

***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR
LUTHERAN SCHOOL
PRESENTS:
PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Good Parents Don't Give Warnings

Think of yourself tooling down the freeway at 70 mph in a 55 mph zone. You see the multi-colored lights in your rear-view mirror, and you think of one thing and one thing only: "I'm going to get a ticket."

The cop saunters up to your car, nice as can be, writes the ticket, bids you adieu, and is on his merry way. He offers no hysterics, no anger, no threats, just courtesy, and a little slip of paper—the consequences of your breaking the law.

As an adult, you would never think of telling him, "I'll be good, officer. Honest, I won't speed anymore," and having him say, "Well, okay. If you'll be good, I won't write you a ticket." That is the stuff of fantasy. But how often do we allow the fantasy world to become reality for our children?

Jerry comes home late.

Mom, thinking she's consequential, says, "We'll talk about this in the morning. Off to your room."

Jerry says, "I'm sorry I'm late. Time just got away from us. I promise it won't happen again."

And what does Mom say but, "Oh well, okay. Are you sure you'll be in before curfew next time you go out? Or are you going to keep me worrying until all hours of the morning? I've told you before what's going to happen if you don't remember to get in on time."

"I know, Mom. I won't do it anymore."

"Well, okay," Mom says, thinking her problems are over. "Go to bed."

The real world doesn't operate on the multiple warning system and neither should parents. Parents who give a lot of warnings raise children who don't behave until they've had a lot of warnings.

The real world operates on consequences. If we do a lousy job at work, our boss doesn't take away our VCR. He fires us. By allowing teens to feel the results of naturally occurring consequences, parents then allow teens to learn about their responsibilities and their behavior. Consequences lead to self-examination and thought.

Mom, after seeing Jerry come home late, can handle the situation in the following way, allowing consequences to fall.

After Jerry comes in, Mom says, "I really worried about you. I'm glad you're home. Go on to bed and we'll talk about this when we're calm."

Then Mom doesn't say anything more about it, until the next time Jerry wants to go out and Mom drops the bomb: "Oh, Honey, I think you ought to stay home. I'm not up to worrying about you tonight," says Mom. The consequences fall like a bolt out of the blue.

***The Real World Doesn't Operate on the
Multiple Warning System***