses referenced during regular classroom activities	Adam, Cathy	Betty, Debbie, Elaine, Freda	
Bible verses referenced while handling student misbehavior	Adam, Cathy	Betty, Debbie, Elaine, Freda	
Referencing situations in the Bible when handling student behavior (example: Remember when David did not fight Saul even though Saul was trying to capture David.)	Adam, Cathy	Betty, Debbie, Elaine, Freda	
Referencing biblical concepts such as the fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, etc. in regular classroom activities (example: fruit of the month, beatitude of the month)	Adam, Debbie, Elaine	Cathy, Freda	Betty
Having students cite Bible verses in behavioral situations	Adam	Betty, Elaine	Debbie, Freda
Using a Bible verse or biblical concept as a class motto	Adam, Cathy, Elaine	Debbie, Freda	**Betty
Prominent posting of Bible verses/concepts in classroom	Adam, Cathy, Debbie, Elaine	Freda	**Betty

*Do not begin elementary art classes in prayer, but do with high school students.

**Art room used for all students – cannot direct to one class.

What other biblical concepts do you use in classroom management?

- Student testimonials
- Peer groups

- Cross grade-level relationships
- Classroom rules backed up with Scripture
- Unity of the body of Christ (working together as a team)
- Being kind
- Putting others first
- No complaining (Philippians)
- Define and discuss monthly schoolwide character qualities
- Give examples of character quality behaviors
- Reference to ten commandments
- Reference to the Golden Rule
- Fruit of the Spirit
- Armor of God

Table 3

Participants' School Information Question One

Does your school require biblical concepts incorporated into your classroom?		
Participant	Yes	No
Adam	✓	
Betty	✓	
Cathy	✓	
Debbie	✓	
Elaine	✓	
Freda	✓	

If answering yes, please explain below:

- The school's philosophy is biblically based.
- All educational objectives are linked to a biblical focus.
- Objectives, both academic and Spiritual are required for each subject, each grade level.
- We have objective and also criteria that we have in order to complete lesson plans.
- Our back bulletin board is supposed to display biblical concepts.
- We are encouraged to "look" like a Christian classroom (noticeable upon entering the room).
- We are required to list Scripture references in every subject in curriculum guides.
- We should tie lessons in with the Bible (example: learning measurements tie in with Noah and his measurements in building the ark).

Table 4

Participants' School Information Question Two

Has your school provided training on how to incorporate biblical concepts into your classroom?		
Participant	Yes	No
Adam	✓	
Betty	✓	
Cathy	✓	
Debbie	✓	
Elaine	✓	
Freda	✓	

If answering yes, please describe the training you have received.

- Glen Schultz – *Making the Connections*.
- In-services.
- Curriculum development.
- Biblical training (Friday devotions) from a persistent text.
- Special workdays when these issues are presented and discussed.
- Administration is always available to guide faculty members through situations that may be out of the ordinary and need an unbiased perspective.
- School provided training during Teacher Orientation.
- We completed a course on biblical worldview.
- ACSI conferences and in-service meetings addressing biblical integration.
- We have access to reference materials to help find appropriate Scriptures.
- Seminars during in-service week.
- Workbooks.

Interviews

Participants were interviewed during the school day either during their planning time, or at a time arranged by the administrator. Each school provided a room to conduct private interviews. Each participant was interviewed according to the Individual Interview Template (Appendix F) which included six questions pertaining to their personal experiences regarding utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. Each interview lasted between 10 and 15 minutes depending on their responses. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed exactly as they were recorded. Individual Interview transcriptions are found in Appendix H.

Member checks were employed after the transcription process for validity purposes. Member checking was conducted by emailing each participant's copy of his/her transcribed interview for review. Participants were encouraged to offer feedback concerning the interview transcription. Participants emailed me feedback and all were satisfied with what was transcribed and confirmed these were accurate statements they had made.

After the interviews were transcribed, I reviewed each interview to highlight significant statements, sentences, or quotes to provide an understanding of how each participant experienced the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) referred to this step as "horizontalization." After noting these statements, I developed clusters of meanings to discover common themes among the participants at each school. These common themes were noted. After the individual school's interviews were analyzed, I compared the emerged themes from the individual interviews from each school to see if there were similarities or differences between the participants from the different schools. The findings from the individual interviews were categorized by what research question they answered and listed in the Phenomenological Reduction Chart (See Appendix J).

Significant Statements and Themes

There were six questions asked in each individual interview. I took each question and analyzed the individual's responses to discover commonalities and significant statements.

Individual Interview Question One was, "In general, how do you define classroom management?" All three participants from FCS had similar answers with "learning" is taking place as a central theme. Two participants from FCS and one from SCS indicated classroom management is an "appropriate student environment." Two participants from SCS indicated classroom management is the way a class is run with scheduling, lesson planning, and student behavior as key concepts.

Individual Interview Question Two asked, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?" Two participants from FCS included the concepts of clear expectation and procedures were important. Two participants from FCS added the use of Scripture in their classroom management. The three participants from SCS included concepts about rules, system of consequences, and positive reinforcement and rewards.

Individual Interview Question Three asked the participants, "What are specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?" Each participant from both schools indicated the use of Scripture in dealing with student behavior, either with specific verses or biblical concepts. Two participants from FCS expanded their use of biblical concepts to not only deal with misbehavior, but to reinforce positive behavior.

Individual Interview Question Four added onto Question Number Three, "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management, and if so explain in detail how." Several of the participants had indicated the use of Bible verses in Question Three, so I asked them to go into

more detail in answering Question Four. Two participants from FCS and two from SCS utilized biblical verses to support classroom rules. Another participant explained in detail how Bible verses were used in daily lessons to reinforce Scriptural concepts.

Individual Interview Question Five asked, “How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?” All of the participants from FCS and one from SCS indicated they used biblical concepts frequently, but it depended on the situation. One participant from SCS indicated “most of the time” and one participant from FCS indicated she used biblical concepts “every time I’m dealing with classroom management.”

The final question asked, “How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?” All of the participants indicated biblical incorporation was very effective in their classroom climates. Significant statements from this question included, “Our guideline is to follow God’s Word;” “in a Christian atmosphere it is our privilege and responsibility,” “very effective because all truth is God’s Truth;” and “it’s the only answer for effectiveness.”

After analyzing and coding the significant statements from each individual interview, the following themes were evident.

- Reinforcement of positive and negative behavior with Scripture and Scriptural concepts.
- Utilization of biblical concepts depends on the student and situation.
- Utilization of biblical concepts is beneficial for the Christian school elementary classroom climate.
- The Bible is a foundational component for Christian school elementary classroom management.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted in a private room on each school's campus. At First Christian School, the administrator arranged a time during the school day to conduct its session. At Second Christian School, the focus group was conducted at the conclusion of the school day. I asked five opened-ended questions regarding biblical concepts in classroom management using the Focus Group Template (Appendix G). The participants were asked to contribute to each question if possible and they could elaborate on each other's responses. The duration of the two focus groups was approximately 30 minutes each depending on the responses and discussion among the group members. The focus group was audio-recorded and transcribed exactly as they were recorded. Focus group transcriptions are found in Appendix I.

After the transcriptions were completed, they were reviewed to see if any themes regarding utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management emerged. After both schools' focus group transcriptions were reviewed, the two schools' focus group transcriptions were compared to see if any themes were common between the two schools. These common themes were noted for analysis. The transcriptions were highlighted and the common themes were noted in a chart according to what research question they answered (See Phenomenological Reduction, Appendix J).

Member checks were again employed after the transcription process for validity purposes. Member checking was conducted by emailing each participant a copy of his/her transcribed focus group interview for review. Participants were encouraged to offer feedback concerning the interview transcription. Each member emailed me to confirm these statements were accurate and the themes represented the statements correctly.

Significant Statements and Themes

There were five questions asked at each focus group session. I took each question and analyzed the group's responses to discover commonalities and significant statements. Question One was, "What have you personally experienced in terms of biblical classroom management?" The FCS focus group answered this question from a classroom teacher standpoint. The first participant noted how their school parents appreciated the teachers approaching classroom management from a biblical perspective. The parents wanted the Bible to be the foundation in all that is done in the classroom. Another participant referenced the Bible verse that says "His Word will not go void." If the teachers are constantly sharing God's Word with the students, it is constantly being poured into the students and will not go "void." Betty discussed dealing with student behavior from a biblical perspective. She had received feedback from parents appreciating the fact she did not "beat them over the head" but approached the misbehavior from a biblical viewpoint.

The group at SCS drew on their past experiences of education to answer this first question. The first participant had been to a Christian school for most of her life. She notes Bible memorization as a foundational concept. She also recalled her experiences of attending church youth group where there were distinct groups of Christian school kids and public school kids. This experience enables her to share with students how segregation affected her and allows students to relate her experience with a concept they are learning in class. The second participant had a public school background. When she began teaching in a Christian school, she did not have any Christian educational experience to draw from aside from her endorsement in early childhood education she received from Liberty University. When she came to teach in a Christian school, she had to learn how to relate the Bible to every aspect of her life and how to relate those biblical principles into academics. She noted the wisdom when trying to counsel

students on their behavior with that the Bible taught. She referred to the Bible as “the ultimate source that we go by, so it was a real education for me in coming here and getting that training on how to just weave it together for your whole life.” The third participant started out in a Christian school, but also attended public schools. She noted wishing she had more training in college in Christian education at her Christian university. She also related to learning by being here at a Christian school how to integrate the Bible. She noted, “In fact, this is the first place I had even really heard that term.” This statement led into more discussion among the participants regarding learning from others at their school about integrating the Bible into all areas. Participant two added, “You have to purposely plan to integrate the Scripture into what you are doing.”

Focus Group Question Two asked the participants, “What specific situations have influenced your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management?” The focus group at FCS began to discuss their previous experiences in public education. One participant had taught previously in a public school and remembered not having the freedom to mention things of the Bible. This experience influenced him when he came to FCS to feel freer to use God’s Word in his dealings with the students. Another FCS teacher added her experience with public schools from a student’s standpoint. Her son had attended public school in the elementary years. She noted, “Things of the Lord were just scorned.” It was this experience that convicted their family about Christian education. The third participant at FCS had always attended a Christian school. Her thoughts were, “As long as everything you are teaching is centered around the Word of God you won’t go wrong.” Her background in Christian education enhanced her teaching now in a Christian school.

The SCS focus group took a different approach to this question. One participant indicated listening to other teachers handling behavioral situations with biblical concepts made a big impression. This response guided the conversation to the point of the other participants recounting their experiences of collaborating with their colleagues in handling classroom situations while utilizing biblical concepts.

Focus Group Question Three focused on teacher empowerment as a result of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. “Describe in detail how your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have empowered you as a teacher.” The FCS focus group immediately began describing experiences of confidence and trust in the fact they were working towards the right goal. One participant stated, “All truth is God’s truth. I’m confident I’m doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal.” Another participant added, “You may not think you are making an impact, but you’ve got to trust you’re doing the right thing.” The third participant shared experiences of seeing God at work in the students on a daily basis.

The SCS group described personal experiences in which the biblical concepts affected the teachers on a personal level. One participant took biblical concepts from school which were being discussed to strive to improve her personal life. She would see a verse posted in the school and say to herself, “You need to work on this.” Another participant added the transferability of grace and mercy God had shown her to extend that same grace and mercy to her students. This concept added to the discussion in which another participant agreed and shared her experiences of showing grace and mercy to her students. She explained, “Err on the side of mercy.”

Focus Group Question Four dealt with details of biblical classroom management that improved teaching. “Explain in detail how incorporating biblical concepts in classroom

management have improved your teaching.” The FCS focus group began immediately to discuss the importance of classroom management in general with further descriptions of the importance of incorporating biblical concepts. One participant indicated the need for living out the Word of God in her own life in order to teach the concepts to her students. The word “freedom” became central to the discussion. One participant stated, “I think it frees you to have successful classroom management, not that it happens every moment of every day, but overall you’re free to do what you need to do.” Another participant added, “It frees you to understand they’re not necessarily rebelling against you. It’s not you that they’re made at. They’re rebelling against the Lord.” This “freedom” concept developed into the purpose of a Christian school teacher coming from the Lord.

At SCS, this fourth question developed into the concept of the biblical incorporation sharpening a teacher’s ability to teach in the classroom. One participant noted, “I think it can make subjects more clear to them and more real.” The idea of the connectivity of the Bible to every subject and every area of life began to develop. Another teacher recalled how she would say to her students as they would see this connectivity, “And look! See how they intertwine together!” Finally, a participant delved into the idea of how the biblical principles sharpened her as a person. She added, “I’ve found that in saying the biblical principles for myself, it certainly sharpens you as a person and gives you a clearer understanding.” With this understanding she is able to confidently say, “The Bible says this and I believe it.”

Focus Group Question Five was open ended with the goal of adding to the overall discussion on biblical classroom management. “What other thoughts would you add to enable other elementary Christian school teachers to include incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management?” The focus group at FCS had several ideas including having a network

of comrades to come along side of you and say, “I know what you’re going through and have you tried this?” This is the biblical idea of “bearing each other’s burdens.” Another participant added the idea of biblical concepts in classroom management releases one to do what’s right. This is not a personal idea of classroom management but one based on Scripture. “It releases you from the equation.” Finally, the concept of God being a God of law and love and order was introduced. One participant noted, “those are all three things we have to have in the classroom in order to have class management and to have children succeed in learning.” Another participant added, “Those principles just really reinforce that.” One participant noted the importance of a school establishing guidelines and general parameters for classroom management. These guidelines included support from the school and consistency. Finally, the concept of biblical guidelines ensuring continuity between school and home was reiterated. One participant said, “We’re all on the same page and that’s going to mean better success for the students and for us as a school.”

The SCS focus group added several ideas to the concept of utilizing biblical components in classroom management. One participant discussed the importance of a personal relationship with God and bringing learned concepts into your classroom. To which another participant added learning concepts in personal church attendance or spiritual life experiences. One participant included the value of the time and effort put into incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. “I just think it’s well worth the time.” SCS also added the idea of searching out other teachers who have more experience in the area. “Experience is probably the best thing . . . you need to ask the experienced teachers.”

After analyzing and coding the significant statements from each focus group, the following themes were evident.

- Belief in the Bible and a biblical worldview are foundational components for Christian school classroom management.
- Personal experiences and personal spiritual development influence how a teacher incorporates biblical concepts in classroom management.
- Connecting the Bible to all subject areas and classroom components is an integral part of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management.
- Collaboration with colleagues is a needed component of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management.
- A school's expectations, atmosphere, and mission are key components in teachers incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management.

Document Review

A thorough document review was conducted on pertinent documents from each studied school. Documents were used as a part of triangulation to add to the comprehensiveness and validity of the study (Patton, 2002). The study of documents provided access to contexts and philosophical frameworks which could not be observed or captured in interviews or focus groups (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). Examined documents included both school's Parent/Student Handbooks, website information, website downloads, Faculty Handbooks, Teacher Evaluation Forms, and related classroom documents. Items were purposely chosen for review to represent a reflection of the phenomena studied (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). The purpose of the document review was to discover information-rich items related to the nuances of the phenomena of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. The documents were purposely selected because of their relation to the goals of the study (Howell & Prevenier, 2001; Jordanova, 2000).

A content analysis approach was applied to the document review to discover themes and categories and underlying philosophies (Patton, 2002). Each document was read thoroughly and notes were taken regarding items related to biblical concepts in classroom management. After all the documents were read, I examined each document again to search for themes common throughout the individual school's documents. These themes were written down and noted each time this theme was present in another document of that particular school. After discovering themes in each individual school's documents, I compared the themes between schools to see the similarities and the differences. If there was a match, I noted the theme and the location in the documents of that particular theme. If there were differences, I noted those also and described the differences between the two schools.

Finally, I compared the themes from the document reviews to the responses and themes of the individual interviews and the focus groups to see where the concepts intertwined. I recorded the document review themes supported in the individual interviews and focus groups according to research questions to see where the themes were consistent (See Appendix J).

Significant Items and Themes

Each school's documents revealed significant items which developed into themes. To grasp the heartbeat of each school, I reviewed the mission and vision statements. The mission statement for FCS indicates the school's desire to make students disciples of Christ by training students with God's truth. Its vision statement adds to this mission by including statements of how their students will develop spiritually, by imitating the mind of Christ, being under the authority of the Bible, and possess a biblical worldview. The mission statement for SCS indicates they are a partner with the local church and Christian families who desire a biblically-based education for their children who possess a biblical worldview of life. The vision adds to

the mission in the development of servant leaders in the method of quality Christian education. Both of these schools' mission and vision statements are geared to what the goals of the school aim to achieve in the students. A noteworthy item is the emphasis on the Bible and developing in the students a biblical worldview.

