



RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

LESSON FOURTEEN

Follow-up (As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Responsibility.)

1. How have we improved in our efforts to take responsibility for our own thoughts, words and actions?
2. Do we blame others less?
3. Are we eliminating excuses? Can anyone tell us about a time they didn't make an excuse for something they did wrong?

Concept

In life there are rules--at home, at school and in the community. It's important to have rules in a family for order and peace to exist. When all family members help make the rules, children take the responsibility of helping to set their own limits. Families should gather together and decide on family rules. Then the rules need to be obeyed by all family members.

A consequence is what happens as a result of a choice. When rules are obeyed, good consequences usually follow. When rules are disobeyed, unpleasant consequences follow.

After creating family rules, everyone can decide on the consequences for disobedience. To best change behavior, whenever possible, the consequence should relate to the rule that was disobeyed.

Example: Child disobeys and returns home late after dinner is over. Possible consequences are that he fixes his own dinner, or waits until morning to eat.

Example: Child forgets to take his homework to school. A possible consequence is that he receives a lower grade, then he does extra-credit work to raise his grade.

Consequences can be used inappropriately. For example, if a student's grades are unacceptable, and the consequence is removal from the one school activity that the student likes, then he may have even less desire to go to school. It would be more appropriate to have the consequence for falling grades be extra study time in the evening, under parental supervision. When deciding on rules and consequences as a family, be careful to make them reasonable and do-able.

When children help create family rules and consequences, when they disobey, they are

disobeying rules which they once agreed upon. Then parents can simply empathize with their children's bad decisions, and remind them of the previously agreed upon consequence which they'll now experience because of the wrong choices they made.

When it becomes necessary for parents to enforce rules and consequences, it is best to be kind and firm at the same time. Gentle words and loving actions show kindness. Consistent follow-through with appropriate consequences shows firmness. An example of firmness: "I'm willing to have Jerry stay overnight only if both of you agree to go to bed by 10 o'clock." There needs to be appropriate follow-through if the children disobey. This could mean that the parents take Jerry home or he isn't allowed to spend the night again.

It is important to understand that obedience to rules prepares family members for life outside the home, and obedience will bring a greater measure of peace and happiness inside the home.

Family Survey Review

Statement #14. **We all help make the rules in our family.**

- Children, do you like the idea of helping to make the rules?
- Will it be easier to obey rules that you helped make? Why?
- What should consequences teach us?

Story

The Canadian North lands have only two seasons: winter and July. As the back roads begin to thaw, they become muddy and vehicles traveling through the back country leave deep ruts. The ground freezes hard during the winter months, and the highway ruts become a part of the traveling challenges. For vehicles entering this undeveloped area during the winter, there is a sign which reads, "Driver, choose carefully which rut you drive in because you'll be in it for the next 20 miles."

Choose carefully the path your life takes. Once you choose, your choices often will control you. It will be difficult to get out of your "ruts." There are consequences in life for the choices we make.

Discussion

1. What are some rules at school? At work? In the community?
2. What happens when those rules are broken?
3. Are people usually happier when they obey the rules? Why?

Activity

With everyone helping, we're going to create some family rules. Then we'll decide on consequences for obedience or disobedience to the rules.

- *Have one person write down all ideas suggested.*
- *Everyone should have a chance to share their ideas about what would be good rules for your family.*
- *Remember to keep your rules few and simple.*

Example: One family member may say, "I think we should have a rule of no hitting in our family." We'll write that down. Then someone might say, "We should each keep our bedroom clean." We will get everyone's ideas for rules. (Remember to be kind, and make only positive comments to each other.) Then we'll talk about which ideas should become our family rules.

Now let's make a list of our family rules and display them somewhere in our home.

Then let's discuss the consequences for obeying our family rules.

*Examples: The consequence for not hitting one another is helping to create peace and a loving atmosphere in our home.
A consequence for keeping bedrooms clean is a tidy home which contributes to family peace, order and well-being.*

Next, let's decide on the consequences for disobeying the rules.

