

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM

“God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

SESSION #2: Genesis 13:1-18

TEXT:

v. 1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.

v. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

v. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier

v. 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

v. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

v. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.

v. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

v. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.

v. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.”

v.10 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. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

v.11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:

v.12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

v.13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

v.14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.

v.15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

v.16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

v.17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

v.18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.

INTRODUCTION:

Short & Funny

My wife and I had words, but I didn't get to use mine.

Frustration is trying to find your glasses without your glasses.

Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.

The irony of life is that, by the time you're old enough to know your way around, you're not going anywhere.

God made man before woman so as to give him time to think of an answer for her first question.

I was always taught to respect my elders, but it keeps getting harder to find one.

Every morning is the dawn of a new error.

The quote of the month is by Jay Leno:

“With hurricanes, tornados, fires out of control, mud slides, flooding, Severe thunderstorms tearing up the country from one end to another, and with the threat of bird flu and terrorist attacks, are we sure this is a good time to take God out of the Pledge of Allegiance?”

(Received via email from Brenda Lawless, May 2, 2007)

For Those of You . . .

A Florida senior citizen drove his brand new Lexus convertible out of the dealership. Taking off down the road, he floored it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left.

“Amazing,” he thought, as he flew down I-75, pushing the pedal even more.

Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw the highway patrol behind him, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120. Suddenly he thought, “What am I doing? I’m too old for this,” and pulled over to await the Trooper’s arrival.

Pulling in behind him, the Trooper walked up to the Lexus, looked at his watch and said, “Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Friday. If you can give me a reason for speeding that I’ve never heard before, I’ll let you go.”

The old gentleman paused . . . Then said, “Years ago, my wife ran off with a Florida State Trooper. I thought you were bringing her back.”

“Have a good day, Sir,” replied the Trooper.

(Received via email from Edrie Dalton, April 28, 2007)

Teacher Misspeaks on Valentine’s Day

A woman in our church presented the children’s sermon one February Sunday, telling the kids about Valentine’s Day and how we use it to honor the people we love. At the end of the sermon, she handed out a blank Valentine card to each child with the instruction, “Give the card to your parents—or to someone you like.”

Kim Sheard, “Lite Fare,” Today’s Christian (January/February 2005), p. 16

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Children's Boots Leave Teacher Frustrated

Did you hear the Texas tall tale about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots? He asked for help, and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. By the time they got the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?"

Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they gotten the boots off when he said, "They're my brother's boots. My mom made me wear 'em." Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry, but she mustered up what grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again.

Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots."

Submitted by John Beukema, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

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Conviction

Did you ever experience
a white-hot August day
when you were out a fixin' fence,
or, maybe haulin' hay?

Your skin will start to burnin'.
Your mouth gets awful dry.
Your eyes get kinda blurry,
and you'd swear your brain will fry.

Then, an idea glimmers.
It grows and starts to hatch.
Why not pay a visit
to the neighbor's melon patch?

You crawl through the bob wire,
and then you sneak on in.
Lust for watermelon
blinds your eyes to sin.

Just a thumpin' and a checkin',
you wander all about.
You don't take no shortcuts
to pick a good one out.

A fine, big ripe Black Diamond
gets ripped loose from the vine.
Just make it to a shade tree,
an' you'll be doin' fine.

You haul your bounty through the fence
and settle in the shade.
Your knife comes from your pocket,
an' you plunge in the blade.

She cracks an' pops as you cut the rind.
Then, you lay her open.
Red and juicy, perfect ripe,
just like you were hopin'.

You squat there 'neath that shade tree
in the johnsongrass and weeds,
juice a runnin' down your chin
an' spittin' out the seeds.

No one knows but you and God
as you carve and take your fillin'.
It really ain't a major crime,
takin' just one melon.

But, dang your conscience anyhow.
You wasn't raised that way.
You know you'll tell what you done
and offer then to pay.
pp. 26-27

(Still Lookin' by Joe Kreger) St. Louis, MO: Doane Agricultural Services Company. Copyright – Joe Kreger (poetry) and Doane Agricultural Services Company (book), 2000.