Each school had informational websites with many documents for perusal. These webpages and documents were user-friendly and geared toward the general public wishing to gain information about the schools' programs and offerings. Each website had biblical concepts woven throughout the pages and the downloadable documents. One of the noteworthy items was each school's commitment to reach out to the community. Opportunities for missions' trips, community partnerships, and desire to teach student to be servant leaders were given. Each website had new enrollment applications which I downloaded and reviewed. I was interested to see what requirements for admission were for each school in regards to personal beliefs. Both FCS and SCS had a section dedicated for parents' beliefs. The FCS application had a section which read, "If a Christian, father/mother's statement of faith and relationship to Jesus Christ." This portion indicates the school desires to know parents' statement of faith and personal relationship with Christ, but was not required for student admission. The SCS application had a section which read, "We would appreciate if each parent would make a statement of his/her personal relationship with Christ." Again, the wording of this statement does not indicate that a personal relationship with Christ is a requirement, but is appreciated. Both schools' applications had a question for parents that read, "Why have you chosen FCS/SCS?" This question allows the schools to gain a deeper understanding of the family's position on Christian education. Both schools offered a pastoral discount for tuition indicating a relationship and appreciation for other churches and ministers. Another item of significance is that both schools had a parental

agreement to sign indicating the family's agreement to abide by the guiding principles and beliefs of the school. FCS included a "Family/School Covenant and Cheating Policy" and SCS included a "Philosophy of Christian Education Statement" to sign.

Each school website also had a faculty application which I thought would be important in the document review. Each school had a portion where applicants had to describe their Christian background. Applicants were to also provide a personal testimony of their relationship with Christ. Both schools had applicants sign or agree to the Statement of Faith provided. While both schools delved more into personal beliefs, FCS asked questions regarding church membership while SCS asked more questions about applicants' personal philosophies. Both schools have applicants sign the exact same "Declaration of Moral Integrity" document.

Related to faculty applications were faculty qualifications and expectations. Each school requires faculty and staff members to be professing, born-again Christians who agree to the school Statement of Faith. While wording was a bit different, each school also had expectations of their faculty/staff in the areas of personal growth in their Christian lives, church membership (FCS to the member church, SCS to a "Bible-believing church"), spiritual role-models for students, provide a Christian atmosphere in the classroom, and be ACSI certified. SCS included the statement regarding their faculty/staff, "have been found to be qualified both spiritually and academically" (SCS Faculty Handbook, p. 6).

I examined each school's parent/student handbook to gain insight on the parents' and students' perspectives. These handbooks are available to the public via the schools' websites. Each handbook clearly articulated the schools' mission, vision, core values, and educational goals. Both FCS and SCS have statements in their educational goals regarding the belief the Bible is God's inspired Word and is taught throughout the educational program. Both schools

also have statements regarding the teaching of a biblical worldview. Weekly chapel is a part of both schools' programs. Chapel is an opportunity for the students to be "fed spiritually through the spoken word and song" (FCS Parent Handbook, p. 4).

Another noteworthy item in reviewing the parent/student handbooks was the emphasis on discipline and school rules from a parent/student viewpoint. Each handbook listed life principles which were reinforced through the schools' program. Life principles included respect to God, the Bible, those in authority and other students; obedience; discipline, courtesy and holiness. These life principles were written in a manner conveying expectations set for the students. The Matthew 18 Principle was another life principle for both schools. FCS uses Matthew 18 as a basis of discipline which is directed toward the students. SCS uses Matthew 18 directed at adults (teachers and parents) in handling conflicts. This principle is stated thoroughly in the SCS Faculty Handbook and is listed as one of the commitments of parents on the New Student Application.

Both schools' faculty handbooks were obtained by the school administrators for the purpose of review. Each handbook clearly articulated to faculty the mission, vision, core values, and educational goals. Also included were the statements of faith, faculty expectations, and routine procedures. Discipline guidelines were written from a faculty standpoint and included goals for teachers. Both schools had goals for their teachers to exhibit in their personal lives. FCS expects teachers to have "a self-disciplined life and walk" and "to seek God's wisdom" (FCS Faculty Handbook, p. L-12). SCS urged teachers to "actively live out the Fruit of the Spirit" and be a "primary example of self-discipline" (SCS Faculty Handbook, p. 22). Both schools stressed the importance of positivity in the area of discipline. FCS included a substantial list of Scripture resources to use in disciplining children.

Biblical integration was a topic in both schools' faculty handbooks. FCS included teachers' lesson plans needed to include a "biblical focus" for each subject. This biblical focus is also on the FCS lesson plan template to be completed weekly. SCS went into more detail regarding biblical integration. Its faculty handbook states, "In a Christian school all studies and activities should be God-centered and Scripture-related" (SCS Faculty Handbook, p. 8). SCS also has statements in its faculty handbook describing the role of the teacher to promote a Godly-conscience in the students and to purposely plan lessons from the viewpoint of God's Truth. "The teacher's task is to bring the student face to face with God at every turn of study" (SCS Faculty Handbook, p. 9). The expectation of SCS is for teachers to personally study the Bible and intertwine their subject matter to find "common ground" as God's Truth integrates into thinking which will in turn allow the biblical integration to occur naturally.

Both schools had policies on Scripture memorization. At FCS, they use the New King James Version (NKJV) for "uniformity." Students are to memorize passages and verses from the NKJV unless parents request another translation. SCS uses the King James Version (KJV) or the New International Version (NIV) for Scripture memory. Both schools allow teachers to use other translations for study and preparation. SCS allows teachers to teach lessons from other versions.

Another item of interest in the Faculty Handbooks of both school were student awards. Each school has a system of rewarding students based on academic and spiritual excellence. At the end of the school year, FCS recognizes students for the character trait in which the student has shown the greatest development during the year. Some of these character traits include attentiveness, diligence, honesty, kindness, obedience, orderliness, responsibility, and self-control. SCS also awards students at the end of the year. Some awards are named after people

in the Bible and include the “David Award” for an “A” average throughout the year, the “Solomon’s Reader Award” for the top reader in each class. Students may also earn monthly character quality awards in chapel throughout the year.

I asked each school administrator to view their teacher evaluation instruments. These were sent to me electronically. Both schools evaluate their teachers on a yearly basis with at least one formal observation. They also perform informal observations on teachers on a consistent basis. FCS evaluates teachers on the “spiritual application of subject matter.” SCS uses a more comprehensive form evaluating teachers’ personal traits with items of “models a Christian lifestyle,” and “demonstrates qualities of courtesy, integrity, gratitude, and kindness.” SCS also evaluates teachers on instructional components of their lesson with items of “biblical integration is evident,” and “classroom atmosphere” and “Christian themes are evident.” Teachers from SCS are also given a Teacher Observation and Reflection form which has them state examples of biblical integration from any lesson (other than Bible) taught. These reflection forms are completed mid-year by the teachers and are re-evaluated at the end of the year by the administrator and the teacher.

Themes. After reviewing the documents from both schools, the following themes emerged.

- Belief in the Bible and a biblical worldview are foundational components of each school.
- Teachers are expected to grow spiritually in order to pour into their students biblical concepts.
- Parents and students are expected to support and abide by the spiritual guidelines of the schools.
- All components of each school’s program are an outgrowth of their belief system.

Textural Description

In phenomenological studies, the researcher takes significant statements and themes to write a textural description of what the participants experienced (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the phenomenon experienced by all of the participants was the utilization of biblical concepts in Christian elementary school classroom management. The textural description answers the question, “What was experienced?” (Creswell, 2007). Each participant was able to define in their own words the meaning of classroom management with significant statements including

- “It’s how I run my classroom.”
- “Learning is taking place.”
- “Things are managed in such a way that things or others do not detract from learning.”
- “Safe, comfortable . . . controlled environment”
- “Everything.”

Methods and techniques utilized in classroom management ranged from clear expectations and rules, procedures set at the beginning of the year, positive reinforcement, and a system of rewards and consequences. Each teacher has a particular style of classroom management. It is not a one size fits all experience. These definitions and techniques are common in elementary classrooms.

Add in the component of the Bible to Christian school elementary classrooms and a different picture develops. Each participant added in the biblical component of using Scripture when dealing with student behavior. This use of Scripture may be with negative behavior or with positive behavior. Scripture verses may be specific or they may be Scriptural concepts. This added component adds in the spiritual realm which is nurtured and commonplace in Christian elementary schools. Scripture support is given to classroom rules in some instances

and is woven throughout instructional lessons so the students are hearing and seeing these components on a consistent basis. Some participants noted these Scriptural components are integrated “most of the time” while some stated the integration depended on the situation. One participant stated she used Scriptural components, “Every time I’m dealing with classroom management.”

Common experiences among the participants included the concept of the Bible being foundational to all they are doing as a school. It is this foundational principle which all other principles are built. Purposeful planning on incorporating biblical concepts in every aspect of the students’ educations is a principle the school, teachers, parents, and students expect when attending these Christian elementary schools.

Structural Description

Building on the phenomenological study, Creswell (2007) guides the researcher to write a structural description of the setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Utilizing the significant statements and themes from my research, I have found several key components which influenced how the participants experienced utilizing biblical concepts in Christian elementary school classroom management.

The participants were influenced by their personal experiences. Some had Christian school experiences which influenced them, while others were influenced by their public school experiences. Individuals’ unique personal experiences helped mold their viewpoints on how biblical concepts should be incorporated into classroom management.

Another influence was the atmosphere and expectations of the Christian school. Throughout the documents of each school, expectations of using the Bible as a foundation for everything that is said and done in the classroom were evident. Each school’s mission and

vision, policies, and guidelines center on the Bible and how it is to be the focus. Using the Bible as a foundation, participants expressed feelings of “freedom,” “confidence,” “boldness,” and “trust” in what they were doing. The Bible is seen as God’s absolute truth. If everything in the school, classroom, and all those involved are based on the Bible, there can be confidence in knowing what is being done.

Learning from other colleagues was another factor of influence. This theme became evident in the interviews and focus group sessions. Learning from experienced teachers, asking for help in certain situations and camaraderie were elements several participants cited as beneficial for their understanding how to incorporate biblical concepts in classroom management.

Research Questions Answered

Four research questions guided this study and were answered with items from each method of data collection.

Research Question One

What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management? Participants completed a Participant Profile Sheet prior to being individually interviewed. These responses were used to create a snapshot of what they were doing in the area of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. All six participants reported either “always” or “sometimes” incorporating Bible verses in classroom rules and when dealing with regular classroom activities. They also all reported referencing situations in the Bible in handling student misbehavior. Five out of six reported either “always” or “sometimes” incorporating prayer in class, referencing biblical concepts in regular classroom activities, utilizing Bible verses or concepts as a class motto, and prominently posting Bible

verses or concepts in their classroom. Three out of six participants cited Bible verses in behavioral situations.

During the individual interviews, several concepts were reported as being used in classroom management. All participants reported reinforcing positive and negative behavior with Scriptural concepts. Some reported using biblical concepts such as leadership when dealing with students. Other concepts reported were the use of Bible verses to support classroom rules, and incorporation into lessons.

The focus group sessions uncovered other biblical concepts utilized in classroom management. Participants noted how they strive to get students to look at their behavior from a biblical standpoint. While others worked with the older students to help them make the biblical applications when forming their viewpoint on life.

The concepts of grace and mercy relating to God's grace and mercy on us as adults surfaced during the focus group session. One participant noted if she was not sure of a situation to "err on the side of mercy."

A final concept emerged from the focus group of God being a God of order and not chaos. This concept supported the use of the Bible in classroom management. Love and order are items necessary in classroom management to help students succeed.

The document review revealed several items to answer Research Question One. FCS's resource of Scriptures to use when dealing with misbehavior (FCS Faculty Handbook) supported the use of Bible verses and concepts in classroom management. Each school had discipline guidelines in their faculty handbooks to encourage teachers to think along biblical guidelines when dealing with student discipline. Biblical integration was another key concept for both

schools which incorporates biblical concepts into classroom management's instruction component.

Research Question Two

How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management? This question was mainly answered in the individual interviews with a couple of items supported by the focus group and the document review. Individual Interview Question Three directly asked the participants to share how they incorporate biblical concepts into classroom management. Answers included using positive examples, using Scripture for positive and negative behavior, using Scripture throughout the day, referencing the Bible when dealing with specific student behavior, and rules based on Scripture.

Individual Interview Question Four asked how Bible verses were used in classroom management. One participant was quick to caution about not "twisting" Bible verses to make it fit what you want it to fit. Other participants added using Bible verses as God's expectations for behavior, using Bible verses when working with the children, and another added the use of Bible verses in "student's language" so they could understand the concept.

Individual Interview Question Five dealt with the frequency of using biblical concepts in classroom management. Answers varied from "Every time I'm dealing with classroom management;" "All the time;" "Depends on how the Lord leads;" and "Depends on the situation." Several participants used the phrase "Most of the time" to put a time frame on their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. The general consensus from the answers given were biblical concepts are incorporated into classroom management on a regular basis.

Focus Group Question Four asked the group to explain how incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management had improved their teaching. Responses to this question impacted the answer to Research Question Two of how teachers are incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. Participants responded with the idea of connecting the Bible to everything they are teaching. The idea of not trying to make the Bible fit, but of seeing how everything fits into the Bible was a key concept. One participant noted, “The Bible is the thread that ties it all together.” This was an interesting response to this focus group question, and connects in nicely with how teachers are incorporating biblical concepts into their classroom management.

The documents supporting Research Question Four were the core values of each school, the educational goals, the vision statement, and the statement of faith. Each school has these principles in place which support how the teachers are currently incorporating biblical concepts into classroom management. SCS’s emphasis on biblical integration also supports the answers given regarding the connectivity of the Bible.

Research Question Three

What are elementary Christian school teachers’ perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management? Individual Interview Question Six directly asked participants how effective the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management was in their overall classroom climate. One could look at this interview question from the viewpoint of the overall effectiveness of incorporating biblical concepts in general, but the addition of “your overall classroom climate” requires participants to determine their effectiveness of the utilization of biblical concepts in the overall formula. Every participant gave a general answer of “effective” or “beneficial” ranging from “very beneficial/effective” to “pretty effective.” The

participants had to include themselves in the formula. One participant stated, “To me it’s the only answer for effectiveness . . . if we have God at the center and use His Word in everything that is going to help the children the most.” Other participants added qualifiers with their answers. One participant said “very beneficial,” but “depends on the student and situation.” Another participant also said it depended on the student and “how it’s received by them if their heart is willing to receive the instruction you’re giving them.” Another added, “very effective . . . young children want to please.” The Bible as a foundational concept was reiterated in several responses. “The biblical way is the right way because all truth is God’s Truth.” Another participant added, “Our guideline is to follow God’s Word . . . in a Christian atmosphere, we have that right and privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students.”

During the focus group sessions, several statements were made relating to how teachers perceive their effectiveness in incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. The concepts of freedom, boldness, confidence, and trust were cited.

- “Successful classroom management gives you the freedom to go beyond to teach your subjects.”
- “It frees you in the sense the students are not rebelling against you, but against the Lord.”
- “The biblical concepts sharpen me as a person. I have a clearer understanding and a boldness to say, ‘The Bible says this and I believe it’.”
- “All truth is God’s Truth. I’m confident I’m doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal.”
- “You may not think you’re making an impact, but you’ve got to trust you’re doing the right thing.”

- “When you set up your classroom biblically, it releases you to do what’s right . . . removes you from the equation.”

These statements were in direct line with several school documents including mission statements, vision statements, core values, and educational goals. Teachers who are on board with the school’s underlying principles will feel more effective in how they run their classroom.

Research Question Four

What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management? This final question delved more into finding common themes among the participants experiencing this phenomenon. Six commonalities were found among the participants.

- Personal experiences.
- Collaboration with colleagues.
- School expectations/atmosphere/mission.
- Personal spiritual development.
- God’s Word as a foundation.
- Biblical worldview.

In the area of personal experiences, while some participants had Christian school experiences and some had public school experiences, each participant could recount how their experiences influenced them in incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. Some recounted childhood experiences, while some remembered college and teaching experiences. Each individual’s perspectives on their personal experiences shaped what they are currently experiencing in their classrooms.

Collaboration of colleagues was another theme which emerged from the participants' responses to the focus groups. When dealing with situations they felt were out of their comfort zone or scope of experiences, participants would cite learning from other teachers. Some participants would directly go to other teachers or administrators for help dealing with particular situations. Drawing again on personal experiences, participants with public school backgrounds would learn from other teachers how to integrate the Bible into lessons, handle behavioral situations with biblical concepts, and an overall how to teach in a Christian school mentality. One participant added, "Don't be afraid to ask other teachers, too, who may have been at it longer. Don't be afraid to learn and make yourself vulnerable."

