

# At Work

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In this session, we are going to talk about the first of three things that every conflict firefighter must know. Before we introduce that thing, that first thing that every conflict firefighter must know, I want to encourage you as a Christian leader, as a pastor, as a church planter, whatever position the Lord has placed you in the body of Christ that is you encounter conflict in your own life, and as He uses you to shepherd others through conflict, if you recognize that the Lord has called His people to be ambassadors of reconciliation that we're to respond to conflict differently that the world does and that you have a unique role to play with the conflicts that you encounter and that none of those conflicts are by accident.

That the Lord permits those things to happen for a reason and He can redeem even what the enemy has intended for evil the Lord can turn for good, and there are opportunities that exist in conflict to obey the Lord, to seek the Lord, to walk with the Lord, to see the Lord do powerful things in the lives of His people. And then these last three sessions that I have with you to talk about responding to conflict in a manner that glorifies Jesus Christ. We're only going to scratch the surface of the dynamics that exist in the midst of conflict.

So I encourage you again to invite you to take the Two Fires of Conflict course on our web site at [www.peacefire.net](http://www.peacefire.net) and explore before the Lord what He wants to do in your life and in the ministry that He has entrusted to you of handling conflict because conflict can destroy. It's a great destroyer of ministries, of lives, of marriages, of churches. And by being equipped to respond to conflict at the peace fire as opposed to simply just trying to put out the wild fire in your own strength and power, it makes all the difference in your life and in your ministry. So with that word of encouragement, let's move forward into the first of three things that every conflict firefighter must know.

These are three principles that when incorporated into habitual response to conflict will position you with a peace fire with an attitude that anticipates entering into the Lord's presence. The first principle that every conflict firefighter must know is that the Lord is always at work. When a conflict wild fire ignites, we're often tempted to respond to the conflict without seeking God. Sometimes we don't seek Him because we think we know what it takes to resolve the conflict. Other times, we don't seek the Lord when conflict comes because we think that God has left us to suffer the consequences of our sin or bad choices we've made.

But the Bible paints a different picture for us. It tells us that the Lord is always at work, even in the midst of conflict. He never leaves or forsakes His people and He is always at work. Psalm 121:4 reads, "Behold He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." Hebrews 13:5, "Keep your life free from

love of money and be content with what you have for He has said ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” Jesus said in John 5:17, “My Father is working until now and I am working.” If the Lord is always at work, what is He doing? While we may not know everything that the Lord is doing in the midst of conflict, the Lord has revealed certain things in His Word that He is always at work doing.

We will review three of those things in this session. Keep in mind that while we will discuss three general things that the Lord is always at work doing in the midst of conflict, there are other specific things that the Lord is doing in the conflicts you encounter—things He is doing in the lives of His people, things He is using His people to accomplish in the lives of others. Those specific things can only be revealed to you as you seek Him at the peace fire. Let’s continue our discussion of these three general things that the Lord is always at work doing in the midst of conflict.

I’m going to introduce all three to you here and then we’ll break each one down separately. The first is He’s always looking for someone He can use. The second is that He’s transforming His people into His image. The third is He is accomplishing His purpose in good pleasure. The Lord is always at work looking for people that make themselves available to Him in the midst of conflict. The Lord is always looking for someone to use, people who will let Him live through them, love through them, and serve as His ambassador of reconciliation.

2 Chronicles 16:9 reads, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless or at peace toward Him.” The Lord is always looking for someone to use. “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Who shall I send and who will go for us?’ and I said, ‘Here am I. Send me.” Isaiah 6:8. The next time you’re in a conflict, will you succumb to the wild fire and try to run out of it or fight it in your own strength and overcome it in your own might? Or will you remember that the Lord is at work and He’s looking for someone to use in that conflict as His ambassador? Will you say, “Lord, here I am. Send me. Use me. Show me what you want me to do.”

Do you want the Lord to show Himself strong on your behalf in the conflicts that you encounter? Present yourself with a peace fire. Make yourself available to Him to fill you, to change you, and give you His perspective on the conflict. In addition to always looking for people whose hearts are turned toward Him, the Lord is always at work in the midst of conflict, transforming His people to reflect His image.

Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The Lord is always at work, establishing His workmanship in your life. Romans 8:29, the apostle Paul writes, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.” The Lord uses conflict to transform us into the image of His son.

2 Corinthians 3:18, the apostle Paul writes, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from degree of glory to another for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” In the midst of conflict, there are things revealed about us, about our desires, about our character, about attitude, and habits in our life. But the Lord exposes because He wants to change them. He doesn’t expose those things to embarrass us or to condemn us but to set us free. This can only happen at the peace fire.

In Colossians 3:9,10, the apostle Paul writes, “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” Day by day, from glory to glory, being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator, the Lord is always at work transforming His people. Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O Lord, you are our Father, we are the clay. You are our potter. We are all the work of Your hand.”

We tend to look at conflict wild fires as disturbances, distractions in our life that happen that we just have to get these things taken care of and put away so we can have our peace back and get back to where things were before. But I challenge you that the Lord has permitted those conflicts to happen for a reason. Sometimes He wants to throw the clay on the wheel and He uses a conflict to get your attention, to show you things, to reveal you things in your life or in the lives of the people that you shepherd so that He can have His way and transform that area of their life and continue the workmanship He has begun in them.

Philippians 1:6, “And I am sure of this that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus’ Christ.” This is the Lord’s faithfulness to His people and we can praise Him and thank Him at the peace fire. In 1 Thessalonians 5:24, the apostle Paul writes, “He who calls you His faithful and He will surely do it.” The Lord is faithful to transform His people. When there are things in our life that He wants to change, He can use conflict to accomplish His purpose in good pleasure if we will seek Him at the peace fire.

In Hebrews 13:20, 12, “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant equip you with everything good that you may do His will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” The Lord desires to equip us to do His will. He is the great Shepherd of the sheep. And at the peace fire, we receive His instruction. We seek His presence to understand His purpose and receive His power to respond to conflict in a way that’s pleasing in His sight and we’ll glorify Him.

The Lord is always at work transforming you into His image. Conflict is one of the tools that He uses to transform you to expose things He wants to change, giving you the opportunity to make a faith choice

and let Him do it. The first two things that the Lord is always at work doing in the midst of conflict looking for someone to use and show Himself strong in their behalf, and He is always at work transforming His people into His image.

The third thing that the Lord is always at work doing in the midst of conflict is accomplishing His purpose in good pleasure. Romans 8:28, “And we know that for those who love God, all things, including conflict wild fires, work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.” You become someone He can use to accomplish His purpose when you seek His presence at the peace fire. In John 6:28, 29, “Then they said to Jesus, ‘What must we do to be doing the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”

This is the work of God in the midst of conflict—that you believe in Him whom He has sent. Seeking Jesus Christ at the peace fire and letting the Lord work through you to accomplish His purpose in His good pleasure in the peace fire. Let’s review the flash points from this session. The Lord is always at work. He is at work looking for people that He can use in the midst of conflict. He is at work transforming His people into His image. He is at work accomplishing His purpose in good pleasure.

In our next session, we will consider the second thing that every conflict firefighter must know.