The Gambler

Don't need to go to Vegas
or bet long shots on the track.
This crap shoot I'm already in
can take the shirt right off your back.

Don't need to buy a roper
in a big Calcutta pool.
That kind of stuff is foolishness,
but I'm a bigger fool.

Don't need a short position
in the June pork belly trade.
That's a milder form of gamblin'
than the deal that I just made.

Don't need to watch a roulette wheel
or hear those old dice rattle.
I signed a note at twelve percent
and bought a load of cattle.
p. 107

Wife Prays for Husband to Die

The story is told of an elderly couple who lived together in a nursing home. Though they had been married for 60 years, their relationship was filled with constant arguments, disagreements, and shouting contests. The fights didn't stop even in the nursing home. In fact, the couple argued and squabbled from the time they got up in the morning until they fell in bed at night.

It became so bad that the nursing home threatened to throw them out if they didn't change their ways. Even then, the couple couldn't agree on what to do.

Finally, the wife said to her husband: "I'll tell you what, Joe, let's pray that one of us dies. And after the funeral is over, I'll go live with my sister."

Submitted by John Beukema, Chambersburg, Pennsy

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In our first study we noticed together that Abram received a command from the Lord to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and to go to the land of Canaan.

He was to leave his kindred and family. But Terah, his father, along with the rest of the family went on the expedition and made it to Haran where they remained for a period of about six years.

It was in Haran that **TERAH DIED** and Abram received a new message to move on to Canaan with the promise that the Lord was going to:

MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION,

BLESS HIM,

MAKE HIS NAME GREAT, and

BLESS THOSE WHO BLESSED HIM AND CURSE THOSE WHO CURSED HIM.

He then set out for Canaan, but Lot his nephew also traveled with him.

When Abram arrives in the land of Canaan he has **TWO SURPRISES** waiting for him:

1. the **CANAANITES** are living in the land and
2. there is a **FAMINE** that sets in.

Abram, without any instructions from the Lord makes a journey south to the land of Egypt. He is obviously out of the will of God in these circumstances, and reveals it by his conduct in the land.

At the end of our last study Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him and they escorted him away with his wife and all that belonged to him.

In order to get the context and to be able to get into chapter 13, I am going to pick up reading at Genesis 12:17 and read down to verse 20.

v.17 But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai.

v.18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?"

v.19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!"

v.20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

The most unsettling TV commercial in 1999 showed close-ups of three individuals bearing noticeable physical injuries and scars. There was no explanation—only a familiar logo at the end and the words, “Just do it.” What made the commercial moving was the Joe Cocker song playing throughout the background: “You are so beautiful . . . to me.”

Granted, the commercial was for shoes. But there was another message as well: true beauty and grace is not a matter of physical perfection. Some of the most refreshing people to be around are those who have overcome serious limitations in their lives. Their gracious attitude seems to say, “I may not have everything that’s possible, but I’m doing everything possible with what I have been given.”
(April 22)

Abram and his party have been beat up pretty badly and humiliated. You’ve got to give him credit. He is heading back to the presence of the Lord.

Anderson says:

Coming to his senses in the far country, the prodigal was heard to say: “I will arise and go to my father . . .” (Luke 15:18, KJV). As Genesis 13 opens, Abram begins an equally long journey home.

Thus far in our glimpse at his life, we’ve seen that Abram’s responses to the commands of God have been a jumble of partial obedience. At times, as in leaving Ur of the Chaldees, he did as God wanted him to, yet he also allowed himself to be waylaid in Haran for six long years. After arriving in the land of Canaan according to God’s plan, he stepped out of the will of God and stumbled into Egypt. There he embroiled himself and his wife on a skewer of lies and was ousted from the country by its angry pagan ruler.