The school's expectations, including its atmosphere and mission emerged as another factor which influenced Christian elementary teachers incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. This concept was developed in all three methods of data collection. One participant noted the Christian atmosphere of the school as an influence. In the focus groups, schools' established guidelines and parameters, parental support, and discipleship were all mentioned as factors of influence. When examining the documents of the school, this theme was evident in several items from both schools including mission and vision statements, core values, educational goals, statements of faith, school rules, parent and teacher handbooks, policies regarding chapel, community service, discipline guidelines, biblical integration, teacher evaluations, student awards, and teacher qualifications. The faculty/staff applications of both schools also stated the schools' position on the incorporation of biblical concepts.

Personal spiritual development was another theme to emerge. Participants in individual interviews and focus groups recounted personal relationships with Jesus Christ and spending time in God's Word as influential in how they incorporated biblical concepts in classroom

management. Pouring into God's Word enables them to pour God's Word into their students. Documents which supported this theme include policies of school discipline, teacher evaluations, teacher qualifications, and teacher applications. Each one of these documents included statements stressing the need and importance of teachers to develop a strong personal walk with the Lord.

God's Word as a foundational concept once again was discovered as an influence on teachers incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. The Bible was consistently referred to in both individual interviews and focus groups. Foundation on God's Word was a consistent theme throughout this study. One simply cannot incorporate biblical concepts without the Bible. The document review again revealed each school's stance on God's Word being a foundational concept. Mission and vision statements, core values, educational goals, statements of faith, discipline policies, biblical integration, teacher job descriptions, teacher qualifications, teacher evaluations, and Scripture memorization policies all stressed the importance of God's Word being the focal point of what is being done in the classroom.

The final emerged theme is related to God's Word as a foundational concept: a biblical worldview. One of the goals of each school is to teach from a biblical worldview. Each school stresses the importance of teaching students a biblical worldview. This concept is an influencing factor because if everything at the school is approached with a biblical worldview, this approach would include classroom management. This concept was discussed at focus groups and is well-supported in mission and vision statements, core values, the Matthew 18 principle, biblical integration policies, teacher qualifications, and teacher applications.

Composite Description

Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological method utilizes a composite description taken from the textural and structural descriptions to capture the essence of the study. Taking the significant statements and themes from the structural and textural descriptions allows the researcher to discover the common themes woven throughout the study. From this study of the incorporation of biblical concepts in elementary Christian school teachers' classroom management, three dominant themes emerge. These themes focus on intentionality, personal beliefs, and the foundation on God's Word.

Intentionality

Incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management does not happen by chance. Each teacher must intentionally incorporate these concepts. Situations may arise where the incorporation is natural, but teachers need to be purposeful in tying the situation to the biblical concept. The participants in the study described how they must be intentional about learning and developing personally in God's Word to keep it alive on the inside of them. Intentionality is also seen in the mindset of the participants as they described taking the time to make the connection with the students. biblical integration in lessons, taking the time to talk through a situation with a student, personally learning biblical concepts, and being positive with students takes time and effort. The school documents also supported this theme. Teachers are expected to intentionally teach the Bible and biblical concepts in their classrooms. The schools' mission and vision statements support the intentional teaching and conveying of biblical concepts. The participants in this study agreed this intentionality was worth the effort in the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management.

Personal Relationships

The next theme which continually emerged from the research was the concept of personal relationships. This theme is twofold in the personal relationships between the God and the teacher and the teacher and the student. To effectively incorporate biblical concepts, teachers need to have a personal relationship with God. While this may seem obvious, it is the continued personal relationship between the teacher and God which feeds the teacher and enables him/her to instill biblical concepts and principles into his/her life. When these concepts and principles are instilled into the teacher, they are more apt to be brought out in every aspect of the teacher's life, including the classroom.

The second personal relationship which is included in this theme is the personal relationship between the teacher and the student. The participants in this study mentioned ideas such as not using the Bible as a "bat" or negatively when dealing with student behavior. Teachers who are building relationships with their students will most likely be more effective when utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. If there is no relationship, the concepts may be lost or ineffective.

School documents also supported the idea of personal relationships. Teacher evaluations and school handbooks emphasized the importance of teachers being learners of God's Word and church attendance. Parent handbooks stressed the importance of the relationships between teachers and students to even include parents.

Teachers who take the time and are intentional about building these relationships, teacher/God and teacher/student will have a better chance of success in utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. This success may be seen in on several levels, including knowledge, application, and effectiveness.

Foundation on God's Word

While this theme may seem obvious, it is the most necessary. Everywhere in the study, this theme was evident. Teachers simply cannot utilize biblical concepts in classroom management without the belief and consistent viewpoint of the Bible being at the center of the Christian school classroom. The biblical way was the common goal of all the participants in the study. If a teacher in a Christian school does not hold this core belief, biblical concepts incorporation in classroom management will be artificial or nonexistent. School documents all support this theme throughout their programs.

Every participant in one form or another indicated the Bible is foundational to the experience of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. Statements were made regarding the Bible is central in the lives of the participants, the Bible is the foundation of the Christian school, and the Bible is the main focus of the Christian school curriculum. The Bible applies in all areas of life, whether it is the teacher's life, the student's life, the lessons, the discipline, or the school's founding principles. At every turn and in every area researched, the Bible was always the mainstay.

Every participant noted using biblical concepts when reinforcing behavior in the Christian school elementary student. These behaviors could be positive or negative. Praise when a student is doing well, and reinforcement when a student's behavior needs redirection. Document reviews also indicated biblical concepts are to be utilized when dealing with students in various areas. Each teacher also noted the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management is "effective." Some answers ranged from "very effective" to "pretty effective."

Finally, all participants used biblical concepts in instructional lessons. This utilization is important, because classroom management not only deals with behavior, but what goes on daily in the classroom. Instructional lessons comprise the majority of the school's function, and

biblical concepts are incorporated in each participant's daily classroom instruction. Pertinent documents from each school also support this use of biblical concepts incorporated into instruction, whether through lesson planning, classroom activities, or dealing with behavior issues. The focus on incorporating the Bible into every aspect of the classroom is a central concept.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Since the mid-1960s, Christian schools began to increase in number and popularity for those families wishing for an alternative to public education (Gangel, 2003). These schools are founded on denominational and biblical principles. It is these foundations which began the examination of the idea of biblical concepts incorporated into classroom management. Are Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts into every aspect of their classroom, especially in the area of classroom management? If so, how are they incorporating them? It was this curiosity about biblical classroom management which began the quest for answers.

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to examine biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management. The study was guided by four research questions.

1. What biblical concepts do elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?
2. How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?
3. What are elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?
4. What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

Data was collected from six participants by employing individual interviews, focus group sessions, and document reviews. Each interview consisted of six questions. The focus group sessions added five additional questions. Document reviews of pertinent school documents were employed as the third method of data collection.

In this final chapter, I will provide a brief summary of findings followed by a detailed discussion of each research question's themes. Relevant literature linking classroom management and the participants' utilization of biblical concepts is interwoven throughout this discussion. Comments regarding the theoretical implications and limitations will be discussed along with suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

Chapter Four included an analysis of the data taken from individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. Through the phenomenological reduction process, several themes emerged as they related to the research questions. The themes were subdivided and categorized by each of the four research questions. The following is a summary of findings by each research question:

Research Question One Discussion

Two themes emerged from Research Question One involving what biblical concepts elementary Christian school teachers use in classroom management. The themes which emerged are as follows:

1. Reinforcement of student behavior.
2. Incorporation of biblical concepts in routine classroom activities.

Research Question One asked what is being done in the elementary Christian school teacher's classroom in the area of biblical concepts in classroom management. It is a basic foundational question to discover what concepts are being used in general. The answers given by the participants were broad in scope, but similar in concept.

Reinforcement of student behavior. All of the participants in one manner or another used biblical concepts in the reinforcement of student behavior and in routine classroom

activities. In the area of making good choices based on biblical truths, Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) state, “teachers must take active roles in guiding students toward moralistic life decisions” (p. 191). Participants in this study cited utilizing Scripture and Scriptural concepts in dealing with student behavior and choices. Participants used specific Bible verses in dealing with student behavior. They used stories and situations from the Bible to help students make better choices or to see the possible consequences of their behavior. Some participants used Bible verses as support for their classroom rules. Verses, stories, situations, broad biblical concepts, and moral lessons were used in their routine activities throughout the day including in instructional lessons, informal activities, conversations, and behavioral situations.

Incorporation of biblical concepts in routine classroom activities. Research also suggests the importance of a positive classroom environment in effective classroom management (Bamburg, 1994; Brophy, 1987; Pedota, 2007; Simonsen et al., 2008). The participants concurred with these findings as a positive classroom environment was a stated concept of their classroom management. Furthermore, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) concluded classroom management had a twofold purpose of establishing an orderly learning environment and enhancing “student social and moral growth” (p. 4). Building on the foundation of the Bible, elementary Christian school teachers instill into their students biblical concepts in classroom management to enhance this moral growth. The incorporation of biblical concepts into their classrooms was discussed in individual interviews and focus groups and its effectiveness on their classroom environment and students’ growth. School documents also supported positive classroom environments and the moral growth of students.

Research Question Two Discussion

Three themes emerged from Research Question Two regarding how elementary

Christian school teachers utilized biblical concepts in classroom management. Those identified themes were:

1. Connectivity of the Bible to all other subjects.
2. Intentionality of incorporating biblical concepts.
3. Biblical concepts are incorporated in dealing with student behavior.

Research Question Two delves deeper into this practice of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management by asking how this incorporation is completed. The participants had varying answers to this methodology question as each individual participant has a unique style of classroom management. The three themes which emerged were common among the participants either from individual interviews or focus group discussions. It is interesting to note that the participants, while different somewhat in methodology, could relate their methods to these three themes. These themes support relevant classroom management literature.

Connectivity of the Bible to all other subjects. Brophy (1987) referred to student socialization as “actions taken with the intention of influencing students’ attitudes, beliefs, expectations, or behavior . . .” (p. 8). The participants all indicated their intentional utilization of biblical concepts by reinforcing behavior with Scripture, connecting biblical concepts to instructional lessons, and using biblical concepts either directly or indirectly with students. These actions were intentional and purposeful with the intent of influencing their students. Using the Bible as a foundation, these participants cover a large scope of influence as they work with their students on a day to day basis.

Intentionality of incorporating biblical concepts. Influence is intentional, yet may be spontaneous as the situation presents itself. The mindset is on how to purposefully incorporate God’s Word daily into the lives of these students. Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) support this

intentionality by stating, “the intentional transmission of character within the education process is, in fact, the essence of true education” (p. 184). One participant stated, “you have to purposely plan to incorporate biblical concepts.” School documents also supported this idea of intentionality in their biblical integration policies, core values, and educational goals. The schools studied are expecting these concepts to be taught intentionally to the students.

Biblical concepts incorporated in dealing with student behavior. The literature suggests students need consistent rules and expectations in order to be successful (Barbetta et al., 2005; Emmer & Evertson, 1979; Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007; Simonsen et al., 2008). Participants noted rules were a component of their classroom management. One participant used Bible verses to support the rules. Others used verses as a part of posted classroom rules. For the Christian school elementary teacher, the combination of classroom rules with specific or implied Scriptural concepts builds on the foundation of God’s Word and gives support to the rules from a higher authority.

Literature also supports the use of rewards and consequences or punishments in classroom management (Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Little & Akin-Little, 2008; Pedota, 2007; Wong & Wong, 1998). Participants noted they used the Bible in dealing with both positive and negative behavior. The Bible was noted as useful in helping students understand natural consequences and reinforces consequences. One participant was careful in stating she never wanted to use the “Bible as a bat” to drive consequences home, but as a tool for teaching and correcting. Another participant noted he did not want to “twist” the Bible to make it fit a certain situation. The Bible is full of stories of actions and consequences. Many times, children learn best from stories and the lives of others. The Bible is a tool which may be used to help reinforce

this cause and effect reality of life. The participants in this study are using biblical concepts of sowing and reaping to reinforce behavior.

Research Question Three Discussion

Three themes emerged from Research Question Three regarding elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. Those themes are identified below:

1. Biblical incorporation into classroom management is beneficial.
2. Incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management gives teachers a sense of freedom, boldness, and/or confidence.
3. God's Word is a foundational concept in biblical classroom management.

Research Question Three adds another dimension to the study. Previously learned was what biblical concepts are being incorporated and how they are being incorporated. Research Question Three sought to discover how the participants think about incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. The three themes which emerged are interesting in the fact they view the participants' personal thoughts about the incorporation while maintaining the foundational concept of God's Word.

Biblical incorporation into classroom management is beneficial. Shaping students according to God's Word is possible through a biblical approach to classroom management. Adding to Brophy's (1987) study on influencing students is the idea of shaping as a basic teacher function. Classroom management and instruction are intertwined together. With the idea of student shaping, Christian school teachers are able to seamlessly blend biblical concepts into every aspect of their teaching. Participants confirmed this theory in their individual interview statements and focus group discussions. One participant noted, "I use biblical concepts every

time I'm dealing with classroom management.” One aspect of teaching is influencing the students, and the fact these teachers are able to utilize biblical concepts in classroom management helps the students to learn not only academic material, but moral and spiritual concepts as well.

Gives teachers sense of freedom, boldness, and/or confidence. Adding to Wilhelm and Firmin's (2008) conclusions regarding teachers taking active roles in guiding students' moral decisions, Participants voiced agreement in feeling confident in their utilization of biblical concepts. When God's Word was the basis of not only classroom management, but everything the school and classroom are about, they were confident they are leading students in the right direction. One participant noted, “my goal is the correct goal.” Another participant stated regarding using the Bible as a foundation in classroom management, “You've got to trust you are doing the right thing.” The belief of the Bible as the ultimate authority allowed the teacher to act as a messenger of the truth rather than the final authority. In a focus group, one participant summarized this concept by saying, “When you set up your classroom biblically, it releases you to do what's right. It removes you from the equation.”

God's Word is a foundational concept in biblical classroom management. This theme kept repeating itself in the study. The repetition is significant in the fact it drives the participants and the schools and all their activities. In Research Question Four, this theme emerged again in the discussions of elementary teachers helping students see their behavior from a biblical standpoint. One of the aspects of behavioral management as defined by Maag (2001) is deciding what behavior to change. The participants in the study utilized the Bible as the determining factor in deciding what behavior needed to change in several ways. Some participants referred to “What would Jesus do?” Others would work with students one on one to

try to get the student to see his/her behavior from a biblical standpoint. Again, the theme of God's Word is foundational cannot be overlooked in teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management.

Research Question Four Discussion

Finally, there were six discovered themes from Research Question Four regarding what factors influenced elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. The identified themes were:

1. Personal experience.
2. Collaboration with colleagues.
3. School expectations, atmosphere, and/or mission.
4. Personal spiritual development.
5. God's Word is foundational.
6. Biblical worldview.

Research Question Four explored the question of "why" in elementary Christian school teachers' utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. Determining influential factors in this utilization was beneficial for fully exploring the nuances of this phenomenon.

Personal experience. Every teacher has personal experiences which shape their philosophies, motivations, teaching styles, and in this study, biblical classroom management. What was interesting in the participants' interviews and focus group sessions, is the fact that different backgrounds influenced their incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom managements. One may think a teacher from a Christian school background would have stronger feelings about the importance of incorporating biblical concepts. This thought would not prove true with the participants. While there were several who did state biblical

incorporation was impacted directly from Christian educational experiences, the same direct impact was experienced by participants who did not have Christian educational experiences.

Participants who cited Christian educational experience referenced these experiences as foundational in their motivation and desire to instill these biblical concepts into their students. To some this Christian educational background was viewed in a negative viewpoint in the sense of what they experienced was not the manner in which they wanted their students to experience Christian education. The positive and the negative past experiences fueled the desire of these participants to be a better Christian educator. Other participants remembered learning Bible verses in their Christian educational experiences, several of which they use in the incorporation of biblical concepts into their classrooms today.

Several participants cited public school experience, either as a student or a teacher, as a motivational force in their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. One participant referenced the freedom once in a Christian school to include biblical concepts into all components of teaching. It was the restrictive nature of public school experience which motivated more incorporation of biblical concepts. Another participant noted public school experience throughout her educational background until college. She saw the behaviors of the students in her past and noted she included biblical concepts into her teaching and classroom management because of what she experienced throughout her education. Another suggestion from a participant was the need for Christian colleges and universities who are education future teachers to include how to teach in a Christian school to include the utilization of biblical concepts. She stated, "I wish I would have had more of a training in if you wanted to go to a Christian school then these are things you need to do."

