

# SESSION 3

# STAND DOWN





*As a kid, what made you call "Mine!" most often?*



## THE POINT

*I don't have to get my way to solve a conflict.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I recently lost a battle over paint. I gave up. I didn't "win." It wasn't really a battle, but it was tense for a time. And it did involve pain.

In my new church, I encouraged some cosmetic changes to clean up the church in preparation for new visitors we hoped to attract. One day the phone rang. It was someone in the church letting me know about tension simmering over paint colors in a particular room people were painting. The problem was that this particular room had history. No one disagreed that the room needed painting. But the color I chose, in the opinion of one group of people, took away from the history and purpose of the room. In discussing this with someone I trusted, it became apparent that if we stuck with this color, good things we were doing in the church would be usurped.

I have learned there are battles to fight and battles to let go of. I saw this as one to let go. It protected my relationship with the concerned group and healthy growth of the church continued.

Lesson learned: I don't have to get my way to solve a conflict.



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## **Genesis 13:1-18** (HCSB)

**1** Then Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev—he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. **2** Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. **3** He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, **4** to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of Yahweh there.

**5** Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. **6** But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together, **7** and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.

**8** Then Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives. **9** Isn't the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left." **10** Lot looked out and saw that the entire Jordan Valley as far as Zoar was well watered everywhere like the LORD's garden and the land of Egypt. This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

**11** So Lot chose the entire Jordan Valley for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. **12** Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities of the valley and set up his tent near Sodom. **13** Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning greatly against the LORD.

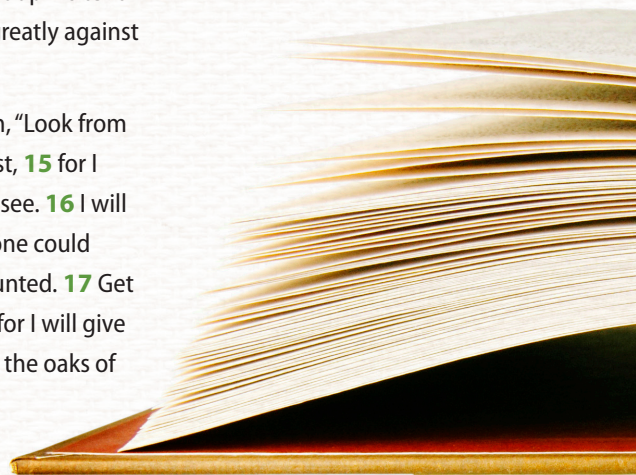
**14** After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, **15** for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. **16** I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. **17** Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you." **18** So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

## Key Words

**Abram** (v. 1) – This was his name before God gave him the covenant name of Abraham (Gen. 17:5).

**called on the name of** (v. 4) – This expression was first used for worship in Genesis 4:26 and also in Genesis 13:4. It means to acknowledge God by worshiping Him.

**quarreling** (v. 7) – The Hebrew word used here described a public legal dispute or strife between two hostile parties. Although the word's original meaning related to physical conflict, it most frequently described a verbal dispute.





## **Genesis 13:1-7**

A man named Abram had a conflict to solve. Due to a famine, Abram went to Egypt (Gen. 12:10). Fearing the Pharaoh, Abram asked his wife Sarai to pretend she was his sister. Pharaoh took Sarai into his palace, made her his wife, and made Abram a wealthy man. Pharaoh showered Abram with flocks, herds, and slaves. Abram's sending his wife to live with another man, of course, did not meet God's approval. God brought severe plagues on Pharaoh's household. Pharaoh sent Abram and Sarai on their way.

Abram surely learned that his behavior in Egypt was a mistake. He gained at the expense of his wife.

Abram traveled from Egypt to a new land. On that journey he came back to calling on God (13:4). Abram visited an altar he had built before. At this altar, Abram recognized God alone as His provider. At this altar of God, Abram humbly worshipped God.

I find after a time of worship that I look at things differently. I think Abram must have as well.