Finally in Genesis 13 we find Abram leaving Egypt, at the beginning of a U-turn on his long trip back to the center of God’s will. We recall that God has obligated Himself to Abram by promising him four marvelous things: that He would make his name great, that he would bless him, that He would make him a “great nation,” that He would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him. God never starts a work He won’t finish, and He would be faithful in a mighty way even to His disobedient servant Abram.
p. 46

Boice says:

Abram had been in Egypt through a lack of confidence in God and had suffered humiliation there as a result of his unbelief. He had begun by doubting God. He left his place of worship. He grew self-confident. One sin led to another, and his own sin spread. He suffered the temporary loss of his wife. Finally, he was rebuked by Pharaoh.

As we said at the end of the last chapter, it was a sad, and no doubt greatly subdued, man who eventually led his little company back to Canaan. Yet Abram was wiser. He had doubted God once and had seen where that had led. As we read the opening verses of Genesis 13 we get a picture of the patriarch moving restlessly on until he reached Bethel, where he had been at first.

p. 479

Boice says further:

How foolish we are to fail in this. The Devil will tell us that we have sinned and can never go back; but God is the God of new beginnings. Someone has said that he is the God of the second chance. But he is even more gracious than this. He is the God, not merely of the second chance, but of the seventy-second chance or the hundred and seventy-second chance or whatever.

Abram had failed once. He had been called out of Ur but had stopped at Haran, wasting many precious years there. God called him; he had a new opportunity. He came to the land of promise, but he failed there also. He went down to Egypt. Abram got into a great deal of trouble before God got him out of Egypt. But at last he did get out and was restored to the place of blessing.

p. 480

He says still further:

The only way to get back into the will of God is to go back to the very cause of the departure, confess it, forsake it, and return to the place of fellowship.

p. 480

Candlish says:

Like Paul and Barnabas, the uncle and nephew ended the contention by an amicable separation; and in the parting, Abram manifests at once his faith and his forbearance. He is not careful to choose for himself; but is ready to defer to Lot (ver. 9). Relying on the sure promise of God, and having good hope through grace for the time to come, he can well afford, so far as the scenes and interests of his present pilgrimage are concerned, to act disinterestedly and generously. Nor has he any cause to regret it afterwards. Lot, judging by sight and sense, rather than by faith, is attracted by the beauty and fertility of the plain of the Jordan,—its fruitful gardens and flourishing cities (ver. 10),—without sufficiently taking into account the wickedness of its inhabitants, which has already become notorious (ver. 13). He judges according to the world's judgment, and narrowly escapes the world's doom. Abram, walking by faith, and not anxious about an earthly portion, receives the promise of an eternal inheritance.

pp. 194-95

Gangel & Bramer says:

Expelled from Egypt, Abram headed northeast back to the Negev **with his wife and everything he had**. These verses also tell us that Abram **had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold**. Twice now Genesis has emphasized Abram's wealth (12:5, 16). But both God and Abram knew that the Negev was only a temporary rest area on the interstate highway of his life.

p. 123

Hughes says:

The record of Abram's fiasco in Egypt is the story of a man of faith. His scandalous attempt to represent Sarai as his sister was not the act of a man devoid of real faith, but of a man who had succumbed to doubt, whose trust had devolved to distrust. Despite the fact that he had descended to such self-serving deception, Abram was yet a man of faith. Abram's faith was not window dressing or a rabbit's foot or fire insurance. It was the real thing, but in temporary retreat.

On the momentous day when he left Ur, he had rested everything on the bare word of God. He obeyed and went out, though he had no idea where he was going. He believed God's promise that great blessing would come both *upon* him and *through* him. Then, in Canaan, he believed God when God said, "To your offspring I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7). But in Egypt he exhibited a distrust that was not consonant with the faith in his heart of hearts.

