

PARENTING BY THE BOOK
PEACEMAKING... RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

1. REVIEW

A. PEACEMAKERS ARE PEOPLE WHO BREATHE GRACE.

1. **THEY DRAW CONTINUALLY ON THE GOODNESS AND POWER OF JESUS CHRIST, AND THEN THEY BRING HIS LOVE, MERCY, FORGIVENESS, STRENGTH, AND WISDOM TO THE CONFLICTS OF DAILY LIFE.**

2. PEACE IS OUR GOAL IN THIS SECTION = PEACEMAKERS

A. THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF PEACE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST:

1. PEACE WITH GOD.

a. SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

b. TIME SPENT WITH GOD IN:

1) STUDY OF HIS WORD

2) PRAYER

c. DISCUSS:

2. PEACE WITH OTHERS.

3. PEACE WITH SELF.

a. BY GOD'S DESIGN, THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF PEACE ARE INSEPARABLY JOINED.

b. WE WILL NOT KNOW GENUINE INTERNAL PEACE UNLESS WE ALSO PURSUE PEACE WITH GOD AND PEACE WITH OTHERS.

B. NOTE: THIS CLASS IS DEVOTED TO TEACHING PARENTS, AND OUR CHILDREN, HOW TO PURSUE PEACE WITH OTHERS WHEN CONFLICT HAS DISRUPTED OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

C. ENEMIES OF PEACE:

1. FEAR
2. ANGER
3. ANXIETY

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4. DISSAPPOINTMENT/UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS
5. PRIDE
6. ENVY
7. CONFLICT

D. **CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE... IT'S HOW WE DEAL WITH CONFLICT THAT AFFECTS OUR PEACE.**

1. **CONFLICT DISRUPTS PEACE... WITH GOD, WITH OTHERS, AND WITH SELF.**

2. **AGAIN... THIS CLASS IS DESIGNED TO HELP PARENTS, AND OUR CHILDREN, BECOME PEACEMAKERS BY PROVIDING SIMPLE YET COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES TO RESOLVING CONFLICT.**

a. **INSTEAD OF REACTING TO CONFLICT IN A CONFUSED, DEFENSIVE, OR ANGRY MANNER WE CAN LEARN TO RESPOND TO CONFLICT CONFIDENTLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY.**

3. **THE APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES CAN TURN CONFLICT INTO:**

a. **OPPORTUNITIES TO FIND LASTING SOLUTIONS TO SERIOUS PROBLEMS.**

b. **HELP US TO EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**

c. **DEEPEN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS.**

d. **EXPERIENCE AND DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE IN NEW AND LIFE-GIVING WAYS.**

3. **CONFLICT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES**

A. **STORY... OF FOUR BACKPACKING FRIENDS COMING TO A FAST AND ICY STREAM:**

1. **ONE FRIEND: A DANGEROUS OBSTACLE TO BE AVOIDED.**

2. **ANOTHER FRIEND: A MEANS TO SHOW HOW TOUGH HE WAS.**

3. **TWO OTHERS FRIENDS: AN INTERESTING CHALLENGE.**

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4. THE LAST TWO FOUND A FALLEN TREE AND LAID IT ACROSS THE LARGEST GAP BETWEEN THE ROCKS IN THE STREAM.
5. AT THAT POINT THE OTHER TWO FRIENDS BEGAN TO COOPERATE, AND:
 - a. WORKING TOGETHER ALL FOUR MANAGED TO GET ONE PERSON OVER TO THE OTHER BANK.
 - b. THEN TWO FRIENDS STOOD ON ROCKS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREAM, AND PASSED THE BACKPACKS TO THE OTHER SIDE.
 - c. FINALLY, ONE BY ONE, THE LAST THREE JUMPED FROM ROCK TO ROCK RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM THE PERSON AHEAD.
 - d. ULTIMATELY, ALL THE FRIENDS WERE ON THE FAR SIDE DRY AND EXHILARATED BY THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT.
6. **CONCLUSION**: MANY PEOPLE VIEW **CONFLICT** LIKE THE BACKPACKING FRIENDS VIEWED THE ICY **STREAM**.
 - a. TO SOME, **CONFLICT** IS A **HAZARD** THAT THREATENS TO SWEEP THEM OFF THEIR FEET AND LEAVE THEM BRUISED AND HURTING, AND THEREFORE MUST BE **AVOIDED**.
 - b. TO OTHERS **CONFLICT** IS AN **OBSTACLE** THEY SHOULD **ATTACK** AND **CONQUER** QUICKLY AND FIRMLY, **REGARDLESS** OF THE **CONSEQUENCES**.
 - c. BUT... SOME PEOPLE (**PEACEMAKERS**) HAVE LEARNED THAT **CONFLICT** IS AN **OPPORTUNITY TO SOLVE COMMON PROBLEMS** IN A WAY THAT **HONORS GOD** AND **OFFERS BENEFITS** TO **ALL** THOSE **INVOLVED** IN THE **CONFLICT**.
 - 1) THE **PEACEMAKING** **RESPONSE** CAN **TRANSFORM** THE **WAY** WE **RESPOND (NOT REACT)** TO **CONFLICT**.

