

Parenting and Consequences, Part 5 | change your consequence culture

I. You need to make sure you know and understand the biblical data.

- There are definitely two sides to this coin. Some people jump in before they really understand what they're doing, and the rest of us get the paralysis of analysis where we don't do anything until we believe we have it all figured out.
- Neither of those approaches is best, but can say with all certainty that the second approach is worst.

II. You need to make sure you understand how to wisely apply what you've learned.

- James 1:22-25
- It's one thing to have theoretical knowledge and understanding, but we need to know how to put it into practical use in our lives. I pray our last episode was very helpful in that regard.
- You need to commit to growing in your knowledge and understanding and wise application of biblical discipline.

III. You and your spouse need to make sure you're in agreement.

- Jesus said, *"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."*
- If you have both learned and understood the same material, it will be very important for you to have applicational agreement in at least one of two ways.
 - Agreement in method. This basically means that you're both on the same page theoretically and practically. But if you're having a hard time coming to terms on all of the finer points, you need to seek . . .
 - Agreement in trajectory with a willingness to tolerate appropriate differences. The idea here is that you both agree with God's commands and expectations, and that you're willing to allow the other to exercise their liberty in Christ-honoring discipline though you may — perhaps — take a different tact. Obviously, the husband's authority needs to be taken into account.

IV. You need to develop a new disciplinary plan.

- **You need a new motivation.** Your goal in parenting is to worship God. Your goal in disciplining is to worship God. You need to do it in His way for His reasons and in His power.
- **You need a new vocabulary.**
 - First on the list, you need to stop referring to your discipline as punishment. Just stop it.
 - Second, you need to get used to talking about the most important things. Primary Consequences, Spiritual Lessons, God's expectations, pleasing the Lord, the Bible — all of this needs to become a regular part of your family talk.
- **You need to have a process for determining biblical consequences.**
 - The key is to choose a consequences that clearly flows from and points back to not just the sin, but — more importantly — the lesson God wants to teach your child in this season of their life.
 - But you also should tailor it to your child so that it has maximum impact.

V. You need to teach your children what you've learned.

- Plan it out. Keep the conversation going as long as it takes for your kids to understand that something different is going to happen.
- **You need to teach your children about consequences.**
 - This should include consequences in general — the whole action/reaction nature of existence.
 - But you also need to teach them about biblical Primary Consequences. And then use those truths to help your kids see why it's so important for biblical Secondary Consequences.
- **You need to teach your children about punishment.**
 - It's not bad when the right people do it in the right way, and they need to understand what it is. However, they also need to understand that no one in the home has the right to punish anyone else for their sins — real or perceived.
- **You need to teach your children the difference between punishment and discipline.**
 - Along these lines, if you haven't already, you should teach your kids about the Parent's 5 Jobs. Those 5 jobs are the very warp and woof of biblical discipline.
- **You need to show your children that you and your spouse are in agreement.**
 - You don't want them thinking that this is a mom-thing or a dad-thing. That will breed favoritism issues as well as the age-old tactic of playing the parents against each other.

VI. You need to invite your children to partner with you in serving the Lord.

- Joshua 24:14-15
- Formal Invitation can be massively impactful. Our society is losing the significance of contracts and vows. But the Scripture is full of ceremonies and significant moments of decision-making where the weight of the choice was fully felt by all who were there. Even God made multiple vows all throughout the Bible. This is a good thing.
- But the formal moments can so easily be forgotten with time. That's why it's important to keep the conversation going with casual invitations.

VII. You need to clearly explain your plan for discipline.

- Don't leave them with more questions than answers. Allow them to think through what you're presenting and get any clarification they need.
- Bare minimum, you definitely need to explain the new vocabulary as well as the criteria you will use to determine a consequence.

VIII. You need to be consistent.

- Do your best to consistently work the new plan.
- When you fail, you need to be consistent in acknowledging your sin and repenting.
- Don't believe the "It's not working" lie. No one ever promised that changing your consequences structure would change your kids. In order to worship God, you need to give biblical consequences the way He outlines. This is about changing you, not your kids. This is about changing your worship. And if God is pleased to change your kids by using the changed-you to do it . . . amen.
- Do right regardless of how your kids respond.

IX. You need to teach your children to make a wise appeal.

- **Consider the truth.**
 - The biggest problem when kids don't like what's happening in their lives (consequences included) is that they compare what's happening to what they want to have happen. Honestly, that doesn't amount to a hill of beans. They're in the situation they're in because they cared more about what they wanted than about what really mattered — what God wanted.
 - Therefore, the truth of a situation refer to 2 main ideas: A. The truth includes the actual, factual events as they happened, and B. God's Word.
- **Communicate lovingly.**
 - It's important to start with the words "May I make a wise appeal?"
 - Having to start the appeal that way is a huge help to you and them. They need to carefully consider what's about to come out of their mouth, and that needs to be a sign to you that potentially valuable information is about to come your way.
 - Hopefully, you say, "Yes, you may." The child then communicates the truth of the situation respectfully, patiently, kindly, lovingly, graciously, etc.
 - Still, after your child has Considered the truth and Communicated lovingly, if they really want to glorify God, they need to be prepared to . . .
- **Comply with their parents.**
 - The Bible tells our children that they need to obey. No, they never have to sin, but it's not a sin to go to their room even if their parent's shouldn't have sent them.
 - Of course, this isn't an excuse for us to sin against God and our kids, but it is an important lesson for them to learn. Whether the appeal goes the way they want it to or not, they need to humbly and obediently be willing to comply.
 - Children rarely do a perfect appeal — especially when they're in trouble. If they make a good attempt, try to encourage their growth in that area by showing grace. However, sometimes they're just shrouding their manipulation or discontentment in a fake appeal. Often times the facts of the situation were exactly what you knew them to be, and your consequence was good. And they need to comply.

IX. You need to keep the conversation going.

- Don't stop talking. Discipleship requires conversation. And since this is likely a paradigm shift in your home, it's that much more important to keep the God-exalting goal in front of everyone's eyes.
- It will be nearly impossible to over-communicate the new plan. Talk about it, post reminders up all over the house or on your Celebration Wall.
- Talk about it before your children sin. Talk about it during the consequence process. Talk about it after the consequence is over and before they sin the next time.
- Keep it up. Remember, this is going to be a multiple-month long process to get to a new normal. Keep your eye on the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, and help your kids keep their eyes on the prize as well.

Bonus Point: Get help in this process. Especially if your children are older and your family has a history of punishment, pragmatism, and/or passivity . . . please get help. Don't go it alone. You may think it's easy to flip the paradigm upside down, but it's not. It can be very heavy. Please find a mature believer to help you through this process. Ask them to listen to these episodes; make sure you're all on the same page. You owe it to your God, and you owe it to your kids.