Abram was like us, a paradoxical mixture of self-centered reliance and trust in God.

p. 197

Kidner says:

The lifelong test of Abram's obedience to the vision takes a new turn in this chapter in the temptation to self-assertion against Lot, and in the lure of the cities of the plain. With the promised land failing him again (6), this time with what must have seemed a permanent inadequacy, the common-sense course was to abandon it for something more fertile.

p. 117

McGee says:

In chapter 13 we see the return of Abram from the land of Egypt. Abram and Lot leave Egypt and return to the land of promise. Lot separates from Abram and goes to Sodom, and then God appears to Abram for the third time. As long as Abram is in the land of Egypt and as long as he is still holding on to Lot, God does not appear to him. The minute that he comes back to the land and there is the separation from Lot, God appears to him.

p. 60

Phillips says:

The Egyptian episode was over and Abram, a sadder and a wiser man, crossed into the promised land for the second time. No doubt he promised himself he would never again step out of the will of God.

p. 119

Stigers says:

Chapter 13 instructs us that one may safely leave to God the disposition of His promised blessings, that what God has promised He is able to fulfill. But before this may be presented to us, Abram must be restored to proper relationship to Yahweh. This was accomplished at Bethel.

p. 144

Waltke says:

Though Abraham fails the tests of faith and ethics, God proves faithful. Though we are unfaithful, he is faithful (2 Tim. 2:13) and takes pity upon his children (Ps. 103:13). He supernaturally intervenes to protect his own, though this is not always so (1 Kings 18:13; Heb. 11:35b-38), and he even enriches Abraham materially. Nevertheless, Abraham pays a price. He loses God's voice, builds no altar, and brings no blessing on others. Instead of blessing, he brings a rebuke upon himself.

pp. 216-17

Waltke says further:

Paradoxically, whereas in the previous scene the plot's tension arose out of the severity of famine, the plot tension of this scene arises out the prosperity of Abraham and his nephew Lot. On a deeper level, the plot's tension involves a test of character for both men. Will Lot defer to his esteemed uncle and benefactor or assert his own self-interest? Will Abraham give up his right to choose in order to retain peace with his kinsmen and trust God to give him the Promised Land? Abraham, not Lot, proves the worthy covenant partner.

p. 219

Wiersbe says:

The practical lesson from all of this is simply *near abandon your altar*. Stay in fellowship with the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. If you have disobeyed and God is disciplining you, *go back to the place where you left Him and make things right*. Remember: “The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.” That is not an excuse for sin, but it is an encouragement for repentance.
p. 73

I feel like a good hymn for us to sing as we begin this particular study is, Charlotte Elliott’s hymn:

Just As I Am

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, tho’ tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am—Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome pardon, cleanse, relieve.
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am! Thy love unknown
Hath broken every barrier down.
Now to be Thine, yea Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

“Just As I Am” by Charlotte Elliott. *Sing to the Lord Hymnal* © 1993 by Lillenas Publishing Co., Kansas City, MO. #343

I found this great note in a newsletter this past week:

“If there was any other condition that would be better for you than the condition you are now in, God would have placed you there.”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

v. 1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

So Abram left Egypt and went back to the Negev, he and his wife and everything he owned, and Lot still with him.

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

So Abram went up from Egypt into the Negev. He took his wife and all his possessions with him, as well as Lot

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Faced with a problem of survival because of their many possessions . . . and ensuing strife . . . sheiks Abram and Lot had to separate, one going one way and the other another. One might have expected that Abram, the recipient of God's promise, would have exercised his right and chosen first. But he magnanimously offered the first choice to Lot. Lot made his choice purely on the human level, satisfying himself with the fat of the land. Abram's decision to let Lot choose first was undoubtedly a choice made by faith, with Abram not looking on things temporal, but on things spiritual, that is, God's promise.

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:**

Chapter 13 shows how faith solves strife. One might say that generosity is a sign of faith in God's promises, for faith does not selfishly seek one's own desires, but is generous, magnanimous, and self-denying.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says finally:

Verses 1-4 provide the setting for the story, but that setting is a story in itself. It is one of conflict in the midst of God's blessings. The first few verses stress the return of **Abram to the place** where he had been at the beginning. Here one cannot help but see the emphasis placed on **earlier** and **first . . .** in describing his return to the land . . . Back in the land, Abram renewed his worship and proclamation of **the LORD . . . at an altar . . .**

The word **"SO"** that begins verse 1 **POINTS US BACK** to:

Genesis 12:17-20 and

their **FORCED EXODUS** from Egypt perpetrated by Pharaoh himself.

