



**Consequences:** “outcomes or results of the choices we make.”

**A** (us) + **B** (choices we make) = **C** (consequences)

### Truths for Life:

- (1.) *God is completely in control (Psalm 115:3), and He designed us to decide (Acts 2:22-24).*
- (2.) *We can't control other people's choices because we're not God.*
- (3.) *We can influence other people's choices, but we can only control our own choices.*
- (4.) *Every choice we make impacts someone else.*
- (5.) *We are free to make choices, but we are not free from our choices' consequences.*
- (6.) *Consequences are a part of life, there are good and bad consequences. . . but God still shows grace.*

### **BATTER'S BOX**

Here is a great mystery: *God is completely in control of our choices and we are completely responsible for our choices!* Yes, God has given us the power to choose, but our free will is still inside the limits of God's control. All of our choices are controlled choices. Because God holds us fully responsible for the choices that we make, God wants our choices to teach us responsibility. “Choices that teach responsibility must have clearly defined limits (or boundaries). The goal is to set boundaries while offering movement (choice) to (people) who have either too much or too little control in other aspects of their lives. . . Think of choice as being like a batter's box on a baseball field.” If the batter is going to play the game and hit the ball, he's got to step inside the boundary lines of the batter's box. “The lines defining the box represent. . . (boundaries). Within the box (boundaries) hitters are allowed to move up or back (choice). . . **Too few choices** can lead to rebellion or dependency, with (people) not getting opportunities to practice making their own decisions. **Too few. . . (boundaries)** can lead to narcissism, because (people) may believe they can have whatever they want.” (*Discipline with Dignity*, pg. 27)

### Why is **The Plan of Consequences** necessary?

- First, God is “not a God of confusion but of peace” (*1 Corinthians 14:33*).

God is not saying He isn't in control of confusion! God is in control whether there is confusion or peace (*Psalm 115:3*). Rather, God is saying that peace is who He is, and confusion is not who He is. ***In order that God may be clearly seen in Bethany Youth, our gatherings will pursue peace, not confusion.*** This is where **The Plan of Consequences** comes into play! Planned consequences can decrease confusion because they show the consequence of a choice before the choice is even made. Planned consequences can increase peace because they draw a boundary line between order and chaos. If there are no planned consequences, there is anarchy.

- Second, consequences are one of the greatest teachers God has given us in the classroom of life.

Consequences show us many things: they show us that we make **mistakes**, that we're **deeply flawed**, and that we're **in need of fixing**. They teach us that we are **responsible** for our choices. They motivate us to **fix the situation**. They remind us of the **big picture** that our choices can have consequences in three realms: the realm of life (here on earth) and the realms of eternity (heaven and hell). The controlled choices that we make become our lives, and our lives become our destinies. God really cares about our choices because so much is at stake for us (*Romans 2:6-8*)!

BATTER'S BOX = ROOTS FOR LIVES TO THRIVE



Baseball is a very helpful analogy for **The Plan of Consequences!** The boundaries (or the batter's box) laid down for Bethany Youth are the **Roots for Lives to Thrive: Community, Integrity, Respect, and Love.**

## STRIKE 3! YOU'RE OUTTA HERE!

In baseball, if the batter steps outside of the batter's box during the pitch, the umpire will always call a strike. In Bethany Youth, if youth step outside the batter's box (Roots for Lives to Thrive), the Y.L.T. will. . . (1.) **Show mercy.** *Mercy is when you don't get what you deserve.* In this case, youth deserve a strike if they step outside the batter's box (Roots for Lives to Thrive). But because God is rich in showing us mercy (*Ephesians 2:4*), the Y.L.T. prays that we are rich in showing youth mercy!

OR (2.) **Call a strike.** \*Strikes always restart at each event unless youth get strike 3 or if they are ejected.\*

 **STRIKE 1!** Youth receive a verbal warning from the Y.L.T.

 **STRIKE 2!** Youth receive a second verbal warning from the Y.L.T. Youth may be. . .

- A.) Taken out of the activity temporarily.
- B.) Taken out of the activity completely.
- C.) Told to have a 1-on-1 conversation with a youth leader nearby.
- D.) Told to move to another spot in the room.
- E.) Separated from the person they are distracting.

 **STRIKE 3! YOU'RE OUTTA HERE!** Youth leave the group, and parent(s) are called.

### \*Different Scenarios after Strike 3\*:

1.) The Y.L.T. **TALKS** with a parent on the phone. The parent(s) decides that. . .

- A.) The youth must immediately leave Bethany's property and go to a place chosen by the parent,
- B.) The youth will be immediately taken home by a youth leader if possible, or
- C.) The youth will be immediately separated from the group and will continue to be separated from the group until a parent comes as soon as possible for pickup OR until the event is over.