Collaboration with colleagues. Building on the final note in personal experience, the participant who expressed the thought of Christian colleges and universities to include training in how to teach in a Christian school had to rely on her colleagues in the Christian school to help shape and guide her into successful incorporation of biblical concepts into her teaching. One participant stated, “Sometimes listening to other teachers when they’ve told me this happened in my classroom today and this is how I handled it . . . and how they brought in the Scripture that’s made a big impression on me.” Another participant referred to her experiences of seeing another teacher on the playground handle a behavioral situation biblically and learning from observing that interaction. A consensus among the participants echoed the resource of other teachers and administration to enable teachers in the successful incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management. This collaboration is a team effort building on the next theme of school expectations, atmosphere, and/or mission.

School expectations, atmosphere, and/or mission. Documents analyzed in this study revealed the role of the Christian school as an extension of the home. Teachers have the opportunity to continue the training received in the home at school with biblical concepts. Each school’s mission and vision are intentional in the purpose to influence students based on Christian and biblical principles. Edlin (2003) reinforces this concept by stating, “a biblically authentic understanding of the Bible in the Christian school . . . shapes the school’s mission statement and its practice” (p. 71). A part of these school expectations are discipline guidelines which teachers are expected to reinforce in their classrooms.

Weade and Evertson (1998) confirm the connection between classroom management and instruction. Brophy (1987) suggests successful classroom management and instruction are connected by planning, pacing, and engaging instruction. The participants concurred with the

connection of classroom management and instruction. biblical concepts woven directly into the instructional program occur through biblical integration. This biblical integration was expected from both schools in the study. One school placed more emphasis on biblical integration than the other, but participants at both schools spoke of how biblical concepts are expected to be woven into their instructional program.

Personal spiritual development. Another emerged theme was the concepts of teachers' personal spiritual development. A teacher who is purposeful, in accordance with the school's expectations, in using and applying biblical concepts into classroom management must be personally developing spiritually. The incorporation is not one of rote memory or a checklist to be completed. The seamless incorporation must be intentional and internalized by the teacher.

In order for biblically based classroom management to take place in the classroom, teachers must be students of the Word of God. Gibbs and Haddock (1991) recommend, "a clearly defined, biblical philosophy of discipline is the first step to effective classroom discipline" (p. 18). To have a clearly defined biblical philosophy of discipline, teachers must know the Bible. Examples of personal spiritual growth came from participants' experiences in church, personal devotions, Scripture resources, and personal spiritual learning experiences in their own lives. These examples enabled participants to sharpen themselves spiritually to enable them to become more effective in imparting these beliefs to their students.

God's Word is foundational. "Christians accept the Bible as our source for the ultimate answers in life" (Gangel, 2003, p. 56). The theme of God's Word as a foundational concept was seen once again in Research Question Four. There simply cannot be a discussion of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management without the fundamental belief in the Bible. The two concepts go hand in hand. Each participant in one form or another agreed to this core concept.

This overarching theme of God's Word is foundational is seen throughout every aspect of the study. If one takes away the Bible as a foundation, the other pillars of the phenomenon fall.

This belief in God's Word being foundational leads to one final theme from Research Question Four, a biblical worldview.

Biblical worldview. Personal spiritual development enhances one's belief in the foundational concept of God's Word, which in turn influences one's biblical worldview. Gangel (2003) states, "Christians find wholeness in a worldview that encompasses both the material and the spiritual, the sacred and the secular" (p. 60). Edlin (2003) adds, "Christian education must ensure that students learn about the world and their place and tasks in it from the perspective of a biblical worldview" (p. 69). Teachers who possess this biblical worldview influence their students in the same fashion. The biblical worldview possessed by the participants influenced them in the incorporating of biblical concepts in classroom management which will, hopefully, influence their students' worldview.

Theoretical Implications

The conceptual framework of this study was built around the concept of a Christian school education being laid on the foundation of God's Word. Classroom management was defined as a broad term where the teacher was determined to be the driving force of the classroom environment. A positive classroom environment leads to student achievement. Christian school teachers incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management will impact the students academically and spiritually.

A theme which was repeated in this study was the philosophy of God's Word being foundational. It is on this foundation these schools and teachers have built to educate their students. It is the philosophy of a biblical foundation which permeated this study. If this

philosophy did not exist or if all participants and stakeholders did not adhere to this philosophy, this phenomenon would hold a different meaning to different people. In these schools, the Bible is not only a good book for education; it is the book for education, for all of their education is based on the Bible's teachings.

Because the Bible is foundational, a biblical worldview is taught. These schools and teachers are operating out of a biblical worldview. One of the schools' goals is to help students learn how to develop this biblical worldview as well. To operate out of a biblical worldview, one must know the Bible. The Bible is the basis on what is being taught, how it is being taught, and why concepts are being taught. The Bible is not a book which goes alongside of that is being taught, it is the foundation on which all other items are taught.

Classroom management is a broad term encompassing many different elements. The one common bond in classroom management definitions is the role of the teacher. The teacher is the focus on creating and sustaining a successful learning environment. Maag (2001) added to this important role of the teacher by ascribing the task of pouring into students in more than just the academic realms. Students spend more time in schools and have "extensive contact with teachers who deal with their behavior on a consistent basis" (p.181).

Elementary Christian school teachers in this study are utilizing biblical concepts in their classroom management. While different teachers may accomplish this task in different ways and methods, the biblical incorporation is happening in classroom management. From the philosophy of the school, to the knowledge being taught, biblical concepts are being incorporated. This purposeful incorporation is occurring in instructional lessons, behavioral situations, prayer, classroom themes, teacher/student interactions, and various other methods. The teachers feel this incorporation is beneficial in the fact that the Bible frees them and gives

them the confidence to know they are doing what is right. If they are following the teachings of the Bible and managing their classrooms biblically, they are heading towards the right goal.

With this confidence comes a sense of boldness in what they are doing. This boldness is birthed from their foundational belief in what the Bible says is true.

Several factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in their classroom management. These factors represent the past, the present, and the future and are interconnected. In the past, experiences have shaped these teachers. Whether learning in a public or Christian school, experiences influence teachers today in how they run their classroom. Some may remember negative experiences which they do not want to repeat. Some may remember positive experiences they wish to continue to their students. In the present, collaboration with colleagues is helpful for these teachers to encourage, motivate, and learn in the area of biblical incorporation in classroom management. Personal spiritual development is the present means of continued learning of those biblical concepts to incorporate and instill in students. A biblical worldview is present as it is the way one sees the world. This is an ongoing experience which is directly related to personal spiritual development. The more a person's spirit is developed biblically, the clearer their biblical worldview will be. The school's expectations, atmosphere, and mission are present and ongoing into the future. While expectations and atmosphere and perhaps even mission may change, the teachers are presently influenced by their school. This influence directly impacts their teaching and their incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management. Finally, the Bible as a foundation displays an influence which is represented by the past, present, and future. The foundation is what everything else is built upon. It is on this foundation of the Bible which may arguably be the

most vital influence, for without the foundation, there is nothing on which to build. The implications of the study begin with and end with this biblical foundation.

Limitations

This phenomenological study designed to examine biblical concepts utilized by elementary Christian school teachers in classroom management has limitations. The interview data, focus group data and document analysis indicate participants are utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management. Specific aspects of this biblical incorporation were examined through the chosen research methods. To further investigate into this phenomenon, there are several factors which could be considered.

This study was limited to two schools with six participants in one geographic area. A broader participant base with more schools in several different geographic areas may yield more or somewhat different results. By interviewing more participants in a greater number of schools, the scope of elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management may increase. A nation-wide study would be interesting to see if commonalities existed in the biblical concepts used, how these concepts were used, teachers' perceptions, and influencing factors.

This study only included elementary Christian school teachers. Adding middle or high school teachers to the pool of participants may add different data or possibly reinforce the data found in this study. Do middle and high school teachers utilize biblical concepts differently in classroom management? If so, is their utilization more on an application or synthesis level? What could older students learn from biblical concepts utilized in classroom management? Student participants could also be interviewed at this age to gain another level of understanding in the study.

One of the implications of the study included information on God's Word being a foundational concept for all participants. This concept was reinforced in the document review. While the two schools were similar in their core values and faith statements, there were slight differences. A limitation is found in the similarities of the two study school's beliefs. More "religious" schools could be included in the study to see if there were differences in the utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management. It may be the foundational concept of God's Word may not be found in all religious schools.

Administrators selected participants because of criterion sampling. Creswell (2007) states, "Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon" (p.128). Administrators from each school site observe and evaluate their teachers. These administrators had prior knowledge of which elementary teachers were incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. The purpose of this study was not to discover who was incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management, or how effective this incorporation was in the classrooms; but the purpose was to understand what biblical concepts were being incorporated and how they were incorporated. Further delving into these teachers' experiences with the phenomenon was another focus. Administrators had the knowledge to choose the participants they knew could enrich this study. Choosing participants myself could have added another distinction to this study.

Suggestions for Future Research

There has been very little research in the area of biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management. The limitations of the study would be a suggestion for future research. Broadening this study to more participants in more schools in different geographic areas would be interesting to see if results would vary. A similar study using middle and/or high school

Christian school teachers would be a suggested item for future research to see if the significant statements and identified themes would remain similar or would yield different results.

Expanding the study to include all three levels of students would also be a suggestion for future research. Adding other types of religious schools other than “Christian” would be an added dynamic to see if there were common themes which emerged. Random selection of participants would also be another suggested area to see if the results were similar.

One aspect I was interested in researching, but did not due to the nature of the study was the effectiveness of incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management. What concepts are teachers incorporating and how effective is the incorporation in the overall Christian classroom climate? This question takes my research a step further to investigate overall effectiveness of incorporating biblical concepts into classroom management. Gaining administration, parental, and student input would be interesting to see if these concepts were effective in classroom management.

Another suggestion for future research could be considered in the data collection process. In the individual interviews, questions about the reviewed documents would add another dynamic to the study. It would be interesting to see if the reviewed documents had the same impact or importance for all of the participants. Interviews could also be expanded to include the administrator’s and parent’s perspective on the concept of biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management. If this study were completed in middle or high school, students’ perspectives would add another level of understanding to the study through interviews or surveys.

A final suggestion for future research is to determine if this study could be completed in the public or charter school setting utilizing character concepts in place of biblical concepts in

classroom management. While some of the themes would vary, as the Bible is not a foundational concept in public school education, are there other foundational concepts? What would this study reveal in a school setting where parents were not necessarily signing a parental commitment form or ascribing to a particular set of beliefs?

Suggestions for Christian Schools

After reviewing the results of this study, there are several suggestions for Christian schools, Christian school teachers, and teacher training. For Christian schools, focus on the Bible being a foundational concept is important. The Bible and its teachings and concepts were revealed in every aspect of this study, from the school documents, to the teachers' lessons and classroom management, to the teachers themselves. When the Bible is central and foundational, all the other components work together. Everyone and everything relating to the school itself are working in the same direction towards the same goal. While this may seem obvious, it is the intentionality of keeping the Bible the foundation which is the overwhelming theme and heartbeat of this study.

For Christian school teachers, having the freedom to incorporate these biblical concepts should be utilized. Each teacher in the study referenced this freedom to share biblical concepts with students, not only during Bible lessons, but throughout the day. It is this biblical incorporation which gives Christian school teachers the confidence that what they are doing is sound biblically and in line with the mission and vision of their schools. This incorporation is not to be forced, but to flow naturally as situations present themselves. Teachers should take the initiative and time to learn from other teachers what concepts to incorporate and how to incorporate these concepts.

In the area of teacher training, Christian schools and Christian university teaching programs could be more purposeful in training teachers to incorporate biblical concepts in classroom management. Professional development opportunities in Christian schools could include workshops from teachers who are already incorporating biblical concepts. Training on how to integrate biblical concepts into specific lessons could also be utilized. Christian universities could consider training teachers who desire to teach in Christian schools how to incorporate biblical concepts into lessons and classroom management. A classroom management course for Christian school teachers could be offered to those students who desire to work in Christian education. Workshops for local Christian school teachers from Christian university professors may be a useful resource.

Conclusion

Classroom management has been cited as a critical component of effective teaching (Garrahy, Cothran, & Kulinna, 2005). Teachers are the driving force in effective classroom management (Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Brophy, 1982; Good, 1981). The combination of the effective teacher with effective classroom management will produce an environment conducive to student learning and achievement. In the Christian school, where the foundation is the Bible, the effective teacher and effective classroom management come together standing on the biblical foundation to influence students for the cause of Christ.

The results of this study indicate biblical classroom management is taking place. It is intentional, beneficial, and founded on God's Word. In alignment with the schools' missions and visions, biblical classroom management helps to create a complete student. One who knows and applies God's Word to everyday situations. One who learns how to handle life's problems biblically. One who strives to be more Christ-like. As evidenced in the conclusions of this

study, the Bible is not only the foundation to biblical concepts incorporated into classroom management, but it is also the thread that ties everything together.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Documentation

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 28, 2014

Christy Hill

IRB Approval 1775.012814: Elementary Christian School Teachers Utilizing Biblical Concepts in Classroom Management

Dear Christy,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

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APPENDIX B: Superintendent/Administrator Consent Form

Research Information Letter

Elementary Christian School Teachers Utilizing Biblical Concepts in Classroom Management

Research Information Statement/Letter of Invitation to School Principals

My name is Christy Hill, and I am a doctoral student at Liberty University. I am conducting research on the incorporation of biblical concepts in classroom management under the direction of Dr. Ellen Lowrie Black. The Liberty University Internal Review Board has given me approval to conduct this research. A copy of their approval is attached to this letter. I invite your school to participate in this research.

Aims of the Research

This research aims to:

- Determine what biblical concepts elementary Christian school teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management
- Determine how biblical concepts are being utilized in classroom management
- Determine teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management
- Analyze any determining factors of successful utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management

Significance of the Research

The research is significant in these ways:

1. A connection between biblical concepts and classroom management will strengthen the connection of biblical integration into real-life situations for Christian school students.
2. Determining what biblical concepts are utilized in classroom management will enable other Christian school teachers to effectively incorporate these practices in their classrooms.
3. Determining how biblical concepts are utilized in classroom management will enable other Christian school teachers a model of how to incorporate these practices in their classrooms.
4. A connection to general education may be made with the utilization of character concepts into classroom management.

Research Plan and Method

A phenomenological approach will be used for this study. School administrators will be asked to choose 3 elementary teachers who are currently using biblical concepts in classroom management. Teachers consenting to participate would agree to be interviewed to determine which biblical concepts they specifically use in classroom management. These interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed to aid in analysis. A focus group session of all the teachers would also be conducted. The focus group session would also be audio recorded and transcribed. These recordings and transcripts will be locked in a cabinet. A review of pertinent school and classroom documents would be conducted to determine how biblical concepts are woven into the schools' and specific teachers' classroom. The school and the teachers participating in the study will be assigned pseudonyms and all documents will be available for review from all participants.

School Involvement

Once I have received your consent to approach teachers to participate in the study, I will

- Ask you to choose 3 elementary teachers to use in the study.
- Arrange for informed consent to be obtained from participants.
- Arrange a time with your school for data collection to take place.

Invitation to Participate

If you are willing for your school to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached school consent form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Christy Hill

Researcher

Liberty University

Superintendent/Administrator Consent Form

Research Background

Title of Study: Elementary Christian School Teachers Utilizing Biblical Concepts in
Classroom Management

Name of Researcher: Christy E. Hill

Phone:

Address: City: State: VA Zip: Email:

Description of Research Proposal

Refer to the Research Information Statement for detailed description of research study.

Agreement (to be completed by the superintendent/administrator)

I, _____, superintendent/administrator of

_____ school, understand

- The study and what it requires of the staff, students, and/or parents of my school.
- The privacy and confidentiality of any staff or student will be protected.
- I have the right to allow or reject this research study to take place at my school.
- I have the right to terminate this research study at any time.
- I have the right to review all consent forms and research documents at any time up to three years after completion of the study.
- I grant permission to the researcher to conduct the above named research in my school as described in the proposal.
- I DO NOT grant permission to the researcher to conduct the above named research in my school as described in the proposal.

Signature of Superintendent/Administrator

Date

APPENDIX C: Participant Recruitment Letter

January 27, 2014

Elementary Teacher
First Christian Academy
0000 Main Street
City, VA 00000

Dear Elementary Teacher:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to fill out a teacher profile sheet, answer individual interview questions, and participate in a focus group with two of your peers. It should take approximately *one hour* for you to complete the procedures listed. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required.