B. DISCUSS:

4. **THREE BASIC RESPONSES TO CONFLICT**: (SEE THE CHART ON PAGE 7)

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A. ESCAPE RESPONSES

1. PEOPLE USE THESE RESPONSES WHEN THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN AVOIDING CONFLICT THAN IN RESOLVING CONFLICT.
2. ESCAPE RESPONSES CAN NEVER RESOLVE CONFLICTS.

B. ATTACK RESPONSES

1. PEOPLE USE THESE RESPONSES WHEN THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN WINNING A CONFLICT THAN IN PRESERVING A RELATIONSHIP.
 - a. THIS ATTITUDE IS SEEN IN PEOPLE WHO VIEW CONFLICT AS A CONTEST OR AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS, TO CONTROL OTHERS, OR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFLICT.
2. ATTACK RESPONSES ARE DIRECTED AT BRINGING AS MUCH PRESSURE TO BEAR ON OPPONENTS AS IS NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE THEIR OPPOSITION.

C. PEACEMAKING RESPONSES

1. THESE RESPONSES ARE COMMANDED BY GOD, EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND DIRECTED TOWARD FINDING JUST AND MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICT.

5. ESCAPE RESPONSES:

A. DENIAL:

1. ONE WAY TO ESCAPE FROM A CONFLICT IS TO DENY THAT THE PROBLEM EXISTS.
 - a. WHEN WE DENY THAT A PROBLEM EXISTS, WE REFUSE TO DO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT.

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2. **DENIAL** ONLY BRINGS TEMPORARY RELIEF AND USUALLY MAKES MATTERS WORSE.

B. FLIGHT:

1. **FLIGHT** RESPONSES MAY INCLUDE LEAVING THE HOUSE, ENDING A FRIENDSHIP, QUITTING A JOB, FILING FOR DIVORCE, OR CHANGING CHURCHES.
2. IN MOST CASES, **FLIGHT** (RUNNING AWAY) ONLY **POSTPONES** PROPER **SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICTS**.
 - a. THEREFORE, **FLIGHT** IS USUALLY A HARMFUL WAY TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT.
3. **NOTE:** THERE MAY BE TIMES WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE TO TEMPORARILY WITHDRAW FROM CONFLICTS TO:
 - a. CALM DOWN
 - b. ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS
 - c. PRAY
4. **FLIGHT** CAN BE A **LEGITIMATE RESPONSE** IN SERIOUSLY THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCES:
 - a. VERBAL ABUSE
 - b. PHYSICAL ABUSE
 - c. SEXUAL ABUSE
 - d. ... **HOWEVER**, EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT SHOULD STILL BE MADE TO FIND TRUSTWORTHY ASSISTANCE AND **SEEK A LASTING SOLUTION**.

C. SUICIDE

1. **SUICIDE** IS **NEVER** THE RIGHT WAY TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT.

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2. I ONLY MENTION **SUICIDE** BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME THE **THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN THE UNITED STATES.**

a. IN PART, BECAUSE **MANY CHILDREN HAVE NEVER LEARNED HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT CONSTRUCTIVELY!**

1) **DISCUSS...**

6. **ATTACK** RESPONSES:

A. **ASSAULT**

1. SOME PEOPLE TRY TO **OVERCOME CONFLICT** BY USING VARIOUS FORMS OF **INTIMIDATION** SUCH AS:

a. **VERBAL ATTACKS**

1) **GOSSIP**

i. **STORY...** OF A JEWISH MAN WHO **GOSSIPED** ABOUT HIS RABBI:

1. "IT IS AS **IMPOSSIBLE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE** DONE BY YOUR **WORDS** AS IT WILL BE TO **RECOVER THE FEATHERS**".

2) **DISCUSS:** ENCOURAGING OUR CHILDREN AND OURSELVES **NOT TO GOSSIP.**

b. **PHYSICAL ATTACKS**

1) **DAMAGING OTHERS FINANCIALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY**

2. **ASSAULT** RESPONSES **ALWAYS** MAKE **CONFLICT WORSE.**

B. **LITIGATION**

1. **ALTHOUGH SOME CONFLICTS** MAY **LEGITIMATELY** BE TAKEN BEFORE A **CIVIL JUDGE...** **LAWSUITS** USUALLY **DAMAGE RELATIONSHIPS** AND OFTEN **FAIL** TO **ACHIEVE COMPLETE JUSTICE.**

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2. WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES, THEIR WITNESS CAN BE SEVERELY DAMAGED.

a. THAT IS WHY CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CHURCH RATHER THAN IN CIVIL COURT.

b. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 (NASB) Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to *constitute* the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. *You do* this even to *your* brethren.

c. DISCUSS... IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SETTLE DISPUTES OUT OF COURT WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

C. MURDER

1. IN EXSTREME CASES, PEOPLE MAY BE SO DESPERATE TO WIN A DISPUTE THAT THEY WILL TRY TO KILL THOSE WHO OPPOSE THEM.

a. WHILE MOST CHRISTIANS WOULD NOT ACTUALLY KILL SOMEONE, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT WE STAND GUILTY OF MURDER IN GOD'S EYES IF WE HARBOR ANGER OR CONTEMPT IN OUR HEARTS TOWARD OTHERS.

b. Matthew 5:21-22 (NASB) "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and

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whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

7. NEXT WEEK: **PEACEMAKING** RESPONSES

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