In response to the Pharaoh's command he left the land of Egypt and took his wife and all of the possessions that he had acquired while there. Lot also went with him.

Barnhouse says:

Our God is the God of the second opportunity—and of the seventy-second. We can always begin afresh with the God of grace. We are the people of God and Abraham is the father of all who believe. God's dealings with him are a pattern of what we may expect from our Father.

We often go down into Egypt and God always waits for us to return. He creates difficulties for us in Egypt so that we may long for the grapes of His land and the blessings of His communion. Swine-husks are often the *hors d'oeuvres* before the fatted calf. The only way to get back into the will of God is to go back to the very cause of the departure, confess it, forsake it, and return to the place of fellowship.

p. 84

Boice says:

Who was Lot? He was the son of Abram's brother Haran, who had remained behind in the land of the Chaldeans when Abram went to Canaan. One might expect that Lot would have remained with his father. But either caught up in the enthusiasm of Abram's decision to be a pilgrim or else merely desiring a change or a bettering of his condition, Lot went with Abram. He was swept into the current of Abram's faith. F. B. Meyer says that he was like Pliable in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He would have thought that he was as much in earnest about spiritual things as Abram. But he was mistaken. Consequently, when the real tests came he chose the world and its rewards, thus escaping destruction with nothing but his soul's salvation.

Have you known people like this? I have. Apparently F. B. Meyer had too. He wrote,

In every great religious movement there always have been and always will be a number of individuals who cast in their lot with it, without knowing the power which inspires it. Beware of them! They cannot stand the stress of the life of separation to God. The mere excitement will soon die away from them; and, having no principle to take its place, they will become hindrances and disturbers of the peace. As certainly as they are harboured in the camp, or their principles are allowed within the heart, they will lower the spiritual tone; allure to worldly policy; suggest methods which would not otherwise occur to us; and draw us toward the Egypt-world.

Nothing but supreme principle can carry any one through the real, separated, and surrendered life of the child of God. If you are prompted by anything less, such as excitement, enthusiasm, fashion, contagious example—you will first be a hindrance, and end by being a failure. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves. And, if you are consciously acting from a low and selfish motive, ask God to breathe into you his own pure love.

pp. 480-81

Thomas says:

We can imagine Abraham's feelings as the caravan slowly wended its way out of Egypt and as he came back to the land of Canaan. Note the phrase "at the beginning" (ver. 3), and "unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first" (ver. 4), and "called on the name of the Lord" (ver. 4). We read of no such altar or prayer in Egypt. Abraham seems to have been out of communion there. Now, however, he does the only possible thing—he returns to where he had been at the commencement; he came back to the true surrender and simple worship of his earliest days in Canaan. Whenever we backslide there is nothing else to do but to come back by the old gateway of genuine repentance and simple faith (Ps. xxiii, 3; 1 John i. 9).

p. 120

Thomas says further:

A Believer's false step.—Abraham went aside out of the path of God's will; he was occupied with circumstances instead of with God. He only saw the famine, not the divine faithfulness. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. xxviii. 26). "A crust with God is better than a feast without Him."

pp. 120-21

Wenham says:

These verses describe Abram's journey from Egypt to the heart of Canaan near Bethel.

1 . . . "He went up" is the usual term to describe journeys from Egypt to Canaan. One goes down to Egypt (12:10) and up to Canaan.

p. 295

v. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

By now Abram was very rich, loaded with cattle and silver and gold.

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

(Now Abram was very wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold.)

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Rather significant to this section is the stress on the wealth of **Abram** (13:2, **very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold**) and on that of **Lot** who traveled with him (v. 5, **flocks and herds and tents**). They had both greatly prospered. **Lot** specifically is singled out as having tents, a fact to be developed later.