To participate, fill out the attached Teacher Profile Sheet, participate in the individual interview, and participate in the teacher focus group. The interview and focus group will be arranged at a convenient time for all participants and will take place at your school. You will turn in your Teacher Profile Sheet to me at the time of the individual interview. I will seal your Profile Sheet in an envelope which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Both the interview and focus group will be audiotaped for transcription.

An informed consent document is attached to this letter. Please sign the informed consent document and return it to me at the time of your individual interview. Your informed consent letter will also be kept in a sealed envelope and stored in a locked file cabinet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Hill
Liberty University Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D: Participant Consent Form

Elementary Christian School Teachers Utilizing Biblical Concepts in Classroom Management

Christy Hill

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of biblical concepts utilized in classroom management. You were selected as a possible participant because your administrator chose you as a teacher who utilizes biblical concepts in classroom management. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Christy Hill in the Liberty University School of Education.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify what biblical concepts elementary Christian school teachers utilize in classroom management and how these concepts are incorporated. Factors influencing teachers incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management will also be explored.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Fill out a Teacher Profile Sheet (approximately 10-15 minutes)
- Participate in an individual audiotaped interview (approximately 15-20 minutes)
- Participate in an audiotaped focus group with two of your colleagues (approximately 30 minutes)

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

- The study has minimal risks which are no more than you would encounter in daily life.
- There are no direct benefits to the study other than adding to the research on biblical classroom management.

Compensation:

You will not be compensated for the study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. All paper data will be stored in a sealed envelope in a locked file cabinet. Audio recordings of interviews and focus groups will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Electronic copies of data will be stored on a password-protected computer. All data will be disposed of in three years by the researcher (paper data shredded, audio recordings deleted, and computer files deleted). While the records of this study will be kept private, there are limits of confidentiality. I cannot assure other participants in the focus groups will maintain each participant's confidentiality and privacy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any audio recording of you will be deleted and any documents containing items from your portion of the study (interview transcriptions, Teacher Profile Sheet, etc.) will be deleted and shredded.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Christy Hill. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me. You may also contact my university supervisor, Dr. Ellen Lowrie Black.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

I agree to be audio recorded for the interview and focus group. (Check box.)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers: 1775.012814

IRB Expiration Date: 1/28/15

APPENDIX E: Participant Profile Sheet

Section I – Background Information

Name: _____

Gender: M F

Grade Level(s) Currently Teaching: _____

1. How many years have you been teaching overall?

- a. 0-5 years
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-15 years
- d. 16-20 years
- e. 21-25 years
- f. 26-30 years
- g. Over 30 years

2. How many years have you taught at a Christian school?

- a. 0-5 years
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-15 years
- d. 16-20 years
- e. 21-25 years
- f. 26-30 years
- g. Over 30 years

3. What is the highest degree you have earned?

- a. Bachelors
- b. Masters
- c. Specialist
- d. Doctorate

4. Have you ever taught in a public school?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If answering “yes” how many years? _____

5. Did you receive your teaching degree from a religious or public university?

- a. Religious
- b. Public

Section II – Teaching Information

Directions for items 6 -14: For each statement, please determine whether you always, sometimes, or never utilize the following biblical concepts in your classroom management.

	Biblical Concept	Always	Sometimes	Never
6	Prayer during class			
7	Bible verses or concepts incorporated in classroom rules			
8	Bible verses referenced during regular classroom activities			
9	Bible verses referenced while handling student misbehavior			
10	Referencing situations in the Bible when handling student behavior (example: Remember when David did not fight Saul even though Saul was trying to capture David.)			
11	Referencing biblical concepts such as the fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, etc. in regular classroom activities (example: fruit of the month, beatitude of the month)			
12	Having students cite Bible verses in behavioral situations			
13	Using a Bible verse or biblical concept as a class motto			
14	Prominent posting of Bible verses/concepts in classroom			

15. What other biblical concepts do you use in classroom management? Please describe below.

Section III – School Information

16. Does your school require biblical concepts incorporated into your classroom?

a. Yes

b. No

If answering yes, please explain below.

17. Has your school provided training on how to incorporate biblical concepts into your classroom?

a. Yes

b. No

If answering yes, please describe the training you have received.

APPENDIX F: Individual Interview Template

1. In general, how do you define classroom management?
2. In general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?
3. What are specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?
4. Do you use Bible verses in classroom management? If so, explain in detail how.
5. How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?
6. How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?

APPENDIX G: Focus Group Template

These focus group questions are designed to delve deeper into the participants' experiences with incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management.

1. What have you personally experienced in terms of biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management?
2. What situations have influenced your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management?
3. Describe in detail how your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have empowered you as a teacher?
4. Explain in detail how incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have improved your teaching.
5. What other thoughts would you add to enable other elementary Christian school teachers to include incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management?

APPENDIX H: Individual Interview Transcriptions

Individual interview ADAM:

Researcher: Question number one, in general, how do you define classroom management?

ADAM: I would say it is one's approach to make sure that learning is taking place. The aspect of classroom management is that it allows students to learn, while things are managed in such a way that certain things or students do not detract them from that learning taking place.

Researcher: Number two, in general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?

ADAM: Clear expectations are communicated with the consequences communicated as well. Of course, many reminders of those expectations so that it became very well known to every student. Taking opportunity to talk individually to students when things did not go as should have gone. And depending on the circumstance, using Scripture, if appropriate, not trying to twist it, just whenever appropriate and prayer as well. Tell me the question one more time

Researcher: In general, what methods or techniques did you use for classroom management?

ADAM: Oh, OK. Sometimes I would try to use positive examples, encouraging student behavior by recognizing students who were behaving, good behavior that is. And just encouraging students as they were following what the expectations were, encouraging them to keep that up. So generally.

Researcher: Question number three, you touched on this a little bit, you can expound more if you'd like. What are specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

ADAM: One of the things that I did early in my experience here was I went through Scripture for different types of student behavior, positive as well as negative. I tried to find Scriptural reinforcement so that if I was talking with a student about a specific behavior, for instance, lack

of self-control, I had some actual passages. It wasn't like I had to think, OK, now where's that passage, or...I actually had a printed list and I've given that list to the teachers here. So they've got that to reference, not that they have to use it, but as a tool. And so, I would just have that available, and even now I still use that list as I talk with students. And as I say for positive as well as trying to correct behavior.

Researcher: And number four, you've covered that. My question is, "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management, and if so explain in detail how." I think you have covered that.

ADAM: I just don't ever want us to twist it though.

Researcher: To make it fit what you want it to fit.

ADAM: Right, and to abuse the word of God or to abuse a student. But there are just such wonderful passages that we can rely on as we deal with students. And encouraging them to have a bigger perspective on the circumstances and situations.

Researcher: Question number five, How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?

ADAM: On the routine, day to day types of things, maybe not as much as with specific students and in specific situations. In establishing initial rules and expectations for a classroom. Giving some Scriptural support to them. You know, why do we treat one another kindly? And you know you bring in the golden rule. That's such a perfect example of Scripture supporting that. And there've been several times when I've talked with students about talking too much, you know that's one of our rules in the classroom. Raise your hand if you want to say something. Don't talk out of turn. And just that whole passage that cites self-control. That's one of the fruits of the Spirit, self-control. So how do we experience this situation? How do we experience Christ helping us through what's expected in this classroom.

Researcher: Final question, How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?

ADAM: I think overall, very positive and very beneficial. Some of it is contingent upon who the student is and the type of background that they come from. If the student is from a strong Christian home where those kinds of things would be done in the normal parenting relationship with the child it's almost like I'm just reminding. But for others it's a foreign thing, so it's a part of the teaching of God's Word. So it depends on the student, but overall positive. And I think parents, overall, are appreciative when they know you are approaching it that way that we're trying to do what's best for the child and as biblically centered in that process as possible.

Individual Interview BETTY

Researcher: The first question is, "In general, how do you define classroom management?"

BETTY: Generally, it's maintaining an atmosphere where children can learn, where they can be safe, where they feel comfortable, they're not fearful, nor so much in awe where they cannot feel comfortable interacting with the teacher as well as other students.

Researcher: Question number two, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?"

BETTY: Being in an art room situation, I have some things that are different. We discuss at the beginning of the year procedures for my room, how they will address each other, how we will look at art work without being critical. And just physical things, we have stools in my room, they may not ever put their feet in the stool because they'll fall off and hit their head on the cement floor. So we have some rules that are precautionary rules that sound just really harsh, unless you're in the classroom and see the consequences of them. So we have those kinds of rules.

Researcher: Alright, number three, "What are specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

BETTY: With the small children, you're still bigger than they are, and they're still in awe of the teacher, they don't get used to you because they only see you every other week. So classroom management is generally is just really easy. You just remind them, this is what we do. As they get older nearing middle school, they start getting independent, and sometimes they get so independent they start leading their classmates in the wrong direction. When I deal with them individually, I deal with them...I try to be positive with them. You're a leader. God's given you leadership abilities. Are you leading your classmates in the correct way? I feel like we

cannot...we must not use the Bible as a bat and beat them on the head with it. They'd hate it.

But if you remind them of who they are and that God has a plan for them. They don't always get what you're talking about, but you've got to start somewhere.

Researcher: Question number four, "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management? If so, explain in detail how."

BETTY: Ok, we have some general rules in the classroom. And I don't go over them with lower elementary, but with upper elementary. We have three standard rules. These are very general and you see them everywhere. Before you speak, ask yourself is it true? Is it necessary? And there's a third one...I forgot the third one, but anyway. I got those three general rules, Is it true? Is it necessary? And is it kind? I got these from a public school teacher, but they are so applicable. There are Scripture verses that go with them that tell us that we should act this way. So we talk about that. This is how we are going to talk in the classroom. And those are posted in my room.

Researcher: Question number five, "How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?"

BETTY: Well, in the everyday scheme of things, we're in there to get busy. It doesn't come up until there's a problem usually. But of course I'm using them as I'm managing the kids, are you being kind? Are you being obedient? Are you doing what you're supposed to do? Are you taking care of God's equipment? Treat it that way. Those types of things are ongoing. But then in disciplining students who are misbehaving.

Researcher: OK, final question, "How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?"

BETTY: Well I think it's effective because all truth is God's truth. And if there is any way, there's a right way to do something, it would be a biblical way because all truth is God's truth. So even your management in your classroom is God's truth. So, I think that this is very effective because anything else is untrue, it's not going to work or it's copying what's already been said. It does work. Do students always respond biblically? No. But if you keep up and have the help of the family and administration and others, it will eventually work.

Individual Interview CATHY

Researcher: The first question I have is, "In general, how do you define classroom management?"

CATHY: Just making sure that the children are behaving, listening and the classroom is in a controlled environment so that we can teach and learn at the same time.

Researcher: Question number two, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?"

CATHY: I do a lot of singing and we use a lot of Bible Scripture and transition through song and movement in order to maintain the classroom environment. At the age I teach, that definitely seems to be the key.

Researcher: Question number three, "What are specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

CATHY: Ok for kindness we use Ephesians 4:32, be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted. We put it to a song. So we recite that all through the day. We also sing, encourage one another and build each other up. We sing that and any time the children are helping another child, we stop and we sing and we say, "Oh, they've encouraged each other." Even if they start arguing and fighting we take them to the side and we talk about why it was wrong, you know. And then we ask the one that has done wrong will ask forgiveness and the other one immediately says, "Oh I forgive you." And they hug and then we say the Bible verse "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." So we talk about what that really means. We also talk about being doers of the word and not hearers only. So James 1:22a. And now that we're in the month of February we're all talking about love and what love is and that Christ is love. And by having the love we're showing it to others. We're doing I John 4:9. So all through the year

we're constantly not just learning the memory verses, but we're learning what they really mean and then acting them out. Hopefully it's planting lots of little seeds.

Researcher: And this question goes right along with that, "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management?" And you just explained in detail how you use Bible verses, so I think we've covered that one.

Question number five, "How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?"

CATHY: I use biblical concepts probably every time I'm dealing with classroom management because I explain to them that it's God's way. He is a God of order and He wants us to be in order and He wants us to do our best in everything we do. So whether we're doing in word or deed we do to the glory of God. So probably all the time.

Researcher: Question number six, this is the final question. "How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?"

CATHY: To me it's the only answer for effectiveness. In all my years teaching I'm learning the more I teach the more I realize that if we have God as the center and we use His Word in everything that is what is going to help the children learn the most.

Individual Interview DEBBIE

Researcher: Number one, "In general, how do you define classroom management?"

DEBBIE: Classroom management is, to me, keeping a balance between the fun side of education to where they can be more free to express themselves, but yet maintaining control at the same time. So it's not necessarily a rigid where you have to say sit in your seat, and you have to sit a certain way and answer a certain way. It's helping them to feel free to express themselves, yet maintaining an overall control and balance of the situation.

Researcher: OK, question number two, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use in classroom management."

DEBBIE: Are you asking for...my classroom management?

Researcher: Strategies...things you use in your classroom for management.

DEBBIE: Generally, I, of course, make sure they are aware of the rules and make sure they understand the rules. I have Scriptures on display where I get my rules from, so it's not just my random rules. I base them on the Scriptures. That's the first step and then once I make sure they understand the rules, I usually give them a warning if they have an infraction, and then time off of recess. Usually, that is very effective, they don't want to lose that recess time. If it's something very serious, you know, a note home would be the next step, and then ultimately, what you don't want to do is to have to send them to the Administrator. But if that's the last thing you have to resort to, then I have done that before too.

Researcher: Number three, "What are some specific examples in utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

DEBBIE: I try to discuss with the students what the Bible says about how we treat others. We should put others first, for example, prefer your brothers and sisters in the Lord. That, you know,

incorporates sharing, taking turns, playing fairly, being a good sport, respecting other people's property, you know. And...could you repeat the question, please? I'm sorry.

Researcher: Alright, "What are some specific examples in utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

DEBBIE: Those are types of things, if they're not willing to share, what would Jesus do? Jesus is our example to follow. We need to speak kindly to others, because again, that's what Jesus would want us to do.

Researcher: Ok, question number four, "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management? If so, could you explain in detail how you use them."

DEBBIE: Occasionally, I have used Bible verses. Just to make sure, again, what God expects us to do. And hopefully, the students have accepted Jesus as their Savior, if not, then you have to have that balance there in your classroom management settings.

Researcher: Ok, question number five, "How often do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?"

DEBBIE: How often meaning?

Researcher: Is it something you do daily, is it something you do occasionally? Does it depend on the situation?

DEBBIE: It depends on the situation, it depends on the day, again you always want to encourage them to follow Jesus' example and what He would want us to do, and how He would want us to treat others. Even respect for authority, that is addressed in the Bible, respect those who are over you in the Lord. If it's a respectful type setting. I mean I really can't put a time frame on it, it just depends on the situation, and each situation has to be handled at the moment, and it's not

like a set thing, “Oh I have to do this.” You have to do what the Lord leads you to do in the moment that you’re in and the situation that you’re in.

Researcher: Final question, “How effective do you think utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?”

DEBBIE: Overall, it would be very beneficial because that is our guideline to follow is God’s Word. And because we are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and that responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students. But at the same time, it also has to fall on the student and how it’s received by them if their heart is willing to receive the instruction that you’re giving them. But it’s very important to incorporate the Scripture into your classroom management.

Individual Interview ELAINE

Researcher: The first question is, "In general, how do you define classroom management?"

ELAINE: Classroom management is what the teacher does to help things flow smoothly in her classroom, how she lays out her day, her lessons, and how she interacts with the children. And what you do with situations that arise that aren't going the way you would like for them to go.

Researcher: Ok, question number two, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use for classroom management?"

ELAINE: I like to use positive reinforcement with the children. I try to have a system of rewards and I try to focus on those rewards, although they know there are consequences if they don't do what they are asked to do. I like to focus on the rewards. I like to give individual rewards and then I have a system where I give whole classroom rewards. I especially like to give them a reward if they go to a special class and they come back with a good report. Then the whole class gets a reward for that because I really want them to go other places and be well behaved. I know they are going to behave for me, but I hate for my class to go to music and misbehave or go somewhere and come back with a bad report. So that works well.

Researcher: Question number three, "What are some examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

ELAINE: If the child misbehaves, often when I talk with them, I will ask them what does the Bible say? And usually they'll know what they're supposed to have done. Then I will remind them, I will give them a Scripture, and tell them what the Bible says and this is God's Word, and we obey this we are not only pleasing the teacher, but God first of all. So, and we use Bible references throughout most of the day. We try to bring it in with even the subject matter as far as this is the way God has designed things or God has set this up. Even with your calendar time, 7

days in a week. You can bring that out, you know, God set that up from the very beginning with the 7 days of creation. We've been talking about time and how the years are numbered and the B.C. and the A.D. and all of our calendar system how that relates back to and is based on the life of Jesus Christ. We try to tie everything in we can to help them realize that Bible isn't just a separate subject that is at a certain time. He wants to be a part of every part of our life, so we try to get them to relate. It's not just that Bible class, but it fits in all the subjects because He's really in everything we do.

