



# Creating Effective Consequences for Sexually Acting Out

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## 1. Setting Consequences versus God's Grace

God punished, corrected and disciplined his people for one reason. LOVE. He wouldn't leave them in whatever mess they created. He assigned consequences to their rebellious behaviour and their stubborn hearts. You see, who God loves he disciplines. It is as sign that He cares for you. It is a sign that you matter to Him. I dare you to look at all the references to "DISCIPLINE" in His Word. His discipline and correction is all over the Scriptures.

Engaging in setting consequences for your selfish behaviour is a form of **Self-Discipline**. Your life matters. Honouring God matters. You are admitting that your relapse behaviour has to change. And **self-discipline shows self-respect**. You are treating your life like it matters. That YOU matter. You want to fully honour God.

Further, you are admitting that your selfish acting out relapsing is already having many grave consequences – it is traumatizing the one you say you love the most. Your spouse. Why should you get to relapse and SHE PAY THE PRICE???. That makes no sense. Why not YOU PAY THE PRICE for your failures? Grow up. Man up. Move beyond emotional adolescence.

Remember: **Boys Make Excuses – Men Make Changes!**

Go ahead and ask your wife how long she wants to keep being gracious. Should she keep extending GRACE to you even after ongoing relapses. That's crazy. That is the greatest sign of self-centeredness. You want HER to extend grace to you while you act out. Why should she?

And, regarding God's Grace. Your disobedience doesn't impact your salvation. God's amazing grace is solid. But your closeness to Him is impacted by your selfish disobedience. It grieves Him. So, you commit to make changes **out of GRATITUDE** for what He has done for you. Check out Romans 6:1,2: *"Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?"*

## Setting Consequences Shows Self-Discipline!

Let His Word in **Hebrews 12:5-12** set the tone:

*<sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children?<sup>[a]</sup> He said, “My child,<sup>[a]</sup> don’t make light of the LORD’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you. <sup>6</sup> For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.”<sup>[f]</sup>*

*<sup>7</sup> As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? <sup>8</sup> If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. <sup>9</sup> Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?<sup>[a]</sup>*

*<sup>10</sup> For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.*

*<sup>12</sup> So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. <sup>13</sup> Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.*

Let His Word Sink in from **1 Corinthians 9:24-27:**

### **The Need for Self-Discipline**

*<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

## **2. Determining Relapse Consequences**

- a. Relapses – sexually acting out in any way – **are crushing the ones you love.** Therefore, as part of a real deterrent, relapses need to cost you. You need to choose to **pay for your selfishness** by losing things that you enjoy. That's why it's called a consequence.

- b. Consequences are designed to be a **preventive measure** against any further acting out. You will have in the back of your mind what it will cost you if you re-engage in any wrong behavior.
- c. Good consequences are **best implemented immediately** and should be able to be done within 2-3 days as much as possible.
- d. You need to **set the consequences for yourself** with the help of your accountability partner as a sounding board. Is this a fair consequence? Is it too harsh or too meaningless? Your spouse doesn't set them.
- e. Consequences need to be **really specific activities** including the duration of the consequence (examples below).
- f. You will record and **share a copy** of the consequences you choose with your spouse and your wingman. This increases your accountability. Your spouse will not be your cop. Your wingman will.
- g. You **need to "man-up"**, accept and fulfill your consequences as soon as possible. Don't wimp out, make excuses or ignore them.

### 3. Consequence Ideas to Get You Thinking:

- **Losing time with his buddies:** miss an outing for a meal, fishing, hunting, golf, hockey, ball and the like. Tell them why you can't go.
- **Losing alone time** including any and all of his solo leisure activities, working out, running, reading etc. During this alone time that you lost, do at least one additional family work project or chore from an agreed list.
- **Selling his smart phone** and to returning to a "dumb" phone or flip-phone with no data plan.
- **Sale of any of your favourite items:** whether you have to lose it for a time, a season and actually sell it. Put your motorcycle, canoe, a gun, sports car, quad or the like on the line as a consequence. Name it specifically.
- **Volunteering time** at a soup kitchen, a senior's care home or cleaning the community and other service activities for a few times or at least a few hours.
- **Donating some of his 'play' money** not family money to a worthy cause.

- **Putting money away** from either the sale of items or personal play money into an *'our account'* – one that is fully under the discretion of his spouse to create meaningful couple outings later.
- **Loss of favourite drink** for a period of time – like no coffee for 3 weeks.
- **Delaying, cancelling or suspending privileges** like trips, purchases, season tickets, etc.
- Reporting to and **meeting with his pastor** that you have relapsed.
- **BRAINSTORM** other ideas with your accountability partner.
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#### 4. Effective Consequences to Show Commitment to Recovery

- a. You report to your wingman and your spouse about the relapse and the nature of it within 24 hours of it happening.
- b. You report to your accountability partner within 24 hours as well who in turn, calls your wife confirming her awareness of the fall too.
- c. You must report to your ReGroup small group.
- d. You must confirm to your spouse what the consequence is for your acting out.
- e. You need to accept the consequences you made and carry them out willingly and quickly.
- f. No exceptions – No excuses – No whining!

## **5. When Facing One of Your Relapses:**

- a. Remind your spouse it is not THEIR fault. You need to own it and deal with it.
- b. You seek the Lord for his forgiveness, renewal and ongoing strength.
- c. You need to apologize to your spouse for your failure asking for their grace to continue to love and stand with you through the recovery.
- d. Review with your SAP what you could do different based on knowing how you were triggered and relapsed this time.

## **6. Choose Your Consequences. Write out 5 that can be discussed with your Wingman and your spouse.**

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