

Discovering

RELATED
CONSEQUENCES

to help in parenting

A TRAINING HEARTS ARTICLE. BY SHARON CANNAVO



How many times in the day, as your child has not followed through with an instruction, or is again entangled in a brawl with a sibling— do you wonder, what consequence is appropriate? It's difficult in a busy day to stop everything you should be doing and become creative in your application of discipline, right? So we default to time outs (which, let's face it, will never get to the child's heart and make a difference). Or we take their favorite toy or activity (usually screen time) away for the week. Or perhaps we fall back on spanking, even when it is not necessarily called for in many of these particular incidents. And... what do you do when their favorite toy is no longer available because it was already removed! Another spanking? But you sense that spanking is not appropriate for the circumstance. You become overwhelmed! You just can't deal with it, and so the consequence is bypassed, along with your opportunity to train your child's heart. You realize the child has learned nothing, and the behaviors are left to increase. What's needed is a consistent, easily available and effective consequence that you can apply that will impact your child for the sake of growing in right behavior. You need a related consequences.

What is a Related Consequence?

When a child has sinned by *thoughtlessness or childish behavior* (NOT including rebellion/disobedience, dishonesty or violence in word or action), *then* it is appropriate to apply a "related" consequence. This style of discipline is connected to the circumstance of the sin which allows the child to remember and learn. As a parent *consistently* applies this type of consequence it will help effectively train the child's heart for future correct acts, benefitting your child as he learns godly behavior, and bringing more peace to your home.

Now we are ready to ask the question... "How do we discover the related consequence in each random circumstance?" This is actually very easy to do! We simply look for the privilege or the gift within the circumstance.

We are told in James 1:17 that...

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.



When we look around at all the gifts we have, all the privileges we are given, and even the people God has given us to love and to be loved, we begin to understand that we are surrounded with God's blessings! We don't claim rights to these gifts. We are not owed or entitled to the gifts. So when our child's sinful attitude or action needs correction and they are showing a lack of regard towards God's gifts and privileges, those should be immediately removed as a consequence. As we remove the gift or privilege, it helps to correct the child's thinking and behavior due to the experience of loss or inconvenience, and allows him to make the right decision in the future. Your child is growing in wisdom. This takes consistency on the parent's part, as you faithfully equip your child with the motivation and ability to resist the temptation.

Let's look at some examples and practicals in discovering the related consequence.

These are listed in 3 categories: gifts, privileges and people. However they really are all interchangeable. A gift is a privilege, and a privilege is a gift. People are gifts and it is a privilege to be in relationship with people. For the sake of examples we will categorize to make this easier to understand.

1. Gifts:

a. The Switch-

Cody is playing Switch with his little brother, Levi. Levi begins to take the lead in the game, and Cody starts to act out in anger and frustration, expressing it in his communication with his little brother. "Levi, you're sitting too close to me! Move!! Why do

you have to talk so loud! Be quiet, big mouth!” As a parent the hair on the back of your neck rises. You know this is sinful. This is the right time to apply the consequence by letting Cody know that his game time is over. He has now lost the opportunity to play with the “gift” which is the Switch because of his sinful behavior (jealousy, lack of consideration for others, grumbling/complaining, anger... etc.) . Have a conversation with Cody regarding the sin, and remove the option to play with the Switch for 24 hours. Be sure that Cody asks his brother for forgiveness, and allow Levi to continue playing with the game.

Note: It is important to see the “gift” as your tool for training. If you remove the Switch for a week, you have removed your tool for training, and your child simply moves on. His lesson will not be anymore impactful after the 24 hours. It is the consistency in consequences that impacts the heart in training, and not the severity.

b. The Couch-

Stella, as sweet as she is, is bound to be a gymnast! She tumbles and jumps, and has a very hard time refraining from performing acrobats on the couch. She has been told not to jump on the furniture, yet in the flow of the day, mom is once again correcting her for using the furniture as her personal trampoline. In this situation, the couch is the gift. It was carefully chosen and purchased with Dad’s and Mom’s hard earned money. It has a specific purpose, which should not be confused with a trampoline. And, when adult friends come over, they should be able to sit on the couch without hitting the springs on their way down. In this situation, Stella’s dad takes away her privilege of using this “gift” (and/or other pieces of furniture involved in these behaviors). She will not be allowed to use the couch for any purpose for 1-2 days, depending on how often the sofa is used. If 24 hours is not enough to allow her to feel the loss or inconvenience, than add time. Even if the family is sitting together on the couch, Stella will take her seat on a chair or the floor.