Researcher: Question number four, you touched on this a little bit. "Do you use Bible verses in classroom management? If so, explain in detail how."

ELAINE: Yes. I don't have verses, I think that was one of the questions you asked. If I used verses with my classroom rules. And that's one thing I don't have, is verses with those rules. I have them throughout the classroom. I do use them as I work with them. And not only just in the discipline, but like when they've done something really well. I would say "this is pleasing" or "you did your best." And that's what God wants us to do our very best. Our class motto is "be the best you can be" because that's what God wants of us and then when you do that, you've pleased Him, you please your teacher, you please your parents. You know it doesn't mean that you have to have an "A" but when you've done your best, that's all that can be expected or required of you. Then in discipline then when they don't do something they should have done I try to again explain to them you know, when you do something wrong, it doesn't mean that I don't love you anymore. Or that when you fail, it doesn't mean that God doesn't love you anymore. He still loves us no matter what. Nothing can separate us from His love. And when you do things wrong in the classroom, it doesn't mean I don't love you, but there are consequences to our wrongdoings. I still love you, but because you did this, you've got a

consequence, you've got something that you will lose a privilege or you will have to do something you don't enjoy doing. You know, that sort of thing. I try to bring in how that our actions have consequences, even though the love is still there. I can discipline a child and still hug them and love them. I'm sorry that you did this, and hopefully you'll make a better choice next time. This was not a good choice. I get them to say, "was that a very good choice?" I get them to admit, "no that wasn't very wise." We can talk about what should you have done? Or use a Scripture to remind them of God's love and how He wants us to do our best. But the fact that we all do mistakes, we all make them. So you not the only one, you may be the only one this minute, but everybody does. But when you do you just have to correct it.

Researcher: Question number five, "How often do you utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?"

ELAINE: Probably most of the time I do. I know there are times when I just deal with something, and I don't bring in a biblical reference or a biblical reminder. So, but most of the time I try to do that.

Researcher: Final question, number six. "How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in classroom management is in your classroom climate?"

ELAINE: I think it's very effective, because the young children are pleasers for the most part. They want to please, you know, not only their teacher. I think they understand the general concept of our Heavenly Father who loves them and they study the rules, the commandments, and I think they want to please. So I think that just to remind them that when you do that it makes us sad because you didn't do the right thing. But you know, we still love you.

Individual Interview FREDA

Researcher: Question number one, "In general, how do you define classroom management?"

FREDA: I guess classroom management is the way I run my class, discipline if need be. It's everything...scheduling, it's just my class. What I'm going to do!

Researcher: Question number two, "In general, what methods or techniques do you use in your classroom management?"

FREDA: That can mean a lot of things. Ok, we raise our hand, I have open discussions, question/answer. If we are...I can't think...in a conversation and someone butts in, and they're not supposed to, I'm going to say, "Excuse me, I was talking or they were talking, you need to wait your turn." Or even misbehavior, I deal with it. We use a card system where they have to pull a card and, you know, there's four cards. So each one gets to where there's a warning, five minutes off recess, lunch detention, then I call parents. With fifth grade, sometimes I don't have too much trouble. Is that what you're looking for?

Researcher: Yes...remember there's no right or wrong answer. Let's go on to question number three, "What are some specific examples of utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?"

FREDA: Well, on my wall I have...I don't know what it's called...I'll just use politeness rules. I will use Ephesians 4:32 and you know, if I see someone that's not being kind, I'm going to say, "Look at our wall here. Remember what Ephesians 4:32 says? Be ye kind one to another." Or, I'm thinking, there are with science, there are different sections that we're doing, different units that we're doing that I will search for Scripture verses that will go along with that to prove the biblical version, this is true and what have you. Days of creation, we usually start out with that every year and go over what's created on each day. So we read that together and I tell my

students also, “Don’t just take my word for it.” When I give a Scripture out. In Psalms it says this. I want them to go look for it to make sure, “Is she telling us the truth or not?” History...my 5th grade history I love because it’s old world, and it starts way back at creation and so I can say, “Do you see how this is tying in with the time of Isaiah or the time of Noah?” So my kids are really excited about that because they can see that it ties in too. Math, of course, it’s usually hard to tie that in, but I always use the, I can’t think of the reference. “Things are done in order and in an orderly fashion.” Discipline wise, “Is this how we’re supposed to act? Can you give me an example of something in the Bible where this happened? How did they deal with that?” So, I try to incorporate it in as often as I can.

Researcher: Question number four, you alluded to this in your previous answer, but “Do you use Bible verses in your classroom management, and if so explain in detail how.”

FREDA: You can ask my students. In Bible especially, we do use Bible verses in a lot of things. In the subject of Bible in particular, I will say that whatever the verse says. Let’s say for example, Ephesians 4:32 it says “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as Christ...” So I may say it in a different fashion. I will say that is the Mrs. _____ version. It is not God’s version, but I’m just trying to explain a little bit. But even the story, we’re doing the story Samson, and in the story of Samson. When he wanted to get married, he saw this girl, yeah, and took her out on a date, and hmmm, she’s not for me. You know, kind of make it today time frame so they understand the story. But we go back and we read or we will read the story from the Bible first and then I will say, “OK, let’s close this. Students, here is the Mrs. _____ version,” so they will understand and I read those passages several times before I do my version so that I’m not misleading them. And then, yes, I use other verses with English even. Or various different translations. I brought in King James, the NIV, American Standard, and

ESL. Whatever it is, the ESL. We had several different students read the same verse from each version and they were able to see with a story how your opinion and your version of how you see an incident is different than how they saw it, and you know, and so that tied in, I don't remember the exact reference I used. But that tied into English and writing as well.

Researcher: All right, question number five, "How often, and this can be general, do you utilize biblical concepts when dealing with classroom management?"

It doesn't have to be a certain number.

FREDA: Yeah, I'm not going to say...I don't use it all of the time. I guess I would say it's not never. Maybe if I had to percentage it maybe 70 percent? Because sometimes it's the same problem. We're not being kind, or we're talking too much, you know. So I would say maybe 70 percent of the time. Especially if there is a new situation, and we will talk about that. What do you think we need to do? Where do you think we can we go to find this?

Researcher: OK, final question, "How effective do you think incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management is in your overall classroom climate?"

FREDA: I think, yeah, in my classroom I think it's pretty effective. Because most of them can respond with an example or a verse. I know the Bible, I mean, you know what I mean by that. But do I always do the right thing? No. So they're that way also. But, yeah, I think we do, and I've heard back from different parents that she's says that you told her about da da da da. So I think they're getting it, yes.

APPENDIX I: Focus Group Transcriptions

First Christian School Focus Group

Researcher: Question number one for the group is “What have you personally experienced in terms of biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management?”

BETTY: Do you mean of us managing a classroom or being in a classroom that was managed biblically?

Researcher: I would say as a teacher of a classroom to be more specific.

ADAM: In our setting, I think most parents appreciate us managing our classrooms that way. And of course, all the parents are at different places in their relationship with Christ, and some who don't really know Him personally but really want this kind of environment, knowing that the Bible is the foundation in all that we do here.

CATHY: I can't help but think of the Bible verse that says His word will not go void. And so if we are constantly sharing God's Word with them through verse, through song, through classroom management, with behaving or not being kind, or doing other things. We are constantly sharing that with them. Things are constantly going in, it's not going void. So eventually, they're going to get it, and then they're going to take it home and share it with their parents. So even if their parents are at a different level, these kids are even going home and sharing it, and it has a wonderful effect all the way around.

Researcher: Any other thoughts of your personal experiences?

BETTY: I've had feedback dealing with students who are having a difficult time getting along with others and just one of those classes. I've dealt with them about leadership and how God has given them an ability to lead and how that they were leading in the wrong way. I've had feedback from the parent, thanking me for approaching the misbehavior in that way instead of

beating him over the head. But approaching it from a biblical viewpoint, getting him to look at his behavior from a different standpoint.

Researcher: Any other thoughts on that question?

ADAM: And of course based on the age of the child, how you would approach him.

BETTY: Yes.

ADAM: Where at the very young age, you're more instructive, and as they get a little bit older, in the elementary years, you are wanting them to start making application. Instead of always saying, "This is what the Bible says" or "This is what you've done" approach it from a higher level of thinking, application and evaluation and synthesizing what they've learned. Instead of saying "This is what the Bible says" or "Tell me, what does the Bible say about this?" and being ready but not always taking the lead there.

Researcher: OK, question number two. "What situations have influenced your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management?" This can be in your classroom, this can be personal, so any experience or situations that have affected your incorporation of biblical concepts in your classroom management. I'll give you a moment to think about that.

ADAM: The thing that jumps out first to me is I was a public school teacher, where there were principles I was able to reinforce, but I couldn't really bring in the Bible so that influenced me when I came here knowing we have the freedom to use God's Word. And so just that public school experience influencing Christian school experience.

BETTY: And mine is similar but from a student standpoint. Our children went to public school. Our oldest son went to public school in kindergarten through 5th grade and his teacher, my husband was a pastor, looked at us as something a little lower than the turnip plant. I mean,

just...she probably thought we handled snakes, the whole bit. And this was in West Virginia, so she was equating us with what she had thought about. But she, so when she disciplined our child, it was strange, it was an open classroom in that there were no rules, just odd. And then in first grade the teacher laughed at his misbehavior, but then she would complain to us about how he misbehaved. I had been in there when she laughed at him. So just no consistent classroom management at all. And things of the Lord were just scorned. That really convicted us about Christian education. Putting our kids in a Christian school, we eventually started a school at our church. But that was the turning point really for us.

Researcher: And then I guess as you are now teaching Christian school...

BETTY: Yes, then you bring that into teaching and you understand where parents are coming from. When you've experienced that and you hear them saying...the Lord has to bring everything to the point of being obedient to Him and what applies to one person it may take something different for another person. They have to let the Lord work there. But that really influenced then how we approach and how I approach my classroom and so forth.

CATHY: For me, I've been in Christian education my entire life, and as I've gotten older I've seen the importance of where you are homeschooling or in Christian school, as long as everything that you're teaching is centered around the Word of God you won't go wrong. And so I see the importance of even in my own life personally. When I got to college, I really saw the difference, even with the people I was rooming who had been in secular schools we have had, even though it was memorization it was Bible memory. We knew how to memorize and they would struggle in that area because they had never been taught. And I saw that as a benefit. And then for my own children, just being here, and we also go to we're able to minister to those outside in public schools. Just their worldview is totally different. And once these kids are

being infiltrated with that secular worldview to try to change their thinking is really hard to do. It really is because they've been told this and told this and they totally believe it's true. Just constantly giving the Word of God. And for my own children here, it's been wonderful because the teachers – their personal experiences, and they give personal stories - why it's important to be praying for a missionary. My ninth grader, she comes home and constantly telling me about the librarian who's telling her stories that she prayed for something, and stories that relate. And so she's seen that this really does work.

Researcher: Any other thoughts before we move on?

BETTY: I think with the Christian classroom management in Christian school, everything is building. You're building precept upon precept. You're not trying to manage from this world view teaching these children that all of their parents want them to do something different. We're all together aiming at the same goal. So this is building precept upon precept. Even if the parents are not in the same place in their Christian life. Generally, they see, eventually, where you're going with it. So you're able to build upon each year because we have the same children year after year, you're able to build on what's been built in the past. You know what's been built in the past. And it's just precept upon precept, year after year. It's just a real blessing to be able to do that.

Researcher: OK. That was number two. Number three, "Describe in detail how your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have empowered you as a teacher?"

So your experiences, how do they empower you to be a better teacher, to feel good about your teaching, it's those kinds of things we're looking for here.

BETTY: Since we are teaching in a Christian school, and since all truth is God's truth, and if we are using biblical classroom management, so we know this is true, it should and does give me personally confidence that I'm doing the right thing. Now I may not always incorporating it the right way and I might need to correct that, but I know that the goal is the correct goal. And I'm heading in the right direction. Now I might not be applying it the way it should be. I might need to learn how to do that better, but still we have God's truth so there can be no mistake when we're doing what we should be doing.

Researcher: Any other thoughts?

ADAM: Would you repeat the question?

Researcher: Describe in detail how your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have empowered you as a teacher?

CATHY: Well personally, I mean, I'm really blessed because I get to work with the younger ones, and I have seen the power of God so many times when in a situation and you start singing God's Word to them. You can just see the softness of their heart. Just the power of the Holy Spirit when you are at that moment when you don't know what to do with that child. You know, you're battling that situation and you're thinking, "OK, how am I going to handle this?" You start praying and the Holy Spirit just starts working and you can feel the power. And He speaks through you, and there's the softening. I've gotten to experience that so many times and that's why I think it's just such a blessing. But that only comes because God is so powerful and His Word is so powerful. To be able to see that on a daily basis is amazing!

ADAM: But also on the other hand, you see the enemy at work as well, because when you're doing life change God's way, it doesn't always go as smoothly or the outcome is not exactly what you would expect or desire. But at the end of the day you have to say, "OK, they didn't

respond, maybe the parents didn't support completely, but you have peace that you handled it the way God wanted you to handle it even if the outcome wasn't wonderful. Then you've just got to trust like what you were saying from Isaiah, it's not going to return void. So God might use this years later, and I see that happen because I've had students come back to me years later and say this is how I responded and now I can see where God meant that for good. It's just neat to see it from that perspective.

Researcher: any other thoughts on that before we move on? Alright, that was number three.

Number four, "Explain in detail how incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have improved your teaching."

CATHY: If I cannot manage I will not be able to teach. You will spend your time doing disciplinary actions. In the classroom that we have we're constantly you know, reviewing the verses and going over it and you can see them from the beginning of the year until the end of the year how they understand and what it really means. Even in our own lives, we've got to be making sure the Word of God is being lived out in our own life in order to be teaching it to them.

Researcher: Other thoughts? How has incorporating biblical concepts improved your teaching? Or has it?

ADAM: As you have successful classroom management, it improves it because you are free to do it. But as long as you have children involved you're always going to have those opportunities to remind and even just to bend over and when everything's going well you can just bend over and say, "I'm really pleased to see how well you're doing in this area. Maybe something you've dealt with them before and you can use that to encourage them because when you look at classroom management, it's really what we're all about in the truest sense, because we think of discipleship. And we think of discipline as it ties in with discipleship and so it's really all that

we're about. Trying to see these students of ours embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord of their life. I think it frees you if you have successful classroom management, not that it happens every moment of every day, but overall you're free to do what you need to do. And that is go beyond that to teach your math and your science and all your other subjects.

BETTY: I think it frees yourself sometimes when you have those children who resist warning or whatever. It frees you to understand they're not necessarily rebelling against you. It's not you that they're mad at. They're rebelling against the Lord. And the Lord's put you there for a purpose, so that really frees you to do what you need to do.

Researcher: Any other thoughts on this question? OK, number five is very open ended. "What other thoughts would you add to our discussion to enable other elementary Christian school teachers to include incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management?" This is kind of free thoughts that you have on the subject of biblical classroom management.

ADAM: Just encourage people to have a network of comrades, the camaraderie that if you're in the midst of some difficulty in classroom management sometimes it's good just to have someone come along side of you and say, "I know what you're going through and have you tried this?" "Have you considered this?" Just to be able to bear each other's burdens in that way. So I guess what I would say is seek out people who you can really share the burden with and then who knows what the Lord will open up through a colleague, a co-worker whose maybe had the exact same experience and can give you some help in that regard. Good counsel.

BETTY: I think, that in a classroom, when you're setting classroom management procedures, rules and so forth. When you do it biblically, that really releases you to do what's right, but it also removes you from the equation. So that when someone contests, "Well I don't understand why..." You can say, well we're doing this because this is what we're reinforcing from

Scripture. We don't say negative things about somebody else's art work for instance because we are kind. And it would also frustrate them, and it would also hurt them. And those are three areas that we talk about as Christians. So we don't do that. That's why we're not going to tolerate that behavior. It ceases to be your idea and your rule and your desire. It's what the Lord wants and what He would choose. It really releases you from the equation in the certain way you are acting. And of course, you can act incorrectly, but it still gives more authority to what you are doing and releases you from being, I guess, the bad guy.

Researcher: Any other thoughts?