2.) The Y.L.T. **CAN'T TALK** with a parent on the phone. The YLT leaves a voicemail if possible.

The youth will be immediately separated from the group and will continue to be separated from the group until a parent comes as soon as possible for pickup OR until the event is over.

3.) The youth **LEAVES** Bethany's property without their parent's permission.

The Y.L.T. will immediately call the parent and let them know their youth has left Bethany's property.



## Ejected from the Game:

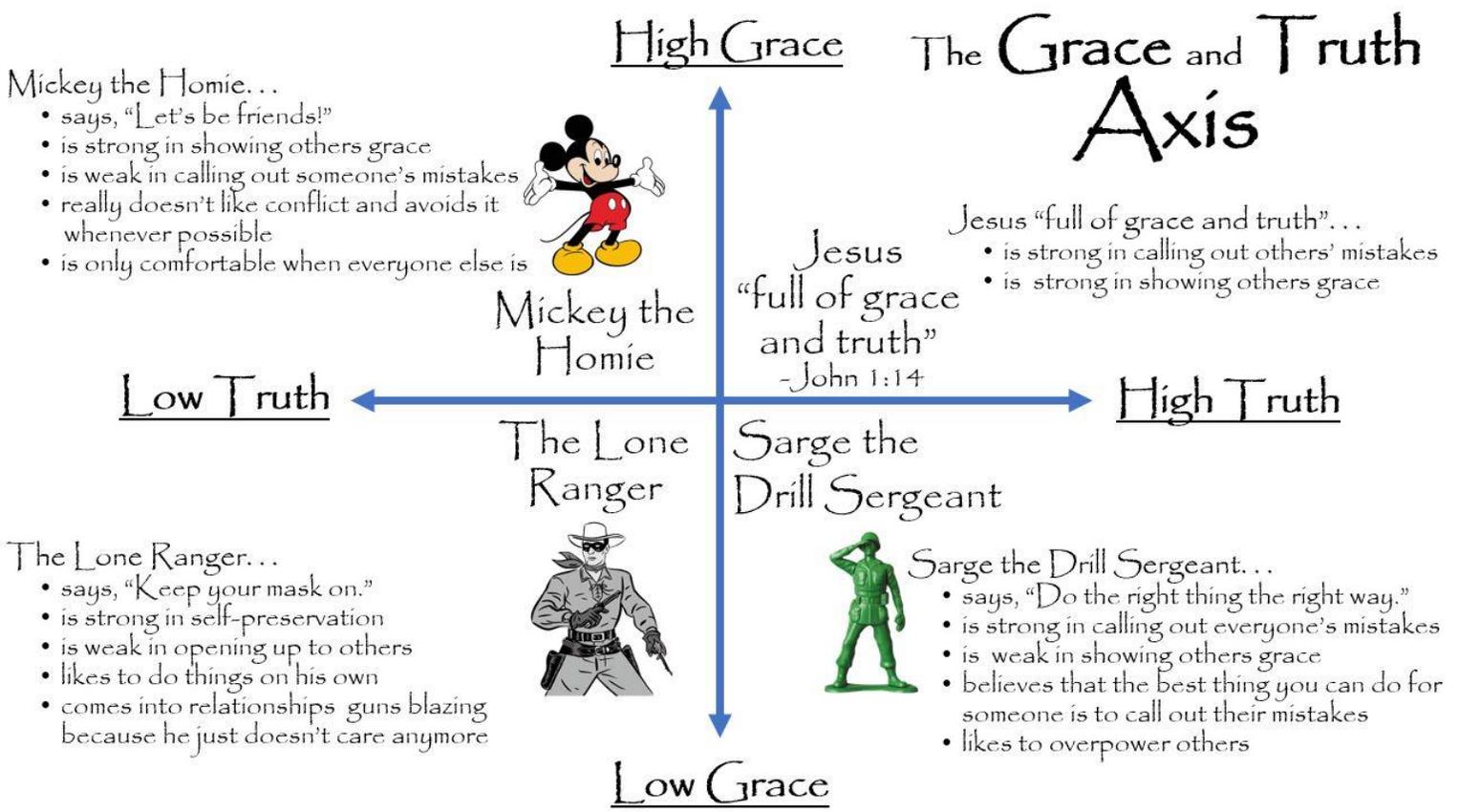
In baseball, when players are ejected, they must leave the field immediately. Likewise, in Bethany Youth, the Y.L.T. do not always have to give “Strike 1!”, “Strike 2!”, and “Strike 3!” before ejecting youth from an event immediately. For example, if youth are a threat to others or themselves, the Y.L.T. will immediately consider the following: ejecting the youth from the event, calling 9-1-1, calling parent(s), and doing whatever it takes to keep everyone safe.



