

# The Choice

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This is the third session in responding to conflict in a manner that pleases and glorifies Jesus Christ. We've introduced you to the two fires of conflict: the wild fire, the fire that destroys, and the peace fire, the fire that transforms. In this session, we're going to talk about a choice—a choice that exists in every conflict. It's a choice that can make the difference between a conflict becoming a wild fire of destruction or a peace fire of transformation. The choice is profound in its simplicity, and here it is.

Which fire will ignite the choices you make in response to conflict, the wild fire or the peace fire? Conflict presents the opportunity to make many choices. Your choices impact the outcomes of the conflict. Your choices matter. Each choice you make in response to a conflict is like a seed you plant that will later bear fruit. In the Book of Galatians, the apostle Paul writes in 6:7, 8, "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life."

Your choices matter. They are like a seed that you plant. "A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace," James 3:18. When the choices you make in response to conflict are motivated by what is happening in the wild fire, you are being motivated by the circumstances, emotions, and relationship dynamics that are present in that conflict. When the choices you make in response to conflict are motivated by what is happening at the peace fire, you are motivated by God's presence, purpose, and power that you find by searching the scriptures, seeking God's guidance and prayer, and by obtaining Godly counsel as the Lord directs.

The Lord desires that you bring your choices to Him for guidance and direction. Deuteronomy 30:19, 20 read as follows, "I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him for He is your life and length of days." These verses remind us the Lord wants us to choose, bring our choices before Him. To choose those things that flow out of our relationship with Him, that reflect His love, His life, His power, His purpose, that reflect our obedience to Him.

When you the choice to let what is happening at the peace fire ignite your response to a conflict, you have made the choice to fight fire with fire. Fighting fire with fire is a firefighting technique that involves lighting a second fire around the perimeter of a wild fire in order to destroy the fuel sources and prevent the wild fire from spreading. In a conflict, fighting fire with fire means lighting a peace fire, seeking Jesus Christ for the wisdom, guidance, and power to contain and extinguish the conflict wild fire.

While the wild fire burns, you can know God's peace and protection at the peace fire no matter what happens in the wild fire.

It's like Daniel 3 when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego are thrown into the fiery furnace bound. The furnace had been heated seven times hotter and yet as they landed on the floor of that fiery furnace, they were not consumed because of the presence of the fourth man in the fire. For the believer in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is that fourth man in the fire with you. But He's not just in the fire next to you. He loves in you and He provides by His presence and His purpose the power you need to know His peace in the midst of a conflict wild fire. Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego stayed in that fire until the king called them out, the Lord will give you His peace and protection within the fires of conflict until the Lord calls you out and brings peace and extinguishes the fire.

The peace fire can burn away the fuel sources that cause conflict wild fires to rage. Bring your natural response to the wild fire to the Lord at the peace fire. Bring your fear, your anger, your pride, your bitterness, your grudges, the gossip, the lies, the hatred, the jealousy, the envy, the strife, the selfishness. Confess them all before the Lord and He will begin to change you as you seek Him. Fight the wild fire with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Overcome evil with good. Return a curse with a blessing. Love your enemies. Make your choices based on what is happening at the peace fire rather than what is happening in the wild fire.

Let's review the key points from this session. Every conflict presents an opportunity to make choices that will impact the outcome of the conflict. Your choices can be motivated and influenced by what is happening in the wild fire or by what you receive from the Lord at the peace fire. The choice you have in every conflict is which fire will ignite your response to conflict. Fighting fire with fire is fighting the wild fire with the fire of the Holy Spirit and what the Lord provides to you as you seek Him at the peace fire. It is overcoming evil with good, returning a curse with a blessing. It is loving our enemy.

In the next session, we begin to examine seeking God's presence at the peace fire. We begin that section by considering three things that every conflict firefighter must know.