

Archived version from NCDOCKS Institutional Repository <http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/>



## Dare To Discipline

By: Linda Johanson

No Abstract

**Johanson, Linda** (2012) "Dare To Discipline" *Journal of Christian Nursing*. 29(4), 249.  
Version of Record Available from Ovid. [ISSN# 0743-2550]. [DOI: 10.1097/  
CNJ.0b013e318268552a]

# Dare To Discipline

Over the years of my career as a nurse educator, I've had many moments when I felt confirmation that I was "Called to Teach." I've felt delight when a student mastered a difficult concept. I'm energized keeping up with research and developments in the profession. I am fairly organized and creative in the classroom. I enjoy teaching.

However, one component of teaching that I initially found challenging involved discipline of students. By nature, I am an encourager and an optimist. I have a gentle approach, and it was very difficult for me to convey something that might hurt students' feelings. If I had to give a reproach, I would sandwich it between positive comments to ease the blow. In some instances I chose to ignore rather than confront students because of my discomfort with discipline. Skirting the issue seemed to work well enough in the early days, and the positive aspects of teaching compensated for this area of difficulty.

Then an event occurred that God used to help me grow as an educator and spiritually. I was administering a pharmacology exam to a large class when I noticed one student in the second row did not seem to be taking the test. She had the test before her, but was not marking answers. She shuffled the test pages but marked only three

answers in 15 minutes. I moved to the side of the room behind her to observe more closely. I saw her flip up the test to reveal pages of notes hidden underneath her exam.

Had I taken time to consider, I might have waived about what to do. However, this egregious situation prompted me to confront the student immediately. My heart was pounding as I took her test and sent her to report to the Chair of the Department. The entire class knew what had happened. I felt extremely conspicuous and miles outside my comfort zone. As the other students continued to test I could not stop thinking about how my accusation of cheating would change this student's life. Had I made the right call? Could I have handled this differently with my usual softer style, and possibly encouraged a change in behavior without severing her chance for a nursing career? For a teacher who dislikes conflict, confrontation, and discipline, I could not have been more uncomfortable.

Ultimately this event changed the course of life and vocation for this student. Following the accusation of cheating there were protocols to follow, reports, a hearing, and eventually dismissal from the nursing program. To my surprise, God used this to help me deal with my extreme discomfort. God has a lot to say about discipline in the Bible, and this verse in particular spoke to me: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11, NIV).

After this incident I was able to clearly observe the truth of God's

teaching. While it was very unpleasant to confront this student, in retrospect, changing her life course was a positive event. The student's dismissal produced a sense of peace among other students. They perceived that fairness had prevailed and I sensed they respected me for doing the right thing. If this student lacked integrity in school, would she have integrity as a registered nurse? This event may have led her to make major life changes.

Knowing God disciplines those he loves establishes a standard—one of training in righteousness. I still don't enjoy disciplining students but I understand discipline better, am now able to discipline when indicated, and I keep mindful of the great value of discipline in our lives.