## Play another Day?

In baseball, if players strike out or get ejected, they may get to play another day. Likewise, in Bethany Youth, any youth that has struck out or gotten ejected from the group may get a second chance to rejoin the group. **A second chance is called grace!** *Mercy is not getting what we deserve; grace is getting what we don't deserve.* Because God has given us “grace upon grace” (*John 1:16*) in Jesus Christ, the Y.L.T. prays that we show youth “grace upon grace”! God hasn't given us sinners a second chance. . . He's given us third, fourth, and many more chances to be restored to Himself through Jesus! *Because God gives us the grace of many chances, the ultimate goal of the The Plan of Consequences is restoration, not elimination.* How can we not show others mercy and grace after God has done the same to us?

But God wants us to be filled with more than just grace. . . He also wants us to be filled with truth. Because Jesus was “filled with grace and truth” (*John 1:14*), the Y.L.T. prays that we are also filled with grace and truth. If the Y.L.T. is filled with grace, then we will be strong in showing youth grace. If the Y.L.T. is filled with truth, then we will also be strong in calling out youth's mistakes, and our tool to do this is **The Plan of Consequences**. God doesn't want the Y.L.T. to be like Mickey the Homie, the Lone Ranger, or Sarge the Drill Sergeant. God wants the Y.L.T. to be like Jesus!





## Plan A or Plan B

After youth strike out or are ejected from Bethany Youth, the Y.L.T. chooses Plan A or Plan B.

### Plan A.) A process of restoration is currently possible.

The Y.L.T. will first consider the youth's current situation. If a process of restoration is possible, the Youth & Young Adults Director will reach out to the youth and their parent(s) with a process for possible restoration. The Y.L.T. will NOT be expecting *perfection* from youth, but we WILL be expecting the youth to show progress in relationships before there is official restoration. The Y.L.T. may choose one or more of the following ways for youth to show relationship progress:

- 1.) Sincerely apologizing to everyone involved in the incident.
- 2.) Participating in church or community service.
- 3.) Meeting up with the Youth & Young Adults Director/the Y.L.T. to talk and pray.

**Situation 1.)** *If youth show progress in relationships*, the Y.L.T. will next consider making the youth's restoration to Bethany Youth official. If this happens, the Youth & Young Adults Director will reach out to the youth and their parent(s) with the good news that the youth's restoration to Bethany Youth is official! The Youth & Young Adults Director will then invite the youth to come to the next Bethany Youth event. **\*Youth begin the next Bethany Youth event with a strike count of zero.\***

**Situation 2.)** *If youth do NOT show progress in relationships*, then the Y.L.T. will next consider pausing the youth's restoration to Bethany Youth. If this happens, the Youth & Young Adults Director will reach out to the youth and their parent(s) with the news that the youth's restoration to Bethany Youth has been paused. Youth are no longer invited to be part of Bethany Youth. **\*Youth keep their strike count of three or their ejection status until/if their restoration is made official.\*** Paused restoration does not mean that restoration can't be continued in the future! God is able to change anyone!

### Plan B.) A process of restoration is currently unwise.

The Y.L.T. will consider the youth's current situation. If a process of restoration is currently unwise, the youth's restoration to Bethany has been paused. The Youth & Young Adults Director will reach out to the youth and their parent(s) with this news. Youth are no longer invited to be part of Bethany Youth. **\*Youth keep their strike count of three or their ejection status until/if their restoration is made official.\*** Paused restoration does not mean that restoration can't be continued in the future! God is able to change anyone!

## PLAY BALL!

We've all made wrong choices and experienced their consequences, right? You live and you learn that no one is perfect. God Himself said that, "There is no one righteous, not even one" (*Romans 3:10*). **God doesn't want us to place the crushing weight of the expectation of perfection on ourselves or on other people.** He even says that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (*1 John 1:8*). Spoiler alert: no future, cleaned-up, put-together version of ourselves can achieve perfection either! God doesn't love a future version of us more than our past or present selves. All of us can find this truth freeing . . . even those of you who don't believe in God! It's ultimately not about our perfection. . . it's all about Jesus' perfection that He worked and earned for us in our place. **When we expect perfection from others, we crush them with a weight that only Jesus can carry.** Because we don't want to crush others with the expectation of perfection, we say these things instead: "It's ok to not be ok, as long as we don't stay that way"<sup>1</sup> and "Come as you are, but don't leave as you came." We need to remember that, "Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Chandler

<sup>2</sup> Oscar Wilde