



Clanking Chains: Principles from the Law of Volitional Responsibility: Thought, Motivation, Decision, & Action; Deliberate & Impulsive Acts; Prov 16:18; 22:8; Hosea 8:7a; Gal 6:7; Col 3:25

- 4) When these wrong decisions have ramifications, the child must never be allowed to project blame upon others. Volitional decisions are the catalysts of a cause-and-effect series of events.
- 5) Thus children must be held responsible for bad decisions through proper, agreed upon disciplinary procedures.
- 6) Children are unbelievers. Both believers and unbelievers are accountable under the law of volitional responsibility. This includes the commission of sins in three categories and the violation of the laws of divine establishment.
- 7) When parents set house policies then the child is accountable to these rules although violation of them is not necessarily a sin.
- 8) For example, parents may set 8 o'clock as their child's bedtime and he is held responsible for being in bed by then. But there also may be a rule that all toys are picked up and clothes hung in the closet before he goes to bed. Therefore, delaying his cleanup procedure until 7:55 causes him to be ten minutes late getting to bed. This is not a sin. But it is a violation of the laws of divine establishment associated with that household.
- 9) This is also not necessarily disobedience but poor time management and thus bad judgment. Children must be taught to think ahead and to endure consequences if they do not get things done on time.
- 10) Parents need to remember that the law of volitional responsibility applies to four categories of life: thinking, motivation, decision, and action.
- 11) They must learn to evaluate the thinking of their child. Was the bedtime curfew missed by simply being distracted? Was it bad judgment? Or was there an arrogant mental attitude of disrespect for the policy?
- 12) Each of these is a violation that must be disciplined. But when the mental attitude that motivates the violation is identified as arrogance then the parents must begin to watch for potential rebellion.
- 13) Children will find all manner of excuses to delay deadlines. Life is filled with distractions and unexpected circumstances. This is to be understood by the child and he must learn to plan ahead so that there is time to deal with these exigencies when they occur.
- 14) When excuse-making becomes successful in childhood then this behavioral pattern is facilitated in adulthood. He doesn't show up for work on time, he can't complete projects on time, he can't even keep appointments on time. This is completely unprofessional.
- 15) But more than this, it is an arrogant self-absorption that betrays an attitude that (1) rules do not apply to him, (2) deadlines don't matter, and (3) other people's time is not important.



- 16) One of the major ways of developing order in the soul is insistence on time management. We have studied time in the past and we won't go there right now. But the capacity of a person to manage his life—personal, professional, married, family, and spiritual—depends greatly on his ability to manage time.
- 17) So failure to manage time is an example of a disciplinary problem that does not necessarily involve sin unless an arrogant mental attitude is determined to be the cause.
- 18) Regardless, wrong thinking results in wrong motivation which produces wrong decisions which lead to wrong actions.
- 19) Wrong thinking and wrong motivation creates a self-imposed condition from which wrong decisions and wrong actions result.
- 20) Wrong decisions are the willful assent of the volition to follow through on wrong motivation by committing wrong actions. These wrong actions are devised by thinking in the soul, they are inspired from motivations in the soul, and they are committed following decisions in the soul.
- 21) This trifecta has a couple of inevitable payoffs: (1) the person who commits wrong actions can do so deliberately bringing on self-induced misery or (2) impulsively bringing on self-indulged misery.
- 22) Deliberate wrong actions originate from wrong decisions based on wrong motivation. The motivation may be from bad judgment, e.g., poor time management, or from arrogance, e.g., disrespect for house rules. The punishment is self-induced.
- 23) Impulsive wrong actions are spontaneous and impetuous. They circumvent motives and decisions and are related to lust patterns and self-gratification. This child is late to bed because what he wants to do is more important than submitting to the system. Thus he ignores the rule in favor of his own self-absorbed desires.
- 24) The time to prevent these kinds of motivations, decisions, and actions from becoming habitual is in early childhood. If not then the problems of messy rooms and late bedtimes will eventually be exchanged for a disordered life and violations of rules that far exceed the impact of getting to bed on time.
- 25) Several verses identify the problems associated with the law of volitional responsibility:

Proverbs 16:18 - Arrogance goes before destruction and a self-righteous superiority of spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 22:8 - He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his punishment will surely come.

Hosea 8:7a - They sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind.

Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap.

Colossians 3:25 - He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.