

SESSION 2

# ABRAHAM AND LOT: FAMILY RIGHTS

Leader pages on pp. 134-137

**THE POINT:**  
TRUST GOD WHEN  
CHALLENGED OVER  
YOUR RIGHTS OR  
POSSESSIONS.

## GENESIS 13:5-11,14-18

<sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. <sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> 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.) <sup>8</sup> So 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.

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<sup>9</sup> 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."

<sup>10</sup> Lot looked out and saw that the entire plain of the Jordan 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.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other.

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<sup>14</sup> 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, <sup>15</sup> **for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see.** <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you." <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

**Lot (v. 5)**—Lot's name means "concealed." He was the son of Haran, Abram's brother who had died in Ur of the Chaldeans.

**Entire plain (v. 10)**— Refers to the Jordan Valley. The Jordan Valley proper designates a strip of land between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, approximately seventy miles long.

**Give (v. 15)**—The Lord not only promised Abram innumerable offspring but also the land of Canaan as a permanent possession.

**Dust of the earth (v. 16)**— Although Abram and Sarai were childless, the patriarch would have so many descendants that they could not be counted.

# HOW CAN WE OVERCOME CONFLICT WITHIN THE FAMILY?

Open almost any source of social media, new media or traditional media and you'll find a platform awash in conflict, debate, and one-upmanship, especially during an election year like this one. It seems that civil discourse and listening have become a lost art.

The saga of Abram and Lot proves that some things about human nature never change. We've often heard people say, "If you don't defend yourself, who will?" It's the bent of self-preservation that often rules the day in relationships. As a family counselor might put it, "Do you want to be right, or do you want to be married?" Sometimes being right, being favored, or winning the property line battle is just not worth it.

We learn from Scripture that we are to be makers of peace in our personal relationships and families. Often this requires sacrifice. This takes a Christ-like faith and a charitable trust in God that He will work things out in His way and in His time.

## Face the Conflict // Genesis 13:5-8

In Genesis 12, God had promised to bless Abram and give him vast lands, properties, livestock, riches, and his own nation. Abram's offspring

would exceed the number of dust or grains of sand. When Abram left for God's promised land, he journeyed with his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot. As we enter chapter 13, God has blessed Abram and his nephew with riches and livestock. Abram seemed to have it all. Except, he still had no son, no heir. Perhaps he was tempted to rationalize God's promise of a son and would, at age 75, consider Lot as a sort of surrogate "answer" to his prayer and God's promise.

Once they arrived in Canaan, the Lord blessed Abram and Lot with increasingly large herds and flocks. God intended for Abram to have great wealth and vast lands. God was blessing Abram, as He promised. While Abram enjoyed the Lord's blessing of abundance, trouble was brewing. The abundance of livestock for Abram and Lot had overgrown the area's natural resources. The land could no longer sustain the flocks and herds. So, the shepherds and herdsmen became frustrated by getting in each other's way as they tended to their responsibilities causing quarreling among their herdsmen. A conflict broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot.

Abram did the right thing by discussing the matter with Lot one-on-one (Matt. 18:15). Abram went



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to his nephew privately. He did not want his family's argument over having enough land for their possessions to dishonor the Lord in the sight of the local community. During this conflict, the Canaanites and the Perizzites lived in the land and would have witnessed the conflict between Abram and Lot. The conflict resulted from natural circumstances from the overcrowded conditions, but the Lord used that situation to move forward with His purposeful blessing for Abram to inherit the promised land.

Sometimes, disputes or unrest arise so that, in our discomfort, we move closer to the plan God has ordained for us. That is what happened in Abram's conflict with Lot. Their separation moved God's plan of blessing forward for Abram to rely more fully on the Lord to have a son, a rightful heir.

Like Abram, believers should go to one another—alone—and work out their differences. And, like Abram, when we discuss our difficulties with the other person(s), we should follow Abram's example, by seeking to "restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

Our blessings may sometimes come through discomfort, but like Abram, we should remain calm and kind.

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ABRAM'S ACTIONS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLVING CONFLICT?

#### Find a Compromise // Genesis 13:9-11

Abram sought a peaceful solution to his problem with Lot. Seeing that their herdsmen began to quarrel, Abram took the initiative to resolve the conflict and avoided escalating it. Abram reasoned with Lot and discussed their options for parting ways and resettling in opposite directions. Throughout the conversation, Abram remained direct about the conflict and was diplomatic by seeking a solution rather than dwelling on whose fault it may have been for causing the conflict.

