

Session 4

A Toolbox of Consequences

Summary of the Video (from the Leaders Guide, page 22)

“Seven categories of consequences provide tools for parents as they work on the hearts of their kids. Some children have deeply-rooted problems and need a variety of approaches in order to see significant change take place. Special emphasis on the heart shows parents how to use these tools most effectively. Included in this session is the one category that is highly effective but often overlooked.”

Consequences are Tools to Change the Heart

*Parents need a “toolbox” of consequences to choose from

*Don’t have a justice mentality about consequences---You did something wrong, so you **deserve the punishment.**

*Have a map mentality about consequences—How do I, as a parent, want to get my child from point A to a mature level at point B? How do I plot the course to get my child there?

*Sometimes the consequence gets his attention, motivates him, acts as a road sign or road block.

*Different consequences can bring out different kinds of change in a child.

Seven Tools in Your Toolbox

Tool 1: Natural Consequences

*This consequence just naturally happens. For example, your child plays rough with the cat, the cat scratches him; your child leaves his shoes outside in the rain, the shoes get wet.

*When the natural consequence happens, avoid giving a lecture and becoming angry.

*Better response: Come along side as a counselor or coach and empathize with the child.

*In Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus walks on water. Peter says, “Lord, if it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water.” ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.” This passage shows that Jesus did not let Peter fail completely (natural consequence was sinking). Instead he picked him up and together they walked back to the boat.

*In Luke 22:54-62, Peter denies Jesus three times. Scripture says, “Just as he (Peter) was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.” There was no other consequence except the natural consequence of shame that lying hurts someone else’s feeling.

*In the story about the two boys throwing rocks at each other, Joanne Miller describes another natural consequence. When one of the boys got hurt and had to be taken to the emergency room, the mom took both boys. The natural consequence was the boy that hurt the other one saw the pain his brother had to go through getting stitches.

*Avoid jumping in, rescuing a child and giving him a lecture. In this situation, the child avoids the natural consequence and has opportunity to resent the lecture.

*Get out of the way and don't say, "I told you so." Instead, let the child learn from the natural consequence. Your empathy draws you closer to the child's heart.

***Do not use natural consequences if it is going to damage the child or damage property or if it takes too long for the child to learn from the natural consequence.**

Tool 2: Logical Consequences

*This consequence relates logically to the event but is orchestrated by the parent.

*Use this if natural consequences would take too long. For example, if the child leaves his bike in the rain, it will take a long time before it rusts (the natural consequence). So, use a logical consequence, telling the child he won't be able to ride his bike for a couple of days.

*If a child is mean to a friend, a logical consequence would be the child could not play with his friend for the rest of the day.

*Parents have to use some planning if they are going to use logical consequences.

*Think of natural consequence vs. logical consequence this way: If you are driving too fast, a natural consequence is that you will have an accident; a logical consequence is that you will get a speeding ticket.

Tool 3: Restricting Freedom

*This consequence pulls the child back and takes away some of his privileges. Then the child must show he can be responsible with what little remains to have the privileges reinstated.

*An example: child not able to get along with another child—have that child stay with the parent for a length of time (the parent restricts the child's freedom down to being in the parent's presence)—whatever room the parent goes into the child goes with her. As the child shows the parent that he can do the right thing, then the privilege would extend to being allowed in the house; then to backyard (successively more as the child proves capable.)

*The parent would restrict freedom or expand freedom depending on how the child is doing.

*Another example: a three-year-old wanders off while in public, then his freedom is restricted by having to ride in the stroller.

*Another example: a ten-year-old does not come on time when called, then his freedom is restricted by having to check in every 15 minutes.

*The child needs to learn that if he wants to have privileges, he needs to be responsible.

*Allow the child to earn his privileges back. Be specific and clarify what the child needs to do to get the privileges back.

*Instead of taking privileges away for a period of time such as 3 days, one week, etc, say to your child, "I am taking that privilege away for a little while. In order for you to get the privilege back, you will need to show me that you are being more responsible."

***Earning privileges back is important so that we don't "provoke to anger" (Eph. 6:4).**

Tool 4: More Parental Control

*This consequence requires the parent to get more involved in his child's life and provide structure.

*One way to determine if you need to use this consequence is if your child is failing at something.

*If a child is failing, he is usually not motivated enough to learn from natural consequences.

*Parental control is so important because it gives the child the tool to be more successful. Parent provides the structure the child needs. Over time, as the parent pulls away, the child learns to stand on her own. This teaches the child how to be successful.

*An example of this consequence is the child taking piano lessons. The parent might sit at the piano and practice with the child, providing structure, motivation, and encouragement.

Tool 5: Spanking

*There are two different extremes on spanking: on one side -- every good parent needs to spank their kid; on the other side -- if you spank your kid you are going to raise emotionally crippled and violent children.

*Dr. Turansky and Joanne Miller advocate a position somewhere in the middle.

*Proverbs mentions using the rod on a child 5 times: 10:13, 13:24, 22:15, 23:13, 23:14; 29:15

*The other types of discipline mentioned in Prov. are warning, exhortation, rebuke & correction.

***If you spank your child out of anger, you will create relational problems with your child. You are modeling a dangerous use of force.**

*Use spanking in a controlled, calm manner as a consequence that would be appropriate for the “crime”. It may be a very quick way to the child’s heart. Remember that the goal of discipline is a change of heart.

*Three reasons to *not* using spanking: 1) If you have an anger problem, then use some other form of discipline; 2) If spanking is not working, discontinue using it; 3) If the child is not your child, then do not spank him.

*Spanking can be effective in young children, especially if they are defiant. Remember that the goal is trying to touch the child’s heart.

*Also, remember that children benefit from a variety of tools in the “toolbox”. Be creative and don’t always gravitate towards the same consequence.

Tool 6: Other Leaders and Authorities

*Others, such as coaches, teachers, etc., have an influence on our children. Take advantage of the other leaders of authority in your children’s lives.

*Instead of stepping in when a coach/teacher disciplines your child, use this as a teachable moment to come along side the child and help him learn how to respond to other leaders and those in authority.

*In the skit, the parent tells the child that the coach has called and said that she has an attitude problem and it is affecting the other players. The parent says something like “you have a problem in this area. You can’t treat people that way and it is my job to help you change and teach you something.” Since this is an attitude problem, the parent tells the child to think of three kind things she can say to her coach the next day.

Tool 7: Practice Doing the Right Thing—The positive side of the toolbox

*The parent needs to teach the child how to do the right thing and then have the child practice it

*For example, if a child is speaking disrespectfully to the parent, the parent says, “The way you are talking to me is disrespectful. Could you say that the right way? Think about it and respond the right way.”

*An example: “I have 5 instructions on cleaning the house. For practice, I am going to give you two instructions for things to do and if you respond with a wrong attitude I will give you the three other things to do. The first instruction is to clean the toilet.” Have the child practice the right way to respond. Make sure this is clear – more tasks if the response is not appropriate.

Summary

*Parents need to plan the consequence instead of reacting to the problem on the spot.

*As the parent sees the problem developing, plan the consequence carefully. Remember: What does my child need to learn? What is in my child’s heart?