

Discovering

RELATED
CONSEQUENCES

to help in parenting



A TRAINING HEARTS ARTICLE. BY SHARON CANNAVO

*H*ow many times in the day, as your child has not followed through with an instruction, or has become entangled in a brawl with a sibling and you know he needs a consequence... do you wonder, what consequence? It's difficult in a busy day to stop and try to be creative about our discipline, right? We give them time out (which, let's face it, will never make a difference). Or we take the tablet away, or the X-box, but once those are gone for the day... now what do we do when there are a dozen more incidents that follow? It will often leave the parent feeling too overwhelmed, so the consequence is bypassed. Thereby... the child learns nothing, and the behaviors continue. So, how *can* a parent quickly discover a related consequence that will always be there, and will certainly be effective in training the child's heart? Well, first before we figure out how to discover related consequences, perhaps we need to define the term.

The Meaning of Related Consequence

When a child has transgressed (or sinned) by *thoughtless* disobedience, disrespect or entitlement (meaning he is not necessarily in rebellion towards the parent, and did not intentionally and/or blatantly disobey), 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 and bringing more peace to your day.

Now we are ready to ask the question... "How do we discover the related consequence in each random situation?" 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 gifts and privileges from the Father. We don't claim rights to these gifts. We are not owed or entitled to the gifts. And therefore, if our child's sinful attitude needs correction, the gift, or the privilege should be immediately removed. As we remove the gift or privilege, it helps to correct the child's thinking and allows him to increase in thoughtfulness and obedience, more able to resist the temptation in duplicating the sin in the future.

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 perfect 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.

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 bouncing 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 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 the privilege of using the couch (and/or other pieces of furniture involved in her behavior) from Stella. She will not be allowed to use the couch for any purpose for 2 days. 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 her new amazing outfit multiple times a day. 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. But, 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 to her own prideful desire. 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 of fasting from these outfits. In fact, Mom should pick 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 friends 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 their drinks. 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. 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 been so wound up that she has been unable to obey their verbal encouragements, and so they choose not to apply the related consequence of placing Brooke on quiet time for the rest of the meal, knowing in the state that her heart is in, she will not submit. Instead they apply a different related consequence. 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 cut her opportunity to be out for dinner short, 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.

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 and complains and cries when Mom

confirms that she will be reading from the book she chose. 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 accustomed to making decisions for herself, and has learned that she can disregard Mom’s authority in running the home. Mom knows the privilege to make independent choices should only be considered if the child is able to be responsible with the choices. It’s time to remove the “privilege” of choice for Gracie, until Mom can successfully work with her 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.



3. People

a. Parents

What child has come to the perfect understanding that their parents are a gift to them? Lol! 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 be in to 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, Mom? 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 me in appreciating the things I do for you, and 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. Furthermore, 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 a clean uniform, 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. Finally, Jack 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 explanations and examples has this helped to make sense of discipline? 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. Let us know how you do!

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

3 John 14