PEACEFIRE

Two Fires of Conflict

SESSION 3 - God's **Power** Changes Your Possibilities When Responding to Conflict

THE PEACEFIRE TRIANGLE

I. The World's Approach - Strange Fire and Wildfire Accelerants - Pursuing the Desired Outcome

A. Strange Fire

1. Strange Fire is an attempt to do the Lord's will in a manner that He has not approved or authorized. Lev. 10:1-2; Gen. 4:3-7; 1 Sam 13:1-14; 2 Chron. 26; Acts 5

2. To rely on Strange Fire is an attempt to extinguish the Wildfire in some way other than a relentless reliance on Jesus Christ.

B. Wildfire Accelerants

1. Wildfire Accelerants represent worldly or flesh-driven attempts to obtain a desired outcome.
2. A Wildfire Accelerant can never bring about the reconciliation and restoration of relationship that glorifies Jesus Christ.
3. **Pride** manifests itself in arrogance, self-righteousness and intellectual or spiritual superiority. It will over-emphasize truth and under-emphasize mercy. Prov. 8:13; Prov. 16:5; 2 Sam. 22:28; Prov. 11:2; Prov. 13:10; Prov. 16:18-19; Prov. 28:25-26; James 4:6-7
4. **Revenge** seeks to settle a score, get even, or exact a pound of flesh (or more) from someone who has wronged us. It exposes a lack of trust in God's promise to take vengeance on behalf of His people. Lev. 19:17-18; Prov. 24:29; Rom. 12:17-21; Hebrews 10:30-31
5. **Anger** stirs up strife and does not produce the righteousness that reflects the image of Jesus Christ. Psalm 37:8; Prov. 14:17; Prov. 15:1; Prov. 15:18; Prov. 16:32; Eph. 4:26-27; Eph. 4:31; James 1:20
6. **Lying** can never extinguish a Conflict Wildfire. Any deceptive peace that a lie might establish will eventually reignite into a more intense conflict when the deceit is exposed. Exodus 20:16; Lev. 19:11; Psalm 55:21; Prov. 6:16-19; Prov. 12:22; Col. 3:9-10; 1 John 4:20
7. **Hatred** is a Wildfire Accelerant that hides. A Conflict Wildfire cannot be extinguished so long as hatred is hidden in the heart. Lev. 19:17; Prov. 10:12; Prov. 10:18; Prov. 26:24-26
8. **Fear** paralyzes and keeps us from walking by faith. The power of God's love delivers us from the fear of man and circumstances. Psalm 56:3-4; Prov. 29:25; Matt. 10:28-31; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Heb. 13:6; 1 John 4:18

9. When un-forgiveness is harbored during a conflict, it often gives rise to **bitterness** that causes a Conflict Wildfire to spread. Eph. 4:31; Hebrews 12:15; James 3:14-16
10. Scorn and mockery are established by the derision and **ridicule** of others. They have no place at the Peacefire. Psalm 1:1-2; Prov. 22:10; Prov. 29:8
11. When you **gossip**, it is like throwing gasoline into the Conflict Wildfire. Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; Prov. 16:28; Prov. 17:9; Prov. 20:19; Prov. 25:9-10
12. When Wildfire Accelerants are exposed in us - and they will be - we can confess them to the Lord and ask Him to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:8-10
13. Ask the Lord to replace the exposed accelerant with the character and attributes that reflect the presence of Jesus Christ in you. Phil 4:8

II. The Power God Provides to Extinguish the Wildfire and Glorify Jesus Christ

A. A Peacefire Accelerant - Love

1. Even when we spend time in God's presence, understand His purpose, and are willing to give sacrificially to reconcile with those in the Wildfire, it all means nothing if we are not motivated and empowered by God's love. 1 Cor. 13:1-3.
2. God's agape love is undeserved, unearned, and unconditional. 1 Cor. 13:4-8a
3. The Lord revealed His love to us while we were sinners who did not deserve His love. Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:19
4. In conflict, we often have the opportunity as Ambassadors of Reconciliation to reflect the image of Jesus Christ by loving someone who (at least from our perspective) might not deserve that love.