c. The Outfit-

Addy just wants to be a princess! So each day Mom finds herself in a battle over what Addy is going to wear. Throughout the day, Addy's clothing preferences change, and Mom even finds perfectly clean clothes on the floor or in the hamper as Addy dons another new and amazing outfit! It's not a surprise that Mom is getting to the end of her rope with Addy's enthusiasm for creating outfits, but at the same time Mom struggles to understand the reason she's having a problem with Addy's flair for fashion. Mom is on the right track in suspecting there are sin issues in Addy's heart that need to be recognized and trained. For one, Addy is making adornment a priority over her mom's effort to keep the home. Additionally, Addy's obsession with clothing should tell mom that her heart is straying from God's desires for inward adornment as our priority, and overshadowed by her exaggerated value of outward adornment. Addy is putting too much value in pretty things which have become an idol to her. It would be very wise for Mom to start biblically training her in God's view of idolatry, pride, and outward adornment. But, the first thing Mom needs to do is apply the related consequence which means she will remove the "gift's" of those favored outfits and bobbles. Depending on how important these items have become to Addy, Mom should determine the time-fast from these outfits. In fact, Mom will be in charge of picking out the one outfit that Addy will wear each day, and remove the freedom Addy has to pull clothing for herself. Along with biblical teaching, Addy will begin to understand what it is to be a humble and considerate princess in the kingdom of God. Such great lessons to be learned so young!

2. Privileges

a. The Birthday Party-

Caleb has been anticipating his friend's birthday party all week! The day has come and the excitement has caused Caleb to become energized and hyper. As Dad is driving to the party, he is warning Caleb that he needs to practice his self control, but Caleb's anticipation has the better of him. Once at the party Dad begins to see Caleb pushing

past other children when the games begin. After his turn with the piñata, he refuses to return the baton back to the adult in charge. And as the birthday boy is opening gifts, Caleb can't seem to keep himself from grabbing at the treasures. Dad realizes this isn't going to stop with verbal correction, so he chooses to apply the related consequence and remove the privilege of attending the party. He picks Caleb up, apologizes to the parents and carries Caleb out to the car. Caleb is devastated for missing out on the cake and the rest of the fun, but Dad knows this related consequence is going to make a lasting impression on Caleb and open up valuable and biblical conversation on the areas of self control, loving others better than himself, and having a humble grateful heart for the "privilege" of being invited to someone's home.

b. The Restaurant-

Mom and Dad take Brooke and the other kids out for dinner at a favorite restaurant. They are seated and served beverages. While they wait for the waitress to return to take their order, Brooke begins to blow bubbles in her soda, causing it to overflow and spill all over the table. In her panic she very loudly calls to her parents, disrespectfully demanding that they help her clean her mess. When the waitress comes for their order, Brooke shouts out before Dad and Mom can speak, and declares what she wants the waitress to bring her for dinner, failing to show any gratitude or common courtesy for the server. People around them are beginning to feel frustrated, as they too are here to enjoy a good meal which will cost them hard earned money. Brooke is creating such distraction, that the other guests have lost their hope for enjoying the time at the restaurant. Mom and Dad discuss the options. Brooke's inability or refusal to obey their verbal encouragements leads the way to their decision to apply the specific related consequence appropriate for this moment. They could have placed Brooke on quiet time for the rest of the meal, but knowing the state of rebellion her heart is in, they know she will not submit. Instead, they kindly ask the waitress to pack up their food to go. Mom takes the family to the car, while Dad waits for the food. Brooke quickly realizes that her lack of self control not only removes her opportunity to be out for dinner, but she is now responsible for the whole family losing the privilege of a nice night out. Brooke regrets her behavior. Dad follows up at home with a reading from Philippians

2:3-8 to help Brooke understand how different choices could have shown not only her family, but the waitress and the other guests that they are important. Brooke now knows and won't forget next time that a night out with the family is not an entitlement, but a "privilege" that should be appreciated.

Note: Because Brooke was in rebellion towards her parents, Dad would be right in this situation to also apply a spanking before his teaching began.

c. Making Choices-

It's a day at home, and Mom is glad! The schedule has been busy lately, and has pushed everyone to exhaustion. Mom is hoping for a quiet break. Unfortunately, she becomes very aware of some specific problems that have been growing with Gracie's behavior lately. When she comes out after her quiet time she finds that little Gracie has poured her own cereal, not only in her bowl but across the table and onto the floor. After Mom cleans up she call's Gracie in to read a story, only to find that Gracie has decided which book she wants Mom to read. Gracie complains and cries when Mom confirms that she will be reading from the book she has chosen. Later Mom is doing laundry only to find that Gracie has decided that her baby doll needs a bath, and has the bathtub overflowing with water and bubbles. As Mom prepares lunch, she sees Gracie pull a snack from the pantry. "That's it", Mom thinks! She realizes that Gracie has become far too comfortable making decisions for herself, and has decided that she can disregard Mom's authority in running the home. Mom knows the privilege to make independent choices should only be permitted if the child is able to be responsible with the choices. It's time to remove the "privilege" of choice from Gracie. Mom will begin working with her to grow in her ability to become more thoughtful and careful, more self controlled and respectful towards Mom's position of authority in the home. From now on, Gracie must ask Mom before she makes any of her own choices. If she does not, it will be considered disobedience.