CATHY: Well, God is a God of law and love and order. And those are all three things we have to have in the classroom in order to have class management and to have children learning and to also succeed in learning. Because we supposed to be building up and encouraging them, but at the same time we have to have rules and regulations. But there are instances where we see the love, too. And order. God is not a god of chaos. So I think the whole time to not think of it as our classroom, but as His. And once we do that and doing it His way, we'll have a successful classroom, no matter what grade level you teach and what you do.

ADAM: Beyond that I think it's important, and this goes beyond the classroom, but it directly impacts the classroom. That is that schools have some established guidelines for classroom management. Not that we're trying to make everybody little robots, so you have to handle things just one way. But at least some general parameters and guidelines that would help a teacher, just like what we have. If it's a first offense, second, or so forth. So that there's that support, too. Trying to be consistent, but also recognizing that we're all uniquely made and we sometimes mishandle it. Or we might handle it differently, even though it's not the right or the wrong way. It's just a different way.

BETTY: And you handle things differently with different students, too. I think about my son who attended public school in kindergarten. They had an open classroom where there were no rules. There were no rules. My husband and I asked his teacher, who was the head of the department of the whole county, “Well, what do you do if they break a rule?” She said, “Well everybody stops and we discuss that rule.” Well, what if the first rule they break ends up with a child...they had homemade tables with sharp edges...running and falling and putting their eye out on that table? She didn’t have an answer. The classroom was in chaos all the time. And my son is somewhat ADHD, so that was awful. There was no peace, no order, and he had a hard time learning there because there was no order and no structure. And I think God wants us, like she said that God is a god of order and not chaos, and that’s how He plans for us to learn. Those principles just really reinforce that.

CATHY: I think it also gives peace to the parents because they know there’s guidelines. They are entrusting their kids with us as a school and as teachers. So they know what our guidelines are going to be and they know the rules and what we expect from the students. Not just rules, but how we expect them to behave and how we expect them to always do their best when they’re doing their work. I think that also gives...we’re all on the same page and that’s going to mean better success for the students and for us as a school.

Researcher: Ok, well that was the final question. Thanks for your participation.

Second Christian School Focus Group

Researcher: The first question is, "What have you personally experienced in terms of biblical concepts incorporated in classroom management?" I will let you think about on for a moment.

And this is very broad and open. Whoever wants to start can start and we can discuss.

FREDA: I take it as, what are you personally experiencing. So I'm taking it as when I was a child or in college. Is that what you're thinking?

ELAINE: Well, I didn't, I was thinking about what I have personally experienced in my classroom.

Researcher: But that's ok, you can tell me what you (FREDA) think and you can tell me what you think (ELAINE). It can be different.

FREDA: I was taking it that you meant me personally, so that it would possibly carry over into my classroom.

Researcher: Did you have experiences of that nature?

FREDA: I did. Most of my schooling has been in a Christian school. Even kindergarten. And way back in kindergarten I can remember memorizing the Lord is my Shepherd, Psalms 23.

ELAINE: Yes, she can remember memorizing.

FREDA: I can. I remember that. And then our Christian school was at our church. Even some of my experiences there I share with my classroom because yesterday in our meeting our administrator mentioned to talk to your classes about when a new student came in. Well, it just happens to work. I'm doing *Roll of Thunder*, and I have a student that is segregated for two days, every two days and it changes. And it just worked in with today even in today's time frame segregation still happens. Even though we're not meaning to, if they're handicapped we segregate them or job wise or whatever. So I was able to share that with my class. Because in

our high school, Christian school kids were here and public school kids were here in our youth group. And so, but that's what I took it to mean. I share some of those things to let my class learn. What did you (ELAINE) think?

ELAINE: Well, I couldn't relate to it like that because I went to public school for my whole schooling. I went to public college as well, and my masters' degree. I never did go a Christian school until I went to Liberty to get my endorsement in early childhood education. I started about a year, maybe a year and a half, before this school opened. So, that was my first experience at Liberty with anything Christian really in a classroom. I wanted to go there because of that, I mean, I knew I was going to be teaching here. And I had no background, plus I wanted to get that endorsement in early childhood education. Just the difference in the atmosphere of the school is just so different from what I had experienced elsewhere. And just so I don't have those experiences to draw from, and I wish I did you know, but I just didn't have that to draw from. I just got so much from being here in this school. I had to learn a lot myself about how to relate, how to tie in the Bible with every aspect of your life and to work in those biblical principles and into your academics. That was a struggle for me how do you make this relate this to the Bible. In every aspect, not just the Bible. You know, just every aspect, and the discipline, and trying to, I just saw the wisdom when I was trying to counsel students on their behavior looking at what the Bible says, it's not just your teacher and it's not just your parents, but this is what God's Word says. This is the ultimate source that we go by, so it was a real education for me in coming here and just getting that training on how to just weave it all together for your whole life. You just, you know, I think we come up sometimes through our churches, here's church, and here's school, and here's the rest of my life and it's not all woven together. But I think that being in a Christian school you're able to see the wisdom behind that was God's

design. And I sometimes think as Christians we do not realize that was His design, that He truly does want to be a part of every single thing that we do. Every subject that we teach, everything that we do with our children. He wants to be in the midst of that. He's, like I tell the children, He's not going to band you over the head, or He's not going to butt in, but He's going to wait for you to ask Him. But He's waiting, He's right there. We had that Scripture today about in our handwriting, we had the Scripture, "draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." And one of the children wanted to know what does draw nigh mean? And I said well, it means get close to and God is here and He's waiting for us to come up and get close to Him. He's not going to come over and force us to be with Him. He's just there waiting for us to come over and get close to Him. And He's there and He'll be close to us as soon as we get close to Him we're with Him. So it's kind of been a process for me.

DEBBIE: I kind of interpreted the question like she did, but then we kind of think alike anyway. I started out actually in a Christian school. My dad was the principal and my mom was...it was an ACE program...I don't know if you're familiar with that. She was kind of like the supervisor or something of the elementary department. So it was kindergarten through fourth, so unfortunately, I don't have a lot of the Christian, biblical things to draw on but I do remember learning Bible verses, and they would have it set up so that if you learned a certain amount of Bible verses then you had certain extra privileges based on how many Scriptures you memorized. You got more privileges for more verses, you know, not as good privileges as being though you didn't learn as many. But going back to what you were saying (FREDA), about being segregated, in fifth grade I had to switch to public school. And it was a completely different environment, and I was a little bit, you know, I felt segregated a little bit because I didn't quite fit into their mold. And then fortunately, I finished school in a public school until I

went to college. I went to Lee. But, my memory of that was they were preparing us to go to public school. I wish I would have had more, I mean I'm sure Liberty does better at this, I wish I would have had more of a training in if you wanted to go to a Christian school then these are things you need to do. So basically, like (ELAINE), have gleaned a lot from just being here really about the biblical integration. In fact, this is the first place I had even really heard that term. You know you need to integrate into every subject. I know you're doing classroom management, but it's still the same thing.

Researcher: It's all a part.

DEBBIE: It's the same thing. So this was really, even though I had taught in Christian schools before I came here, this is the first place that I had ever really heard the concept mentioned. So I've had to glean a lot from, you know, others and our administrator.

FREDA: Even at that, I was in a church school. So you would think, yeah, we had chapel three times a week, and Bible, but they didn't really incorporate that in all our subjects. We tend to compartmentalize...this one God can come in to, but this box here, we need to keep this over here we can't let God see. Even though we know He can.

ELAINE: One thing I thought about was that you have to purposely, it doesn't just come automatic. You have to purposely plan to.

DEBBIE and FREDA: Yes.

ELAINE: To integrate the Scripture into what you are doing.

DEBBIE: Because if you don't, it's not that you mean to, but you get so busy in your routine that it's not that you mean to leave that out, it's just that you're on such a tight schedule, trying to fit everything in and get things done. That it's easy to you know, like you (ELAINE) said you have to plan to naturally do that though.

FREDA: You know there are some subjects that are easier to put it in.

DEBBIE: Not math.

FREDA: And some are not as easy.

Researcher: Ok. We'll move on to question number two. "What specific situations...we've touched on this just a little bit, so think if there's anything else...have influenced your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management?" We've touched on that a little bit, each of you did. But think if there is anything else, maybe in a specific instance in your classroom management, maybe there was an experience that influenced you as you dealt with that situation. You can go at it that way or anything else. Any situations that influenced your experiences.

ELAINE: Sometimes listening to other teachers when they've told me this happened in my classroom today and this is how I handled it and what they said to the child. And how they brought in the Scripture, and that's made a big impression on me. Plus we did our curriculum guides, when we did those for our ACSI accreditation, we were for each subject we had to include that, that made us take a really hard look at, ok what Scripture is there out there that really ties in and relates to the curriculum. And then a lot of the books we started using are A Beka, they bring in a lot of Scripture with the science and the health and history. They bring in a lot of Scripture that sometimes can be related to the children's behavior as well.

Researcher: Anyone else?

DEBBIE: I think it depends on the class. It seems like each class has its own...I mean it doesn't seem...it is, that each class has its own unique set of characteristics. And there's always it seems like one dominating, is that the right word? Character that wants to seep in, like you have some that wants to be the showboats and not let others go first, or you have the people who aren't

willing to share or the people who complain. So I think God uses those to teach you ways to using His Word, train them to cope better with their different character, you know, kind of redirect their behavior I guess. What ELAINE was saying too, it's not that you're trying to eavesdrop, you know, when you share the playground with others and they're gently reprimanding another student. It's not that you're trying to eavesdrop, but you can kind of hear like, I've learned a lot from ELAINE, because we used to use the playground a lot and she's just always so calm and you know, trying to direct the students' behavior that way. I learned a lot from listening to others like you said.

FREDA: Sometimes I will wait and not, I mean, I know that an incident has happened. I will let the student know that was inappropriate and we'll talk later that day. But I will go and ask how would you handle this? I'm not sure...

DEBBIE: We all do that.

FREDA: This is the first time this has happened. I'm not sure how to deal with this. So I would say experience wise it's good that we have that ability to go and ask. I did have the opportunity ten years ago when I first came here to go on an accreditation team and visited some classrooms and so I was able to hear how this teacher did this and with basketball, I've made a friend at another school and she teaches the same grade. So when we see each other we're like, hey what do you do about this? So.

DEBBIE: And sometimes like you say you take the time, we'll deal with this later. And you don't know what to do. And that's the time you can take to pray and you know, seek the guidance the Lord can give you. And you can talk, like you said (FREDA) to your colleagues or the administrator.

FREDA: The administrator, because I've gone to her too.

DEBBIE: I have too. So it's just good to even talk about it. Not that you're trying to gossip. You aren't like, "Johnny did this..." but "This happened today..." We keep it without a name.

FREDA: She's (DEBBIE) very good at saying, "A student" She doesn't say a boy or a girl. Me – "Do you know what she did today?" (laughing) I'm learning from her (DEBBIE) to be quiet and not say, "This happened and I don't know what to do."

ELAINE: On the positive side of the looking for the positive things they do. I know the character qualities have helped me a lot that we focus on every month. You know, a different character quality. And as you're explaining that quality. You're explaining to them what that word means and what you're looking for. Then you start to see more of that in your classroom. You know I've noticed, especially like with thankfulness, you start to see them using good manner and saying "thank-you" and you start hearing it more. That's been a real plus to bring out.

Researcher: All right, question number three. "Describe in detail how your experiences of incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have empowered you as a teacher?"

FREDA: Ok...(laughing) my sister in law put on Facebook and now I can't think of the reference. But anyway, let every word out of my mouth be..."

Researcher: Pleasing?

FREDA: Pleasing, acceptable...oh I can't think of it. And I have been trying, specifically trying, to make a point to stop and think about what's going to come out of my mouth before I say it. So that I'm not so negative. Trying to be more positive about it. And something just happened...something that was around here just recently, and the verse that was being posted

made me think, “You need to work on this.” What did we do? But that verse was, yeah, I just needed to be very mindful of the words that come out of my mouth.

ELAINE: I think as you grow in your knowledge of who God is and how much He loves us, and the grace and the mercy He has shown us, and He says we need to show that to others. And yes, do sometimes they deserve to be fussed at and they do have to do some of that. Yet we need to extend that same grace and love to that child. And I think understanding and having a child to understand that when you’re punished, it’s not because we hate you. Or we don’t like you. We need to do it...our punishment, our discipline...whatever needs to be done in such a way that they know we still love them. Because God has surely shown that to us over and over and over again. That He, no matter what we do, He still loves us. He hates the sin and it hurts Him, but He still loves us. So if we can convey that to the child we still love you. After you discipline, if you can hug them or just let them know. I still like you and I want you to do well, I want you to succeed. Yet to let them see that sin always has a consequence. You know, just saying I forgive you, doesn’t mean, OK , it’s fine and dandy and let them go on their way. No, because you did this sin always has consequences, and I think that’s important for children to learn and us as adults as well that every sin has a consequence. It doesn’t mean that God doesn’t love us, He does and He’s forgiven us, but still you have to deal with that consequence. Because that’s part of life, it’s always going to be there. To me, I think that has helped me more than anything to be able to deal with the children. Just to deal with them in love and try to make them know I still love them and that I don’t hate them, or don’t have ill will toward them. I still love them as a person, but this thing, whatever they’ve done, has got to be dealt with and we’ll see a change so that they can be a better person.

FREDA: I've shared with my class that there are good and bad consequences. And even a story that we're reading you know, OK, this happened here. What are some of the good

consequences? What are the bad consequences to talk about so that they see and that they know.

DEBBIE: Along with what (ELAINE) was saying. I try to remember to show them mercy rather than harping on them every single time. And sometimes if they will own up to something, if they will not deny but actually own up, "yes I did that." Then I'll say, "I'm glad you told me, instead of having this much time, you now have just this much time." So it's not that they totally get away with it, but you know, just to show that hey, that was honorable that you did that so the consequence won't be quite so severe. And something my husband taught me as a pastor. Err on the side of mercy. You know, if you're not sure, whether Johnny did so and so. God is merciful, of course God knows whether we did it or not. But God is merciful toward us like she (ELAINE) was saying, so we ought to be merciful to our students. Not that they can get away with everything, and that you don't handle those serious situations...but...

Researcher: Question number four is something similar, and you've touched on it. "Explain in detail how incorporating biblical concepts in your classroom management have improved your teaching."

Now, think of this as your teaching, your classroom. Your actual teaching.

DEBBIE: I think it can make subjects more clear to them and more real. And, I forget who said this, compartmentalizing our lives, it helps students to see, you know. Because sometimes, as we're doing Bible and doing science, they see it as connected together. And you know, God created all of these wonderful subjects.

FREDA: I even say, depending on what the subject is, you know, that our English, we use Bob Jones, I think it is.

DEBBIE: Yes.

FREDA: Their sentences that they have to diagram or whatever will tell the story of Daniel or Mary and Joseph or whatever. And I'll kind of get silly with my class and say, "Imagine that! We're doing English but these are Bible sentences! And look! See how they intertwine together." And so I use that sometimes as an opportunity to say we can do this in our life. We can go out and do and maybe you can try to explain it a little better. In reading the Bible, what are they thinking about? Then you have to search and seek.

DEBBIE: Especially the King James Version.

FREDA: Yes.

DEBBIE: It's really above their heads at times. There's a verse that says they are "Wrought in God." And the first thing they get out of it is r-o-t, but it's not and so I will even pull out a different version.

FREDA: I will too.

DEBBIE: And say, "Well this is how we would say it today." You know that kind of thing.

FREDA: This is when I would say, "This is the Mrs. ____ explanation. You know...(laughter)

ELAINE: I've found that in saying the biblical principles for myself, it certainly sharpens you as a person and gives you a clearer understanding for me it's given me more of a boldness to be able to say, "The Bible says this and I believe it." I take it that way. Especially in science with the creation and with the days of creation, things that people get right off the bat get divided over. And I say, well, I think God wanted everything to be very well known to us and this is very clear what the Bible says. He says a day and an evening were the first day. Now how much clearer can that be? You know that's a day? And if we want to make it a thousand or a million years we're trying to fit the Bible into what scientists have taught us. I've told the boys and

girls, it comes down to this, now scientists are very smart people, but they matter of the fact is they don't believe the Bible and they are want to try to discredit it because they don't know God. And if they knew our God, then they would know. And He wanted us to know. He didn't want us to be in the dark. He told us right off the bat where things came from and how things came into being. When I came into Christian school, the first year I taught in Christian school, my oldest daughter was in third grade, and she came home and she was studying her science. I'll never forget, that her teacher had told her that man was not an animal. And I said, "Oh, yes he is." So I asked for a conference and went in to have a discussion with that teacher (laughter). Because I had learned all my life, through college and everything, everything's either an animal or a plant. So I can remember going in and sitting down with that teacher. She explained that very beautifully to me the concept of man as a special creation. And here I was a first year teacher in a Christian school (laughter). And I was just dumbfounded! I mean, so I had to go back and tell my daughter, "Your teacher's exactly right." (laughter) And I never had it explained to me that way. It's kind of amazing how you can grow up in church all your life and what you don't know. You just touch the surface. You just really touch the surface. I'll never forget that. (laughter)

Researcher: OK, final question. "What other thoughts would you add to enable other elementary Christian school teachers to include incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management?"

