

Lessons From Lot For Father's Day

It is Father's Day and I want to direct these thoughts especially to the men of the church. Whether you are a father or not, where you are male or female, the truths of the Scripture certainly will apply to all. But I feel there is a need for men to take a stand for righteousness in this culture. Your family needs you to serve God and stand for what is right. I want to make some observations from Scripture today that I believe are applicable for all of us. Look with me today as we examine some lessons from Lot. I should warn you that Lot teaches us what not to do!

Turn with me to Genesis 13. In Genesis 12 the bible tells us of the call of the Patriarch Abraham. God called him to leave his home and to travel to a land that God would give to him and his descendants forever. Lot was Abraham's nephew and he made the decision to leave Haran with Abraham and Sarah and to journey with them.

Genesis 13 tells us that both Abraham and Lot had prospered along the journey and their herdsmen had begun to quarrel over water rights and grazing rights. Genesis 13:6 says the land could not support them both while they stayed together because their possessions were so great.

They decide to separate and go different directions. Generously and humbly, Abraham tells Lot to choose any land he wants in any direction he wants and he can have it and Abraham will take whatever is left. Notice what happened.

“Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company.” Genesis 13:10-11.

Lot saw what looked to be the best, the richest most fertile land. He saw what looked like the most prosperous path and he took it. There was nothing wrong with that. Abraham told him to choose and he did. But there is a lesson for us. In the final analysis of all that happened to Lot (and we will see this as we go along in our study), **What looks best from a human/worldly viewpoint may not be the best from a heavenly/eternal viewpoint.**

We are pretty quick to make our judgements based upon what we can see, what we can weigh from a purely human and temporal perspective. This looks like it will be

the easy way, it looks like it will yield the greatest payout in the shortest amount of time – but if it isn't God's way and God's will – if our choices are based on greed and avarice and pride rather than upon a desire to do right and please God, then what looks like the best way will prove to be a destructive way.

The bible says there is a way that seems right to a man but the end leads to destruction and death. It was free land and a free choice but may I tell you, **Sometimes you can't afford free!** It may look like a bargain but the cost will prove to be great.

It doesn't say Lot sought the Lord as to which land he should choose or which direction he should go. It doesn't say that Lot sought the Lord's will as to where he should live, he just chose what looked the best and easiest for him. But he paid a terrible price. I left out part of verse 10. It is parenthetical information in the NIV. It says in speaking of the beauty of the land Lot chose, **“(This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)”** Lot chose based on outward beauty, but he never considered the plans the Lord had for the land or the judgement that was coming.

Men, be careful in the choices you are making. Just because it looks pretty or easy, if God isn't in it, avoid it. Make your choices after you seek the Lord. Look at verse 12.

“Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.”

Lot may or may not have made a mistake in choosing the “plains of the Jordan”, but his next choice was a mistake. Lot settled his herds and herdsmen among the cities of the plain, but he kept moving himself and his family, his tents, his dwelling, closer and closer to the city of Sodom. **You can't be on friendly terms with sin.** I'm not talking about people. You can love sinners, but you can't flirt with and develop a friendship with sin. We live in this world, on this planet, within our culture, but we are not of this world. We don't adopt its viewpoint, we don't warm to its lifestyle, we don't embrace its' values. Compromise is deadly. Dads, your children are watching and listening. You can't afford to be a friend to sin. Don't keep moving closer to Sodom

and sin. Someone said what parents do in moderation, children do in excess. Dads and moms, keep the door to sin shut tightly. Don't allow compromise to creep into your relationship with God. Don't allow sin to subtly creep into the lifestyle of your family. I'll say it again, you can't be friends with sin. Sin makes for a lousy neighbor, a terrible companion. Run from sin.

In spite of God's assessment of the city and the great sin of the people of Sodom, Lot ignored it all and moved his family closer to the comforts of the city of Sodom. In spite of what he already knew, that Sodom was the original Sin City, Lot went ahead and moved closer to the influence, closer to the draw of the city and the temptations presented there. How foolish, to move closer to a place that was destined for God's judgment. Instead of drawing back, repulsed by the sin, he put himself and his family in harms way, exposing them all to the rebellion and waywardness of sin and its consequences.

Dads, parents, you should be the first line of defense for your children with regard to sin and temptation. Don't allow compromise to affect your own standards and then help your children to see the serious consequences of sin and wrong behavior. Help them to see the devil's tactics in temptation. You wouldn't put poison out on the kitchen table where your child could accidentally get to it. Then don't put sin in front of them through the lifestyle you live, the movies you watch, the things you do and say.