Abram's wealth is described for us in **THREE WORDS:**

1. **"LIVESTOCK,"**
2. **"SILVER,"** and
3. **"GOLD."**

This is the first time we have recorded of someone who is wealthy in the Bible.

There are **TWO THINGS** that Abram got while he was in the land of Egypt that would lead to future problems for him:

1. the **MAID HAGAR**—who is going to figure into the story in just a little while, and
2. the **WEALTH** which he was able to acquire **“IN LIVESTOCK AND IN SILVER AND GOLD”** while he was in the land of Egypt.

Waltke says:

wealthy. Hebrew *kābēd* is translated “severe” in 12:10, inviting a contrast of Abraham’s situation before and after he goes to Egypt. This also sets the stage for the strife between his herdsmen and Lot’s in the following scene.
p. 215

v. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

He moved on from the Negev, camping along the way, to Bethel, the place he had first set up his tent between Bethel and Ai

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

And he journeyed from place to place from the Negev as far as Bethel. He returned to the place where he had pitched his tent at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai.

Abram is on the long trek back to the will of God. The safest thing to do when you have missed God's will or gone out of it is to return to the place of departure and to begin again.

How faithful God is as He watches Abram go into Egypt and He waits for Abram to return—with arms of love and grace outstretched. God has a second opportunity for Abram. Not only a second but a seventy-second. You can always begin afresh with a God of grace who waits to love, forgive, and to trade the swine husks in the pig pen for the fatted calf at the banqueting table.

God has providentially created difficulties in the land of Egypt so that Abram would long for the land and for home.

Psalm 23:1-6

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want [I shall lack nothing].
 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 he leads me beside quiet waters,
 he restores my soul.
 He guides me in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
 Even though I walk
 through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil,
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies.
 You anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.
 Surely goodness and love will follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
 forever.

Psalm 37:23-24

If the Lord delights in a man's way,
 he makes his steps firm;
 though he stumble, he will not fall,
 for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

When you leave or miss the Lord's will, it is best to go back to the place you left.

Abram comes back to Bethel—the house of God. His tent once again is placed where it had been at the beginning—facing Bethel and away from Ai, “the heap of ruins.”

I'm sure he is probably singing along with John Denver:

Back Home Again

John Denver

There's a storm across the valley, clouds are rolling in,
the afternoon is heavy on your shoulders.

There's a truck out on the four lane, a mile or more away,
the whining of his wheels just makes it colder.

He's an hour away from riding on your prayers up in the sky
and ten days on the road are barely gone.

There's a fire softly burning, supper's on the stove,
but it's the light in your eyes that makes him warm.

Hey, it's good to be back home again.
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend.
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again.

There's all the news to tell him, how's you spend your time,
and what's the latest thing the neighbors say?
And your mother called last Friday, "Sunshine" made her cry
and you felt the baby move just yesterday.

Hey, it's good to be back home again.
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend.
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again.

Oh, the time that I can lay this tired old body down,
and feel your fingers feather soft upon me.
The kisses that I live for, the love that lights my way,
the happiness that living with you brings me.

It's the sweetest thing I know of, just spending time with you.
It's the little things that make a house a home.
Like a fire softly burning and supper on the stove,
the light in your eyes that makes me warm.

Hey, it's good to be back home again.
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend.
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again.

Hey, it's good to be back home again.
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long lost friend.
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again.
I said hey, it's good to be back home again.

<http://www.seeklyrics.com/lyrics/John-Denver/Back-Home-Again.html>

Anderson says:

And we see that Abram “went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai” (13:3). Abram returned at last to Bethel, literally “the house of God.” He began again to live in his tent, which was an indication, remember, of his life as a pilgrim. He was a man back at the starting point, having come full circle on his return to the Master plan.

p. 47

Barnhouse says:

We remember the familiar words, “He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psalm 23:3, RSV). All Christians get out of the will of God at times, and many remain out for long periods. That is why God has given us such minute details of His process of restoration. Bethel is always where we left it.