Abram was gracious and deferred to Lot, giving him his first choice of land options. Lot jumped at the opportunity to choose first. He chose the Jordan Valley which was lush and green because it was well watered. There was a noticeable lack of restraint in Lot. He gave no thought to dividing the lush lands of the plains. The land he chose was "easy money." But Lot was short-sighted. He chose profits over protecting his family's future from the evil influences of neighboring Sodom.

Instead of Lot deferring to his elder, Abram, Lot looked out, saw, and took—just like in the Garden of Eden, where Eve "saw that the



### DIGGING DEEPER THE TRUE INHERITANCE

In the Scripture passage, Lot and Abram had to part ways due to limited space for all of their possessions (Gen. 13:5-6). There was quarreling amongst them and their herdsmen, and Abram wanted peace between them since they were relatives, so he gave Lot his choice of where to settle (v. 7). Lot chose the better land (v. 11). However, Abram got the better deal. When Yahweh gave His promise to Abram, he said, "Look from the place where you are . . ." and described a physical land that he and his posterior could possess based on the area Abram would cover with his footsteps (vv. 14-15, 17). That seems well enough. However, the true inheritance did not come with a condition—namely, Abram's "countless" offspring (v. 16). When promised this to Abram, The Lord displayed His omniscience by foreshadowing the concept of believers being heirs by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:29).

**What deeper lesson does God desires to teach you through your interactions with family?**



tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So, she took some . . ." (Gen. 3:6).

Like Eve in the Garden, Lot lived by sight. Although Lot believed in God, he chose to live close to evil. Lot lost everything and lived in caves (Gen. 19:30). He lost his good name, his wife, his sons-in-law, and his surviving daughters lost their sense of shame (Num 25.1-3; Lev 20.2; 1 Kings 11.5,33).

Notice the four steps Lot took that led to his life of worldliness:

1. He and his herdsmen quarreled (13:7); anger is a selfish expression of the flesh.
2. He saw (13:10); that is the lust of the eyes.
3. He chose for himself the entire plain of the Jordan (13:11); this is pride in one's lifestyle.
4. He set up his tent near Sodom, and disaster (13:12); Lot positioned his family to be corrupted by their cultural surroundings.

Lot's choices remind us of John's warning to us, "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever" (1 John 2:16-17).

Although Abram could have pulled rank over Lot and claimed the land of his choice, he placed his faith in the will of God, and his inheritance "remains forever." Abram followed the LORD by faith and

continued in the Lord's blessing. As he aged, his estate grew in properties, cattle, herds, servants, and general wealth.

Philippians 2:3-4 tells us to "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others."

Abram reminds us to place the needs of others before our own.

### IN WHAT WAYS IS PUTTING OTHERS' NEEDS BEFORE YOUR OWN AN ACTIVE SIGN OF TRUSTING THE LORD?

## Focus on God's Course //

### Genesis 13:14-18

To better understand God's promise to Abram, consider God's premise for blessing him. Originally, God told Abram, "Go from your land, [and from] your relatives" (Gen. 12:1). Lot was a relative, his nephew. God's promise did not include Abram's current relatives. The Lord requires full obedience and full compliance with His commands.

Abram was a man of great faith, a spiritual man of great consequence. But when God showed Abram his land and promised, "To your offspring I will give this land" (Gen. 12:7), the Lord did not mention his current relatives.

It was not until Lot was gone that God showed Abram the full expanse of His blessing. "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, for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see.'"

There is no end date of God's promise to Abram. He and his offspring were promised this land—forever. At this point, Abram had no son, no heir. His only possible "surrogate" was now gone because of the contentious conflict. Abram trusted the Lord, who promised his offspring would increase in number "like the dust of the earth."

God told Abram, "Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it

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to you” Abram revealed his trust in God’s promise by moving his tent to another part of the land where he “built an altar” to worship the Lord. It is noteworthy that he did not build a house but an altar. He put the Lord first. Abram made worshiping the Lord a regular part of his life. He did not seek the Lord only when things were difficult. He worshiped in good times, too.

Lot, on the other hand, lost everything. Two angels warned Lot that Sodom was about to be destroyed. (Gen. 19:1-14). Lot ran from the destruction and lived in a cave (Gen. 19:15-30). God used a season of unwelcome conflict and tension to move Lot away, leaving Abram to trust more fully in the promises of God. Abram was now in the position and the place of God’s intended blessing. He eventually obeyed all the Lord commanded him, and some 4,000 years after Abram, his offspring live today in the same land we know as Israel.

Consider Abram’s devotion. After the Lord promised all the land, Abram’s response was to build yet another altar to the Lord. Abram had faith in the Lord, and God worked out the rest.