*Example: A consequence for hitting would be to apologize, then go away from the family for a few minutes to think about being kind next time.
A possible consequence for not keeping a bedroom clean is staying in the messy room and not participating in enjoyable activities until the room is clean.*

Suggestions for Family Rules

1. Be Kind

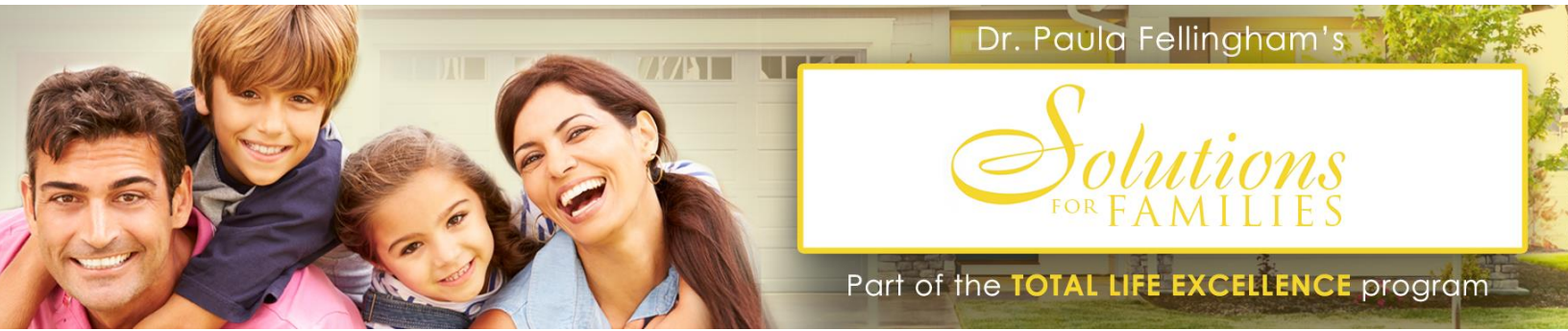
Includes using a kind tone of voice, helping one another, eliminating criticism and unacceptable words, and treating others as you'd like to be treated.

1. Obey

Includes obedience to all of the accepted behaviors for your family.

Examples:

- 1. Say "please" and "thank you."*
- 2. Talk, don't whine.*
- 3. Love, don't hit.*
- 4. Walk, don't run in the house.*



5. *Call if you'll be later than the curfew agreed upon.*

Assignment

2. *Make a real effort to obey your family rules and to have good attitudes when dealing with a consequence. Parents, try to be loving, firm and consistent.*
2. *Read the Additional Solution For Success: Family Values.*
3. *If time allows, choose one or more of the activities on the Solution Suggestion list to do as a family.*

ACTIVITY

FAMILY VALUES

Each of us lives by a set of values that guides our behavior, helps us make decisions, and tells us what is right and wrong. We display our values everyday by the way we speak and act. The decisions we make, the way we use our time, and how we spend our money all reveal our values.

“My son just doesn’t have any values,” complained an annoyed father. “Well,” said his friend, “just what are your family’s values?” “Ah, ummm, well, uhh...” the first man stammered, “I guess I just haven’t thought about it that way.”

Often we haven’t really thought about our values. We haven’t thought about why people believe and act differently than we do. Discussing the differences in our beliefs can help us understand one another. Understanding our differences can promote a healthy tolerance for other people.

The rules we have in our families are a result of our values--the things we think are really important. It’s vital that everyone knows the difference between what’s really important and what doesn’t matter too much. Is not getting a haircut as important as not going to school? What can be negotiated and what is non-negotiable?

In some families, everything is negotiable. In other families, nothing is negotiable. In still other families, what is negotiable and what isn’t changes from day to day.