B. The Reconciliation Triangle

There are three steps to reconciling a relationship in conflict: (1) Confronting Sin; (2) Confession of Sin; and (3) Forgiveness of Sin

THE RECONCILIATION TRIANGLE

1. Lovingly Confront

a. Jesus taught that whether someone sins against us or we sin against them, we are to go to them alone to confront the situation. Matthew 18:15; Matt. 5:23-24
b. Our motivation in going - reconciliation. Matt. 7:3-5
c. Remove the log from your eye before you go - fix your focus on the Lord and His love for you.

d. If an initial confrontation does not result in reconciliation, the Lord instructs us to take two or three others with us to try again. Matt. 18:16
e. If a second confrontation does not result in reconciliation, the Lord instructs us to involve the church. Matt. 18:17
f. The goal at every stage of confrontation is the pursuit of reconciliation, the loving pursuit of lost sheep and not the pursuit of our own agenda or desired outcome.
g. Resolving material issues does not always lead to reconciliation, but the reconciliation of relationship (loving one another) accelerates the resolution of material issues.

2. Humbly Confess

a. Worldly Sorrow vs. Godly Sorrow 2 Cor. 7:10
b. Reconcile with God first, then those affected by our sin. Ps. 51:4; James 5:16
c. Communicate your confession with grace and wisdom.
d. The Seven A's of Confession: **A**ddress everyone involved (All those affected by our sin); **A**void if, but, and maybe (Do not try to excuse our wrongs); **A**dmit specifically (Both attitudes and actions); **A**cknowledge the hurt (Express sorrow for hurting someone); **A**ccept the consequences (Such as making restitution); **A**lter your behavior (Change your attitudes and actions); **A**sk for forgiveness. (Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, Baker Books, 2004; www.hispeace.org).
e. The most powerful words in confession, "Will you forgive me?"

3. Freely Forgive

a. When sin is confessed and forgiveness requested, the Lord commands us to forgive. Luke 17:3-4; Matt. 18:21-22
b. Treat others as we have been treated. Eph. 4:32; Matt. 18:23-35
c. We open ourselves to spiritual bondage and torment when we refuse to forgive. Matt. 18:34-35
d. The Father forgives our sins because of His grace and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, not because we earn it or deserve it. Eph. 2:8-9
e. Our ability to forgive those who sin against us flows from the forgiveness that we receive from the Father and the life of Jesus Christ in us, not from whether the person asking for our forgiveness earns it or deserves it. Gal. 2:20
f. The Four Promises of Forgiveness (Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, Baker Books, 2004; www.hispeace.org):
    1. I will not dwell on this incident;
    2. I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you;
    3. I will not talk to others about this incident; and
    4. I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.
g. The words that can extinguish the Wildfire - "I forgive you."

4. The Reconciliation Triangle and the Trap of Offense

a. The reconciliation triangle - confrontation, confession, and forgiveness - is not a formula that guarantees reconciliation in every conflict.
b. The trap of offense is present at every stage of the process.
c. Confronting Sin - The Holy Spirit convicts. Gal. 6:1; John 16:7-8
d. Confessing Sin - Unsatisfied expectations
e. Forgiveness - Partial, fake, or premature.
f. The Lord is always at work

C. When a Fire Rescue Fails - The Firebreak

1. The firebreak represents a break in intimate spiritual fellowship with a brother or sister in Christ who refuses to repent and reconcile broken relationships. Matt. 18:17b
2. At the firebreak, you treat the unrepentant brother evangelistically, as someone who does not know the Lord, rather than as a member of the Body of Christ. Matthew 18:17b
3. The ultimate purpose of the firebreak is to reaffirm God's love for lost sheep in order to lead them to repentance and restoration. 2 Cor. 2:6-8
4. A place of intense spiritual warfare - not a place to stand alone. Jesus is at work in the firebreak. Matt. 18:18-20; Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 10:4-6
5. The following temptations are common in the firebreak:

   a. Bitterness
   b. The lost sheep becomes an enemy.
   c. The pride of being "right" quenches the Holy Spirit.

6. Sometimes we must wait months and even years before reconciliation occurs - sometimes it never does. Romans 12:18