"Or else!"

By Chaplain Bruce Vaughan

If you are a parent, then you've probably said it to your child on more than one occasion. Or, as a child, you probably have had it said to you by a parent numerous times. It is a warning that is expressed in various ways, but what it basically amounts to is this: "You'd better do what I say, or else!"

Here are a couple of examples of what a parent might say to a child: "You need to come home on time, or else you will be grounded." Or, "You had better finish your homework, or else there will be no video games." I'm sure you can come up with a few examples of your own. Essentially, there are two parts to this warning. First, there is the command, "You'd better do what I say," and then the threatened consequence, "or else!"

Anyone who is a parent knows that there is an upside and a downside to this method of motivating our children to obey the rules or make the right choices. The upside is that children learn early on there are consequences to their actions. The downside is that our children may end up doing what we say, not because it is the right thing to do, but rather because they are more afraid of the consequences… of the "or else."

Children don't always think about how their behavior will affect others or even themselves, and so they need to be taught. Learning about consequences is a valuable life lesson. It's a part of growing up and growing in wisdom. A child learns wisdom from the very moment they begin learning about rules and experiencing consequences when the rules are not followed. We hope that, as our children grow older, they will not have to be told quite as often what the consequences are if they behave in a certain way or they refuse to follow the rules.

Even when the consequences are not clearly known, a wise person is able to draw upon knowledge and experience, or advice from others, in order to make choices taking the potential impact on others and themselves into consideration. Sadly, I've known some adults who still struggle with making wise decisions. If wisdom is the knowledge of consequences (the "or else"), then character is internalizing that knowledge, so that decisions are made without being given the "or else" every single time. Character in a child is developed as he or she incorporates that wisdom into their values and moral judgment.

When making the transition between wisdom and developing character, a natural question to ask when told to do something might be, "What will happen if I don't do it?" If a child or young adult is able to move from only thinking about consequences, and begins to think, "I want to do this, because it is the right thing to do and I'll be happier if I do it," then that person is developing a positive character. Those who are constantly being threatened with punishment, or repeatedly have to be reminded of the consequences, may develop a problem with their character. They may not be motivated to act in the correct manner, unless the fear of being caught or getting in trouble is included in their motivation.

Children, and then later on as teens and adults, may learn very quickly how to "weigh their options." In other words, they might know the consequences, but they attempt to determine whether the potential impact or possible punishment is a price worth paying, or is severe enough, to justify doing what they want to do anyway.

Therefore, a person who has a character problem might use the reasoning: "I will tell a lie in order to get out of work, because no one will ever find out. And, even if I'm caught telling a lie and I'm punished for it, it will be worth it, because I got what I wanted—a day off." Character comes as a result of intrinsic motivation, which means that there is something within us that moves us toward moral choices and also places others above ourselves when we make those decisions. Wisdom is a result of extrinsic motivation. It comes from external sources like our parents, our learned experiences, from God and Holy Scriptures. Wisdom helps shape our character, and our character is a reflection of the wisdom that we have been taught. Every action of ours has an "or else." We make choices every day, based upon our knowledge of the consequences and our will to do what is morally right in spite of the consequences. In the Book of Proverbs, it says, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." And this wisdom that comes from God is clearly connected to our internal character by these words, also from Proverbs: "For wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul." It is my hope that you will never stop gaining in knowledge and growing in wisdom, and that you will never cease to improve your character. Blessings and peace to you.

LDO, CWO package deadline approaches

From militaryonesource.com

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The application deadline for E6-E9 Sailors for the Fiscal Year 2013 Limited Duty Officer (LDO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) programs is fast approaching, officials said Sept. 12.

LDO-CWO applications must be postmarked no later than Oct. 1 for active-duty Sailors and Nov. 1 for reservists.

Both programs provide the Navy with officers who are technical-based leaders and technical experts in key positions throughout the service, said Chief Warrant Officer Mitchell Allen, CWO community manager, Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS).

"Limited duty officers and chief warrant officers are technical experts selected from the enlisted ranks," said Allen. "LDO's become technical leaders, like commanding officers of schoolhouses or shipyard repair facilities, while chief warrant officers stay technical experts in their field often in repetitive assignments."

The LDO and CWO programs provide outstanding senior enlisted personnel the opportunity to compete for a commission without the requirement of a college degree.

Combined, these two communities make up 11 percent of the officer corps.

"Over the next several years, we will be revising the application windows in which senior enlisted Sailors can apply for the LDO/CWO programs," said Allen. "Our hope is to create an even more technically-focused community, with a more predictable career path, more detailed opportunities and better career progression."

Applicants must meet basic eligibility requirements, outlined in Navy Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 224/11 for active-duty or NAVADMIN 226/11 for reserve, before applying for the LDO and CWO programs.

"For the LDO (and) CWO community, there's only one way to get in and that's sustained superior performance," said Capt. John Jones, LDO and CWO community manager, BUPERS. "The application process is tough and many Sailors won't pick up until at least their third try. We don't want Sailors to give up, we're looking for consistency and we want to see them continue to apply."

Eligible Sailors are encouraged to apply for the designator for which they are most qualified, regardless of their current rating. Upon commissioning, Sailors selected for LDO and CWO will attend the four-week Officer Development School in Newport, R.I.

"Right now the LDO and CWO community is not undergoing any sort of reduction in force because of their technical necessity," said Jones.

Specific requirements and additional information about the programs can be found in OPNAVINST 1420.1B, Enlisted to Officer Commissioning Programs Application Administrative Manual, chapter 7.

More responsibilities as a limited duty officer or chief warrant officer mean more benefits, too, said Jones.

"If you are selected for our program as a petty officer first class, your paycheck will double within four years. The long-term benefit is a substantial retirement check that is double what our great master chiefs receive," said Jones. "Couple that with our promotion rates and that makes for a very attractive program."

"But it's not just about the financial benefits," said Jones. "It's about understanding the minds of Sailors and using that knowledge to shape your decisions and implement change which best serves our Navy. That's what I really love about the program."

Complete application procedures, eligibility requirements and links to other resources can be found in NAVADMIN 224/11 and NAVADMIN 226/11.

Sailors may also learn more about the LDO and CWO communities in the 2011 LDO and CWO Guidebook available on the Navy Personnel Command website at www.npc.navy.mil.