Soon Abram faced a new problem. His household and that of his nephew Lot were traveling together. The abundance of Abram's and Lot's possessions caused a problem. There were too many people and livestock with not enough land and resources to support them (13:5-7). Abram sought a solution.

***When has a time of worship changed your perspective or course of action?***

### **QUESTION #1**







## **Genesis 13:8-13**

**I love the maturity of Abram here:** “Please, let’s not have quarreling between you and me.”

Abram’s words are a picture of what faith should produce in a believer. Humility arises in the heart of a Christ follower and asks:

- ▶ “What’s God’s way of solving this?”
- ▶ “What’s most important here?”
- ▶ “What’s the greater answer to this conflict?”

**The best option may be to put aside our interests and let the other person win.** It’s natural to hold out for what we want. When conflict occurs, even when trying to preserve relationships, we tend to think, *If I don’t look after my own interests, who will?* Compromise can be an option. But when we consider the interest of others we can receive the greater benefit of strengthening relationships.

**The time may come to part in Christian love.** Sometimes when two Christians can’t agree—and they have honorably discussed these differences—God may lead them to move apart. That reflects the action Abram took. We see a similar approach between Paul and Barnabas when they couldn’t come to an agreement (Acts 15:36-41). Biblical truth should never be compromised in this process.

**Abram ultimately gained far more than he sacrificed.** Abram’s intentionality is an example of Jesus, who seemed to give up everything. Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested and did not defend Himself. His seemingly defenseless position, however, achieved the salvation of all who believe in Him.

***What keeps us from approaching conflict the way Abram did?***

**QUESTION #2**



## THE POINT

*I don't have to get my way to solve a conflict.*

*Choose one of these situations and identify your choice*

### THE CIRCUMSTANCE

### MY CHOICE

**1.** You'd rather drive straight through, stopping only for gas. One in your group wants to stop for leisurely meals.

If I demand my way, I will:

.....

If I stand down, I will:

.....

**2.** Your fellow committee member is determined to get his way; solving the problem seems secondary.

If I demand my way, I will:

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If I stand down, I will:

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**3.** You and your spouse are both overspending the budget. You blame each other for the lack of funds.

If I demand my way, I will:

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If I stand down, I will:

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***How could your willingness to take the short end of the stick impact your relationships?***

### QUESTION #3





## Genesis 13:14-18

God told Abram to “walk around the land, through its length and width” (v. 17). It appears God wanted Abram to enjoy the provision. He wanted him to know what he’d gotten. It’s interesting that, according to these verses, there’s nothing wrong with having large amounts of land or masses of wealth. God appears to “show off” the land to Abram. So if wealth itself isn’t the issue, it must be our attitude toward the things we have or don’t have that trips us up at times.

Abram humbly offered Lot the very best of the land. In doing so, Abram trusted God to care for him regardless of his current land situation. Abram, the man of faith, knew that if he was to be a man who trusted God he would not be able to rest on his own strength. He would have to rely on God. And God honored that kind of humility and faith.

*"Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

— PHILIPPIANS 2:4

***What choices to stand down have you made that had unexpected results?***

**QUESTION #4**



# LIVE IT OUT

Conflict happens. So what's our plan for handling conflict in a way that honors God?

- ▶ **Focus on the end result.** Evaluate what really matters in the long run and work toward it.
- ▶ **Humble yourself.** Listen to the other person and speak with humility.
- ▶ **Heal a relationship.** Seek out someone who's been a casualty of a conflict with you and reconcile with that person.



Instead of always yelling “Mine!” notice when standing down might be a better choice. **Consider what saying “Yours” could gain for you.**

## Deciding Factors



***One of the greatest struggles in marriage is decision-making. Visions of democracy often dance in the minds of young couples, but when there are only two parties, democracy often results in deadlock. How can a couple make a decision? The answer is found in one word—submission.***



To continue reading “Deciding Factors” from *HomeLife* magazine, visit [BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles).





# My group's prayer requests

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# My thoughts