p. 85

Gangel & Bramer say:

. . . Abram came to **Bethel** as if on a pilgrimage. **Bethel** was about sixty miles north of Beersheba and just ten miles north of Jerusalem. The area is known as Beitin or sometimes Beit El. During the days of the judges, the ark of the covenant rested here for a while (Judg. 20:26-28). **Bethel** literally means “house of God.” In later years Hosea called it *Beth-aven*, referring to it as a house of wickedness.

p. 123

Henry says:

His removal to Beth-el, v. 3, 4. Thither he went, not only because there he had formerly had his tent, but because there he had formerly had his altar. Long afterwards God sent Jacob to this same place on that errand (*ch.* [35]. 1. We have need to be reminded of our solemn vows; and perhaps the place where they were made may help to bring them afresh to mind, and it may therefore do us good to visit it.

p. 27

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

His progress would be by slow marches and frequent encampments as he had to regulate his movements by the prospect of water and pasturage. **unto the place . . . between Beth-el and Hai**—“A conspicuous hill—its topmost summit resting on the rocky slopes below, and distinguished by its olive groves—offering a natural base for the altar and a fitting shade for the tent of the patriarch” [STANLEY].
p. 25

v. 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

and built his first altar. Abram prayed there to GOD.

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

This was the place where he had first built the altar, and there Abram worshiped the Lord.

He **RETRACES HIS STEPS**, not only to the point of putting his tent to where it once was, but the record says to the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly.

It is at this point that **“ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.”**

The altar declares his dependence upon God. Abram realizes that he has made a mistake, that he has been out of the will of God. So he retraces his steps and calls upon the name of the Lord. His prayer was probably similar to that of David in:

Psalm 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compassion
 blot out my transgressions.
 Wash away all my iniquity
 and cleanse me from my sin.
 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are proved right when you speak
 and justified when you judge.
 Surely I was sinful at birth,
 sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
 you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
 wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
 Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
 Hide your face from my sins
 and blot out all my iniquity.
 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
 and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
 Do not cast me from your presence
 or take your Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
 and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

Psalm 84:1-2

How lovely is your dwelling place,
 O Lord Almighty!
 My soul yearns, even faints,
 for the courts of the Lord;
 my heart and my flesh cry out
 for the living God.

You will notice there is **NO RECORD THAT LOT:**

“BUILT AN ALTAR” or

“CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.”

Anderson says:

In Genesis 13 Abram returned to the “house of God.” We can sense afresh that he experienced God’s grace. He had left the husks of a pigpen in Egypt and had come back home to his Father, to the fatted calf and the banqueting table. As Psalm 23:3 says, “He restores my soul.” God is in the business of restoring us as we come back to his will. Psalm 37:23-24 states:

The steps of a man are established by the Lord;
 And He delights in his way.
 When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong;
 Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand.

p. 49

Bush says:

From the manner in which ‘the place of the altar’ is mentioned it would seem that this was the main attraction that drew him to the spot. With his heart set, not upon his earthly possessions, but upon his heavenly inheritance, he measured his steps to the place where he might ‘compass God’s altar,’ and renew those delightful experiences which still dwelt upon his memory.

pp. 211-12

Hughes says:

Again “Abram called upon the name of the LORD.” He renewed his lapsed obedience. He proclaimed that Yahweh was Lord in dark, pagan Canaan, just as his Sethite forebears had done amidst the darkness of the pre-flood world (cf. 4:26). The sin and fiasco of Egypt was now behind Abram. This was a fresh start.

p. 198

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

He felt a strong desire to reanimate his faith and piety on the scene of his former worship: it might be to express humility and penitence for his misconduct in Egypt or thankfulness for deliverance from perils—to embrace the first opportunity on returning to Canaan of leading his family to renew allegiance to God and offer the typical sacrifices which pointed to the blessings of the promise.

p. 26

MacArthur says:

Significantly, after the disastrous situation in Egypt, Abram journeyed back to where he had erected an altar and there he again worshiped (see 12:8).

p. 31

McGee says:

Although he may stumble and fall, this man comes back to God. There is always a way back to the altar for Abram, the Prodigal Son, and any man or woman who wants to come back to God. The arms of the Father are open to receive them.

p. 60

Wenham says:

. . . the narrator is surely suggesting that Abram is trying to recapture his previous experience of God. The only difference this time is that he does not need to build an altar: the old one is still there, perhaps implying that the promises still stand too.

p. 296

(Perfect Peace by Lloyd John Ogilvie) Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House.
Copyright — Lloyd John Ogilvie, 2001.