ELAINE: Repeat that please one more time.

Researcher: "What other thoughts would you add to enable other elementary Christian school teachers to include incorporating biblical concepts in their classroom management?" Like you

can do the how, the encouragement, the why. Any other thoughts that you have if you were talking to another elementary Christian school teacher. Perhaps a new teacher.

DEBBIE: I remember somebody who did a training session on this and they said to take notes when you do your daily devotions and categorize them. Like this would fit into science, or this verse would fit into math. So having that personal daily devotion, prayer and Bible reading, you know then you can draw from those. “Oh I remember.” And the Holy Spirit reminds you of those instances. “Oh I remember reading that. That will fit perfectly with this lesson or this situation.”

ELAINE: I would just say it is well worth it whatever time you can devote to it. To give it the thought how you can tie it all together and what instances you can bring in and having your Scripture ready. I know for me even just this year the Bible Truths. We’re doing the Bob Jones Bible and it used to be called catechism, but I think because of their association maybe with Catholicism it maybe was changed to Bible Truths. Just those questions and those answers. I’m doing them with my children for the very first time and I love it. And I wish I’d done more of this. Where every week they have a couple of questions to study like who is God? And then they give the answer and you’ve got a Bible reference. So it’s given them a beginning foundation of you know, more understanding, so they’ll have the ability to stand up and know what they believe in because it’s like a refining process what the Bible says and believing that. It’s well worth the time you put into it to giving it some thought, through your devotions or reading the resources we have had on Scripture references and how to tie it in. I just think it’s well worth the time.

DEBBIE: Don’t be afraid to ask other teachers too who may have been at it longer, you know. Don’t be afraid to learn and make yourself vulnerable...is that the right word?

FREDA: Or open.

DEBBIE: Open, that's a good word. Yeah, to not be so proud that you can't ask for help from people you can trust.

ELAINE: At whatever age, because none of us are ever going to have arrived.

DEBBIE: Even Paul said, "I have not yet..." (laughter)

ELAINE: Yes, I'm still learning. Oh I wished I could start over younger!

DEBBIE: If I knew then what I know now.

FREDA: I've even, even at church like not just the daily devotions, but at church the sermons. And our pastors, they rotate, there's like three different ones. So a lot of times what they say. Now it's up on the screen, I'll have to admit I don't carry my Bible in church, but I have a notepad in my purse and I'll whip that thing out and he said something, I'm going to write that down. And honestly, I cannot tell you how many times, Sunday this happened and I wrote this down and I see it in my personal printout and I read it over and over. And then sometime during the week, I'm able to share that with my classroom. What? That's exactly what they said at church on Sunday and I wrote this down. And you know, mine are 5th grade so they can sometimes understand that a little bit better and they're like wow. And our administrator, we're at the same church and we'll even talk about it sometimes. So going to others and just conferences, and your devotions, and the conferences, there's all kinds of...

ELAINE: Helps.

FREDA: Yes, helps. I kept thinking resources, but that's not the right word. Yes. There's all kinds of biblical helps that help when you teach them. And experience is probably the best thing. I mean, yeah, your first year, you need to ask the experienced teachers.

DEBBIE: And the problem that I have is of being afraid of failure. So I would tell them, as hard as it is, don't be afraid. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off and keep at it, keep persevering.

Don't be afraid of making mistakes and I have a hard time with that.

FREDA: That's how we learn.

DEBBIE: I really do.

APPENDIX J: Phenomenological Reduction

Research Question One Selected Statements and Themes

What biblical concepts do elementary teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?

Individual Interview Statements

- Reinforcement of positive and negative behavior with Scripture
- Reinforcement of positive and negative behavior with biblical concepts
- Use of Scripture verses with classroom rules
- Use of Scripture verses in behavioral situations
- Biblical concepts incorporated into lessons

Focus Group Statements

- Getting students to look at their behavior from a biblical standpoint
- As students get older, you want them to make more application of biblical viewpoint on their lives.
- Need to show mercy and grace to students like God shows us.
- Show mercy to students. If not sure, err on the side of mercy.
- God is a God of order, not chaos.
- God is a God of love and order. Those are things you need to have in the classroom to have classroom management and enable students to learn and succeed.

Document Review Items

- Resource of Scripture verses to use in behavioral situations (FCS)
- Discipline Guidelines
- Biblical integration

Participant Profile Sheet

- Prayer during class
 - Bible verses incorporated in classroom rules
 - Bible verses referenced during regular classroom activities
 - Bible verses referenced during student misbehavior
 - Referencing situations in the Bible in handling student misbehavior
 - Referencing biblical concepts in regular classroom activities
 - Students citing Bible verses in behavioral situations
 - Bible verses or concepts used as a class motto
 - Prominent posting of Bible verses or concepts in classroom
- Research Question One Themes Identified from Significant Statements

Research Question One: What biblical concepts do elementary teachers identify as ones they use in classroom management?

Theme	Evidence
Reinforcement of Student Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of positive and negative behavior with Scripture • Reinforcement of positive and negative behavior with biblical concepts • Use of Scripture verses with classroom rules • Use of Scripture verses in behavioral situations • Getting students to look at their behavior from a biblical standpoint • As students get older, you want them to make more application of biblical viewpoint on their lives. • Need to show mercy and grace to students like God shows us. • Show mercy to students. If not sure, err on the side of mercy. • Resource of Scripture verses to use in behavioral situations (FCS) • Discipline Guidelines • Bible verses incorporated in classroom rules • Bible verses referenced during regular classroom activities • Bible verses referenced during student misbehavior • Referencing situations in the Bible in handling student misbehavior • Students citing Bible verses in behavioral situations
Incorporation of Biblical Concepts in Routine Classroom Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical concepts incorporated into lessons • Referencing biblical concepts in regular classroom activities • Biblical Integration • Bible verses or concepts used as a class motto • Prominent posting of Bible verses or concepts in classroom

Research Question Two Selected Statements and Themes

How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?

Individual Interview Statements

- Using positive examples
- Use Scripture for positive and negative behavior
- Be positive with students, not using the Bible as a “bat.”
- Use Scripture throughout the day
- Use the Bible when referencing student behavior.
- What would Jesus do?
- Politeness rules based on Scripture.
- Do not twist the Bible verses to make it fit what you want it to fit.
- Scripture to go along with classroom rules
- Use Scripture to correct, encourage, and in classroom themes.
- Use Bible verses to make sure what God expects us to do.
- Use Bible verses as I work with the children both positively and negatively.
- Use Bible verses in their (students’) language with situations.
- Give Scriptural support in establishing rules and expectations.
- Use biblical concepts when managing students.
- I use biblical concepts every time I’m dealing with classroom management.
- Depends on the situation
- I always want to encourage them to follow Jesus’ example.
- You have to purposely plan to incorporate biblical concepts.

Focus Group Statements

- Connect the Bible to all you are teaching.
- The Bible and your subjects are all connected together.
- You don’t try to fit the Bible to all you are teaching. The Bible is the thread that ties it all together.

Document Review Items

- Biblical Integration
- Core Values
- Educational Goals
- Vision Statements
- Statement of Faith

Research Question Two: How do elementary Christian school teachers utilize biblical concepts in classroom management?

Theme	Evidence
Connectivity of the Bible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Scripture to correct, encourage, and in classroom themes. • Connect the Bible to all you are teaching. • The Bible and your subjects are all connected together. • You don't try to fit the Bible to all you are teaching. The Bible is the thread that ties it all together. • Biblical Integration • Core Values • Educational Goals • Vision Statements • Statement of Faith
Intentionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give Scriptural support in establishing rules and expectations. • Use biblical concepts when managing students. • I use biblical concepts every time I'm dealing with classroom management. • Depends on the situation • You have to purposely plan to incorporate biblical concepts. • Do not twist the Bible verses to make it fit what you want it to fit. • Be positive with students, not using the Bible as a "bat." • Biblical Integration • Core Values
Biblical Concepts with Student Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Scripture for positive and negative behavior • Use the Bible when referencing student behavior. • Scripture to go along with classroom rules • Use Scripture to correct, encourage, and in classroom themes. • Use Bible verses to make sure what God expects us to do. • Use Bible verses as I work with the children both positively and negatively. • Use Bible verses in their (students') language with situations. • Give Scriptural support in establishing rules and expectations. • Use biblical concepts when managing students. • I use biblical concepts every time I'm dealing with classroom management. • Core Values • Educational Goals

Research Question Three Significant Statements

What are elementary Christian school teachers' perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?

Individual Interview Statements

- I think, overall very positive and beneficial.
- Some of it is contingent upon who the student is and the type of background that they come from.
- I think parents, overall, are appreciative when they know you are approaching it that way that we're trying to do what's best for the child and as biblically centered in that process as possible.
- It's effective because all truth is God's truth.
- If there is any way, there's a right way to do something, it would be a biblical way because all truth is God's truth.
- To me, it's the only answer for effectiveness.
- If we have God as the center and we use His Word in everything that is what is going to help the children learn the most.
- Very beneficial, because our guideline is to follow God's Word.
- We are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students.
- Depends on the student and how it's received by them if their heart is willing to receive the instruction you're giving them.
- Very effective, young children want to please.
- Pretty effective, most students can respond with an example or a verse.
- I think they're (students) getting it.

Focus Group Statements

- Successful classroom management gives you the freedom to go beyond to teach your subjects.
- Frees you in the sense the students are not rebelling against you, but against the Lord.
- The biblical concepts sharpen me as a person.
- I have a clearer understanding and a boldness to say, "The Bible says this and I believe it."
- All truth is God's truth.
- I'm confident I am doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal.
- You may not think you are making an impact, but you've got to trust you are doing the right thing.
- When you set up your classroom biblically, it releases you to do what's right. It removes you from the equation.

Research Question Three: What are elementary Christian school teachers’ perceptions of their utilization of biblical concepts in classroom management?

Theme	Evidence
Biblical incorporation into classroom management is beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think, overall very positive and beneficial. • I think parents, overall, are appreciative when they know you are approaching it that way that we’re trying to do what’s best for the child and as biblically centered in that process as possible. • It’s effective because all truth is God’s truth. • If there is any way, there’s a right way to do something, it would be a biblical way because all truth is God’s truth. • To me, it’s the only answer for effectiveness. • If we have God as the center and we use His Word in everything that is what is going to help the children learn the most. • Very beneficial, because our guideline is to follow God’s Word. • We are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students. • Depends on the student and how it’s received by them if their heart is willing to receive the instruction you’re giving them. • Very effective, young children want to please. • Pretty effective, most students can respond with an example or a verse. • I think they’re (students) getting it.
Gives Teachers a sense of freedom/boldness/confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful classroom management gives you the freedom to go beyond to teach your subjects. • Frees you in the sense the students are not rebelling against you, but against the Lord. • The biblical concepts sharpen me as a person. • I have a clearer understanding and a boldness to say, “The Bible says this and I believe it.” • All truth is God’s truth. • I’m confident I am doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal. • You may not think you are making an impact, but you’ve got to trust you are doing the right thing. • When you set up your classroom biblically, it releases you to do what’s right. It removes you from the equation.
God’s Word is foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think parents, overall, are appreciative when they know you are approaching it that way that we’re trying to do what’s best for the child and as biblically centered in that process as possible. • It’s effective because all truth is God’s truth. • If there is any way, there’s a right way to do something, it would be a biblical way because all truth is God’s truth. • If we have God as the center and we use His Word in everything that is what is going to help the children learn the most. • Very beneficial, because our guideline is to follow God’s Word.

Research Question Four Significant Statements

What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

Individual Interview Statements

- Our guideline is to follow God's Word, and because we are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students.

Focus Group Statements

- Most of my schooling has been in a Christian school. I can remember memorizing "The Lord is my shepherd."
- I actually started out in a Christian school. I do remember learning Bible verses.
- I was a public school teacher...I couldn't really bring in the Bible so that influenced me when I came here knowing we have the freedom to use God's Word.
- Our children went to public school. Things of the Lord were just scorned. That really convicted us about Christian education.
- I've been in Christian education my entire life, and as I've gotten older I've seen the importance of everything that you're teaching is centered around the Word of God, you won't go wrong.
- Something just happened here (school), a verse was posted, made me think, "You need to work on this."
- Listening to other teachers and how they handle situations.
- I learned a lot by listening to others.
- Have a network of comrades to have someone come alongside you. Share each other's burdens.
- Don't be afraid to ask other teachers.
- Ask experienced teachers.
- Taking notes during church...there are all kinds of helps.
- It is well worth the time you can devote to it. Give it thought, through your devotions or reading Scripture resources.
- Use what you are learning spiritually in your personal life to use in your classroom.
- Saying the biblical concept for myself, it sharpens me as a person where I have a clearer understanding and a boldness to say, "The Bible says this, and I believe it."
- You don't try to fit the Bible into what you are teaching, the Bible is the thread that ties it all together.
- All truth is God's truth. I'm confident I'm doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal.
- The Bible makes subjects more clear and more real. They are all connected together.
- We are all building on the same foundation, precept upon precept. We are able to build year by year.
- The Bible is the foundation of all we do here.
- We are constantly sharing God's Word.

- I saw the wisdom when trying to counsel students on behavior from the standpoint of what God's Word says.
- You have to purposely plan to incorporate biblical concepts.

Document Review Items

- Mission Statements
- Vision Statements
- Core Values
- Educational Goals
- Teacher Application
- Chapel Program
- Teacher Qualifications
- Community Service
- Statement of Faith
- Teacher Evaluations
- Biblical Integration
- School Rules
- Student Awards
- Matthew 18 Principle
- Teacher Job Description
- Scripture Memory

Research Question Four: What factors influence elementary Christian school teachers utilizing biblical concepts in classroom management?

Theme	Evidence
Personal Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our guideline is to follow God’s Word, and because we are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students. • Most of my schooling has been in a Christian school. I can remember memorizing “The Lord is my shepherd.” • I actually started out in a Christian school. I do remember learning Bible verses. • I was a public school teacher...I couldn’t really bring in the Bible so that influenced me when I came here knowing we have the freedom to use God’s Word. • Our children went to public school. Things of the Lord were just scorned. That really convicted us about Christian education. • I’ve been in Christian education my entire life, and as I’ve gotten older I’ve seen the importance of everything that you’re teaching is centered around the Word of God, you won’t go wrong.
Collaboration with Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to other teachers and how they handle situations. • I learned a lot by listening to others. • Have a network of comrades to have someone come alongside you. Share each other’s burdens. • Don’t be afraid to ask other teachers. • Ask experienced teachers.
School Expectations/Atmosphere/Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our guideline is to follow God’s Word, and because we are in a Christian atmosphere, we have that privilege and responsibility to teach those Christian principles to our students. • Something just happened here (school), a verse was posted, made me think, “You need to work on this.” • Mission Statements • Vision Statements • Core Values • Educational Goals • Teacher Application • Chapel • Teacher Qualifications • Community Service • Statement of Faith • Discipline Guidelines • Teacher Evaluations • Biblical Integration • School Rules • Student Awards

Theme	Evidence
Personal Spiritual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking notes during church...there are all kinds of helps. • It is well worth the time you can devote to it. Give it thought, through your devotions or reading Scripture resources. • Use what you are learning spiritually in your personal life to use in your classroom. • Saying the biblical concept for myself, it sharpens me as a person where I have a clearer understanding and a boldness to say, "The Bible says this, and I believe it." • Discipline Guidelines • Teacher Evaluations • Teacher Application • Teacher Qualifications
God's Word is Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You don't try to fit the Bible into what you are teaching, the Bible is the thread that ties it all together. • All truth is God's truth. I'm confident I'm doing the right thing. My goal is the correct goal. • The Bible makes subjects more clear and more real. They are all connected together. • We are all building on the same foundation, precept upon precept. We are able to build year by year. • The Bible is the foundation of all we do here. • We are constantly sharing God's Word. • I saw the wisdom when trying to counsel students on behavior from the standpoint of what God's Word says. • You have to purposely plan to incorporated biblical concepts. • Educational Goals • Mission Statements • Core Values • Vision Statements • Matthew 18 Principle • biblical Integration • Teacher Application • Teacher Qualifications
Belief in Biblical Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statements • Vision Statements • Core Values • Educational Goals • Teacher Application