Speaking of the sin of Sodom. We are pretty quick to point out the sexual immorality of the city and its citizens but that was not the only sin of which they were guilty. God spoke to Israel concerning Sodom's sin. The bible says, **"Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."**
Ezekiel 16:49-50

The sin of Sodom and perhaps the sin of Lot was that out of their arrogance, they decided they didn't need to observe God's commands, they didn't need to pay attention to his warnings. Lot ignored the wickedness and moved closer to Sodom and its rebellious people. You can't ignore God's warnings and commands. The price is too great.

The closer Lot moved to Sodom, the closer he came to tolerating the sin of the people. There is a process that occurs.

Ignore the sin.

Minimize the sin.

Excuse the sin.

Justify the sin.

Accept the sin.

Embrace the sin.

Defend the sin and the sinner.

Accuse God of being wrong and unfair in judging the sin and sinner.

We start by trying to just ignore the sin, acting as if it wasn't really there or it wasn't that big of a deal. We try to minimize the sin and its impact on us and our family. Then we begin to excuse the sin. Then we justify the sin. Then we accept the sin. Then we embrace the sin. Then we defend the sin and the sinner. Then we accuse God of being wrong and unfair in judging the sin. We've come quite a long way from Haran when we started out with Abraham seeking the land God promised. From walking in the light of God's favor as we obeyed him, to living in the heart of Sodom and its' sin.

You see, Lot just started out living in his tent on the outskirts of town. He wasn't going to put his family at risk. He wasn't going to live in the city, he just wanted to be close. He didn't want to come under the influence of ungodliness. But there is nothing wrong with moving close, living on the edge of sin and temptation is there? But look at Genesis 14. A group of kings gathered together and fought against Sodom and carried off it's people and possession. Notice what the bible says. **"They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom."**

Genesis 14:12

No longer just living on the outskirts. Lot was now living with his daughters and family inside the city. Look what happens.

Lot gets himself kidnapped and it is uncle Abraham that rescues him and all his possessions and the other people and possessions of the city. Lot should have wised up. He should have told Abraham he was going another direction and getting away

from Sodom when he rescued him, but Lot went right back to Sodom. God gave him another chance to make the right decision but instead, Lot went right back to living in the middle of Sin City. **When God gives you another chance, take it!**

Notice the choice Abraham made. He brought back the people and the possessions and gave them to the king of Sodom. The king told him to keep the possessions as a reward for rescuing the people and Abraham told him, **“I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’” Genesis 14:23**

Abraham wanted nothing to do with Sodom, with its sin or its king or its reputation. He didn't want anyone to say that Abraham was made rich by his association with ungodly people or practices. Abraham took a hard line. I think it's time we take a hard-line stand against wickedness.

Understand, this isn't about saying that you are better than others. This isn't about judging sinners but it is about judgment – good judgment. Making choices based upon right judgment, knowing what will lead to sin and failure for you or your children or family. Refusing to even open the door to sin or to allow ungodly influence to begin to permeate your family. Men, it's time to act like Abraham and say “I don't want anything that has to do with sin or immorality or ungodliness – not even a thread or the thong of a sandal.” Take a stand even if it costs you. It may mean the job you take or the job you refuse. Two dollars an hour more if you work at the casino, but is that the job God wants you to have? It may be the video game you want but shouldn't have because it glorifies sin and violence. It may be the movies or music or clothes. It may be your stewardship, the use of your time, your relationships. We need wise and righteous judgment.

Bear in mind too, I'm not saying Lot was a terrible sinner. The bible refers to him as a righteous man. 2 Peter says, **“and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men...” 2 Peter 2:7.** He was distressed by the sin, but is that enough? To have an inward feeling of distress? But did he warn his family? Did he speak out against the sinfulness and did he take a stand for righteousness?

Look at Genesis 19 and allow me to quickly tell the story. Two angels came to

Sodom to rescue Lot and his family. They intended to sleep in the city square but Lot strongly insisted that they stay with him in his home. According to Eastern hospitality, he was bound to offer them food, safety and protection. That evening the men of the town came to Lot's home and threatened to break the door down, insisting that Lot send the two strangers out so they could have sex with them. This shows the extent of the depravity in Sodom, that the men of the city would participate in the homosexual gang rape of these strangers.

Lot does a strange thing, showing his determination to protect these heavenly visitors, he offers the men of Sodom his virgin daughters. I understand the cultural imperative that he protect his visitors with his own life, however, I don't understand his offering his own daughters. It seems to me that he had an obligation to protect his daughters as well. But furthermore, I believe he had stopped protecting them years before when he decided to raise his family under the influence of a godless and depraved city and culture.