### WHY IS WORSHIP THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO RECEIVING GOD’S BLESSINGS?

### DID YOU KNOW?

A recent University of Pennsylvania study estimates that “White households inherit over 5.3 times as much as Black households . . .” and they are “. . . 2.8 times more likely than Black households to inherit any wealth.”<sup>14</sup> Administering an inheritance can be tumultuous. Family members can become estranged over the details of their loved one’s will. There are no simple answers, but as believers, we know “. . . one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). First John 2:16-17 says, “For everything in the world . . . and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but is from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” The Scriptures are littered with wisdom regarding material possessions, and perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn is not to hold too tightly to them, if not for our family’s sake, certainly for our souls.

**Biblical Truth:** “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” (Luke 9:25).

### What practical steps can we take to ensure generations after us have an inheritance?

## LIVE IT

### How can you apply the principles from Abram’s experience with Lot?

Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.” These are Jesus’s words regarding material things. The Heavenly Father knows what we need and He cares for us, so we don’t have to worry (1 Pet. 5:7). Our personal angst causes outward conflict (Jas. 4:1-2). If we continue trusting the Lord, we can calm the inner turmoil and release our death-grip on these earthly possessions, even when we have a right to them.

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- **Go to God.** Start by asking God for wisdom and guidance in this situation.
- **Go to the Source.** When you are aware of a potential family conflict, take the initiative by going directly to the person seeking a peaceful solution. Avoid discussing the problem with others, as that can escalate the situation.
- **Go Diplomatically.** When you meet, be argumentative or respond with emotional expressions. Go with a godly goal: restoration (Matt. 18:15 and Gal. 6:1).



# DAILY READINGS

## 1. BEYOND MEASURE // EPHESIANS 3:20, GENESIS 13:2

God is “able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think.” (Eph. 3:20) Imagine how Abram felt after leaving home, living through a famine, telling half-truths about his wife, and causing plagues for Pharaoh’s household in Genesis 12 to seeing how God had blessed him in Genesis 13:2. Despite the circumstances that surrounded Abram, God was still there blessing him. Not only was God at work in Abram’s life, but He is working things out for us as well. We serve an awesome God who can accomplish things in our lives that we can’t even phantom. For Abram, God blessed him with great riches, family, and a covenant (Gen. 17:4).

**What immeasurable things will God do in your life?**

## 2. MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE // GENESIS 13:10-13

“All that glitters is not gold” and “a diamond in the rough” are phrases that remind us that there is more than meets the eye. Abram gave Lot the right to choose directions. Lot chose the well-watered plains of the Jordan. Yet beyond the glitter was Sodom. “Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD” (Gen. 13:13). Abram went to Canaan, the “diamond in the rough,” later known as the Promise Land (Ex. 3:17). As Christians, we see people who say and do what seems right on the outside (glitter), but their hearts are far from God (Isa. 29:13).

**We must be mindful to look beyond the outward covering to the inward heart.**

## 3. FROM ALL DIRECTIONS // GENESIS 13:14-15

“Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see” (Gen. 13:14b-15). Abram had to be overwhelmed that God’s promised legacy would be the right of future generations of his family. God offers us a similar legacy. In John 14:14; 16:23, we are told that

whatever we ask in His name He will give it to us. Additionally, we are encouraged in Isaiah 65:24 that “even before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

**No matter what we our eyes see in the natural, the hand of God is working in the spiritual.**

## 4. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE // 1 PETER 4:8

“What’s Love Got to Do with It” is the question raised in a popular Tina Turner song and 1 Peter 4:8 supplies the answer. “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” God’s love is unconditional; however, man may show favoritism and partiality. Exalting people or things is a trap to avoid. This verse also reminds us that love covers a multitude of sins. For Tina, the sin of abuse was broken as she learned to love herself more. In families, love helps us see beyond the person’s faults. Moreover, for Christians, Jesus’s love paid the penalty of our sins. It was the love of God the Father, that moved Him to send God the Son, to save us from our sins (John 3:16).

**Love has everything to do with how we treat others. So, strive to love like God.**

## 5. SHOWING FAVOR // GENESIS 25:28

Good parents love their children, but if the truth be told most have a favorite child. A child may have certain qualities that appeal to one of the parents. For example, “Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob” (Gen. 25:28). Unfortunately, favoritism can place a wedge between children who might have otherwise loved one another and gotten along. It is the parents’ responsibility to ensure that all their children feel valued and not in conflict with one another. “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4). Allowing children to feel special is important but favoring them above others is dangerous.

**Let’s emulate God who chose Israel (Deut. 7:6), but grants favor to all who believe.**