3. People

a. Parents

What child has come to the perfect understanding that their parents are a gift to them? Of course children love their parents, but they also expect parents to meet all their expectations. Finley came home from little league and stripped off his dirt-packed uniform and without a second thought dropped it on his bedroom floor behind his door. He knew Mom would pick it up and toss it in the wash, and that by tomorrow's game he would have it clean and ready. Well, tomorrow came, Finley was searching for his uniform, and yelling out to Mom... "Where's my baseball uniform? It's supposed to be with my folded clothes!" Mom walks into the room, glances behind the door and sees the uniform. "Finley, you have been told to put your dirty clothes in your hamper. It looks like you will have to wear a dirty uniform to the game." Finley is mortified!! He cries to Mom, "I can't show up in a dirty uniform, Mom! The coach will be mad at me!! I'm just not going to go to the game!!" Mom in her wisdom looks at Finley and says, "Son, you have a responsibility to obey my rules, and appreciating the things I do for you, and also to the team who counts on you, so you will be going to the game. I'm sure your coach will not be happy with you, but until you understand that you also have responsibilities here at home as part of the family team, and follow the common rules, such as putting dirty clothes in your hamper, you will experience the consequence of your actions. From now on, you are responsible for cleaning your own uniform. You need to understand that my doing your laundry is a "gift", and as you have begun to think you're entitled to clean clothes, it will now be your job to clean your uniform. After the game, I will show you how."

b. Siblings

Jack was the youngest of three. All he wanted was to be a part of the fun that his big brothers were always having. Being the youngest has some great advantages, but also some tough struggles. This day, he woke up with a bit of a chip on his shoulder, feeling

sorry for himself. After breakfast the other boys began the homeschool work that mom assigned while she went to the kitchen to clean up after breakfast. Mom had also given Jack some pre-k work to do, although he was distracted and not at all interested in his work. So Jack began poking at his brothers. They tried to kindly send him away, but this only provoked Jack more. He jumped around trying to get them to laugh, hoping to get them in trouble. Again his brother's encouraged him to do his work and let them do theirs. The chip on the shoulder was growing larger, and rather than being silly, Jack began to target the boys as he threw a wad of paper at them, and then erasers, followed by crayons. Not getting the response he wanted, Jack finally picked up a book, and sent it flying. The book thankfully passed right between the boys without hitting either of them, but sailed dead center into the hanging mirror. **CRRRAASH!!!** Glass shattered to the floor, followed by the footsteps of mom running from the kitchen. When the boys told her everything that happened, Mom realized that there was major work to be done on Jack's heart. She immediately knew the related consequence needed to begin with separation from the brothers. Jack had grown resentful rather than grateful. He was jealous and bitter regarding the relationships, and very discontent with his position in the family. Jack was sent for a time of isolation away from his brothers. He was not allowed to play with them as was his usual routine. While he was in his room and his brothers were able to work and play independently, Mom spent time with Jack in the Bible, sharing the story of Joseph and his 11 angry brothers who did not appreciate their brother. It did not go well for them, and Jack spent a good time thinking through how he might end up just as bitter if he didn't focus on trusting God with his circumstances. With Mom's help, Jack was learning that brothers are a "gift" from the Lord.

Parent, how are you doing? Through these examples, has this helped to make sense of related consequences? Hopefully you now have a clear understanding of how to see the related "gift or privilege" in each circumstance, and thereby giving you unending options for effective consequence. As you discover the gifts and the privileges and the people related to the actions, you can be confident in finding your effective and heart-transforming consequence that will promote biblical choices and wisdom for your child.

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

3 John 14

Final Note: Remember, it is not the extensive length of time, or the severity of the consequence, but your love and faithful consistency that will help to grow your children in wisdom and discernment. They will be equipped to someday walk in the world without you, making good and godly choices, and receiving the blessings that come with those good choices.

Let us know if you have any questions, and we are always interested in how it's going! Feel free to contact us.