Quickly, let me wrap this up and show you three final things. Look at Genesis 19:12-14. Lot came to his future sons-in-law, products of the culture of Sodom, and told them they must flee the city because God was preparing to destroy the place and they thought he was joking. Does that sound like a joke to you? It strikes me that perhaps God's view of Sodom and his view of such wickedness and sin had not exactly been a dinner time topic of conversation. You would think, as grieved as he was by the sinfulness, that he would have been talking about it with his family. You would think he would have said, "God is going to judge this place for its' sinfulness, just like I've been telling you. Now, let's get out of here." Instead, they thought he was joking.

Although Lot was saved, his testimony had been weakened by his compromise. His own family didn't take him seriously when he began to speak of spiritual things and of judgment. What is your testimony before your family? If God spoke to you and told you the judgment was coming upon this nation, would your family and friends listen to you and believe you, or has your testimony been affected by your spiritual and moral compromise? You're still saved, but is your testimony believable to those who know you best?

Look now at Genesis 19:15-16. The sons- in-law didn't take him seriously and

refused to leave. In the early morning the angels told Lot to take his wife and two daughters and run for their lives or they would be destroyed in the coming holocaust. But notice verse 16: Lot hesitated. Two angels just told you to run for your life and Lot hesitates? What's that about? **Although Lot was saved, his priorities had been affected by his compromise.** New American Standard says they seized his hand and that of his wife and daughters and they brought them out of the house and put them outside of the city. God's mercy was upon them but it sounds to me like the angels had to drag them out of their house and out of the city. They were so tied to that city. They were so bound to their possession, to the things and the comforts of the city that they didn't want to leave, even at the risk of losing their lives. Your priorities are all messed up when you love and value things and possessions more than you value your life and your family.

Don't let compromise affect your priorities. If an angel told you today that destruction was coming and you could save either all of your money and possessions or you could save your family, which would you choose? It's a silly question isn't it? At least I hope it is. Of course you would choose to save your family. Your family is much more important than stuff. Your family is of much more value than things and possessions. And since we all know that, and since you've admitted that, how about living like you believe that right now? How about putting your spouse and your children first, above the job, the hobby, the guys, making money. Don't let greed, pride, avarice, ambition, compromise, don't let anything cause your priorities to be distorted. Love God and serve him. Love your family and serve them. If the angels told you to get out, would they have to pry your hands off of anything or would you grab your family and run?

Finally, look at Genesis 19:36-38. Lot and his family managed to get out of Sodom, but his wife looked back and was destroyed. Lot and his daughters then are hiding in the mountains and they decide they need heirs so they get their father drunk and each of them have sex with their own father. This was an abomination to God, a sin, but I can't help but wonder, given the sexual immorality of Sodom, if the girls saw nothing wrong with their actions. Lot should have been teaching his children what was right and what was wrong. He should have been protecting them from the sinfulness of

their society and he should have been explaining the consequences of sin to them. Instead, they learned how to live like the people of Sodom. Maybe Lot never showed them any other way. How sad, not just for Lot, but for his daughters and future generations.

Although Lot was saved, his compromise produced terrible consequences.

The consequences of their sin affected not just Lot and his family, but generations of Israelites to come. Lot's daughters each had a son by their father. One was named Moab and the other Ben-Ammi. From their sons came the Moabites and the Ammonites, two groups who were perpetual enemies of Israel.

Lot loved God and was a righteous man. He didn't like all the sinfulness around him, but he was willing to put up with it in order to live in the city, to have nice things, to be recognized. He was no doubt carving out a good life. And he hadn't rejected God, he just compromised here and there, just made some adjustments to have a good life. And after all, what did it cost him? He and his family got out alive.

Yes, but it cost him his future sons-in-law. It cost him his wife. He ended up living in a cave with his daughters in the mountains. He lost the very thing he treasured and longed for - a life and home in the city. And finally he ends up in an incestuous relationship and becomes the father of two nations who were cursed and rejected by God. (Deuteronomy 23:3 says, "No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation.")

Compromise cost Lot more than he could have ever imagined. Men especially, let me ask you, are your priorities right before God? Are there areas in your life where you know you have compromised and you need to repent and make that right? Do you need to take a stand for righteousness in your own life? Are you a living a life that is a godly example for your wife and children to follow?

Lot could have taught his girls how to live without compromise. Lot could have lived in tents outside the city and taught them that honoring God was more important than living in ease. Lot could have taught his daughters that sin has consequences and always exacts too great a price. Lot could have put his family above everything else.

Lot could have....and so can you. Decide today. Will you compromise like Lot or will you stand like Abraham. Here is what God said about Abraham: **"For I have**

chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” Genesis 18:19

Will you live your life for God and do what is right and will you direct your children to keep the way of the Lord and do what is right? If you do, God will fulfill his promises in your life and in the lives of your children. Take a stand and serve the one who has chosen you. If you don't, you'll have to pay a price far greater than anything you could have imagined. The price of sin and compromise is far too great. Serve the Lord!