It is possible to be flexible and still be firmly based in solid values. The key is to decide what values are strictly non-negotiable, as opposed to the things each family member can decide on their own. There are certain issues that require absolute obedience. President Abraham Lincoln said in his last public address, “Important principles may and must be inflexible.” These inflexible rules need to be clearly defined and understood by all family members. On less important issues family members may choose for themselves. Many families quarrel about things that aren’t on the “really important” list, and parents spend time being irritated unnecessarily. First parents, then families together, need to decide on important rules that must be obeyed and then “don’t sweat the small stuff.”

Today people sometimes avoid declaring right from wrong. “After all,” they say, “everyone has the right to their own ideas, and who is to say that parents should impose their thinking on their

children?” Parents may argue that they don’t want to require a lot of “do’s” and don’ts.” However, families who do not have a clear core of moral values deprive their children of a solid basis for approaching life. Children want and need boundaries. They need to be taught that in life there are principles of truth which, if lived, will bring happiness. If those principles, or moral values, are not a part of your life, the consequence is unhappiness. People in strong families are not afraid to talk about values. They don’t crumble if everyone doesn’t agree with their point of view. They know where they stand and they’re willing to be recognized for it.

Children from such families are able to move into society and do what they know is right, not just what others say they should. The more candid the discussion of values in the home, the better prepared family members are to act in harmony with their own standards. If decisions are made not just on the basis of what is easiest, cheapest, fastest, or what will “pay off,” but what would be the right thing to do, children develop a higher sense of moral behavior. Such children would not have the same fuzzy thinking a college student did who explained that he had stolen a bike because “it wasn’t locked.” To this student his behavior was the fault of someone else. When people behave according to a set of clear standards, their sense of self-worth and self-respect is elevated. We define ourselves by our values.

Of course, the most important way to teach good moral values is by the example set in the home. Albert Schweitzer said, “There are three ways to teach a child. The first is by example. The second is by example. And the third is by example.” Actions speak louder than words. What we do carries more weight than all the warnings and admonitions we can give. The poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “What you are is ringing so loudly in my ears I can’t hear what you’re saying.” To the best of our ability, we need to live the values we believe.

SOLUTION SUGGESTIONS

CHOICES

1. *As a family, discuss each family member's beliefs on an important issue. Talk about how our beliefs determine our actions.*
3. *Decide as a family on rules and logical consequences for breaking the rules.*
4. *Parents, by your example show that challenges can be opportunities for growth.*
5. *Children, set individual goals to take responsibility for your thoughts, words and actions.*
6. *Set a family goal to prevent problems by being kind to one another.*
7. *During the coming week, each person in the family do something which will help make your family your closest friends.*
8. *For at least one week, each person make an effort to wait until the time is right before confronting a family member about a problem.*
9. *Parents, during the coming month, allow children to fail occasionally so they can learn from their experiences.*
10. *Parents, during the coming week, be creative in your problem-solving. Example: When a child disobeys, tell him a story about another young person who did the same thing. Let the story teach your child a lesson.*
11. *As a family discuss the importance of dealing with problems as soon as they arise, and not allowing problems to build up. An ideal time to discuss family concerns is at the weekly family meeting.*
12. *As a family, try to keep a sense of humor. At the dinner table, share humorous experiences with family members.*
13. *Be united as a family. Believing that you can solve any problem or meet any challenge together, talk about a family problem, and discuss possible solutions.*
14. *Create a loving atmosphere in your home by serving one another. Each person do one kind*

deed for another family member this week.

15. *Do a kind deed for a member of your extended family.*
16. *Make a family plaque which reads, "Love one another." Hang it in your home.*
17. *As a family, read a story of a person who overcame great challenges in his or her life.*
18. *Simplify your family rules, if necessary.*
18. *As a family discuss possible neighbors or friends who may need some assistance, and schedule a time to help them.*
19. *At a weekly family meeting, make a list of some of your family's blessings. Discuss the importance of having "attitudes of gratitude" in your family, and try to focus on the good things in your life.*
20. *Individually and as a family, look for someone who needs a friend, and during the coming month, take steps to make that person your friend.*