The first step to this kind of peace, according to Isaiah, is to stay our minds on God. “You will keep him in *shalom, shalom*, whose mind is stayed on You.”

p. 15

Practically, this means that God’s superlative peace is given to those whose minds are intentionally riveted on Him.

p. 15

Abram came back to where he:

“HAD FIRST BUILT AN ALTAR. THERE ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.”

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

. . . I am all Thine; take me, and enable me to glorify Thee *now*, “in all that I say, in all that I do, and with all that I have.”

p. 92

The Lord help you to bow your spirit in submission to the divine will ere you fall asleep this night, that waking with to-morrow’s sun, you may go forth to the day’s cross with the holy and submissive spirit which becomes a follower of the Crucified.

p. 109

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

GUESS WHO MOVED?

For the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD, but His secret counsel is with the upright.

PROVERBS 3:32

A couple was driving home from their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary dinner, she in the passenger seat and he behind the wheel. Dreamily, the wife said, “Honey, remember when we used to sit right next to each other in the car?” The husband answered, “Well, sweetheart, I haven’t moved. I’ve been right here all the time.”

Sometimes Christians remember the early days of their walk with God. They have memories of a more intimate relationship with God. Over time, that relationship became formal and distant. But God never wanted it that way; He desires intimate relationships with all His children.

Abraham, the friend of God, found out just how close God wants to be. Before destroying Sodom, God said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?” (Genesis 18:17). God shared His plans with His friend and gave Abraham the chance to respond—which he did! Christianity is a relationship, not a religion; and relationships demand time together if they are to grow. If God wanted to tell you a secret, would you be available?

If God doesn’t seem as close as He used to, guess who moved?

p. 14

(Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2002.

Prayer does not always change the situation and make it better, but prayer always changes us and makes us better.

p. 348

(In Every Pew Sits A Broken Heart by Ruth Graham) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. Copyright – Ruth Graham, 2004.

*Excessive busyness can be a trap.
Make time for rest during transition. Learn to be still.
Spend time with God.
He will give you direction when he is ready
and when he knows you are ready.*

p. 127

*God is not in a hurry.
If you feel rushed to make a decision,
then stop and ask yourself why.
Listen to your close friends and advisers.*

p. 140

(Age Doesn't Matter Unless You're a Cheese by Kathryn & Ross Petras) New York, NY: Workman Publishing. Copyright – Kathryn & Ross Petras, 2002.

I learned that one can never go back, that one should not ever try to go back—that the essence of life is to go forward. Life really is a One Way Street.

WRITER AGATHA CHRISTIE

p. 44

(A Treasury of Wisdom: Daily Inspiration from Favorite Christian Authors compiled by Ken and Angela Abraham) Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour. Copyright – Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1998.

We must simply and constantly look to Christ to think His thoughts in us, to form His purposes in us, to feel His emotions and affections in us.

p. 242

Being in Christ, all that we have to do to abide (or continue) in Christ is simply to renounce our self-life. We must utterly renounce every thought, purpose, desire, and affection of our own and continually look to Jesus Christ for His thoughts, purposes, affections, and desires in us.

pp. 242-3

Edison Taught Employee Not to Fear Failure

In *Shepherd Leadership*, authors McCormick and Davenport remind Christian leaders to allow for second chances and gently restore the fallen. They write:

Thomas Edison filed an impressive 1,093 patents with the U.S. Patent Office, and behind each one of those 1,093 successes lay hundreds and sometimes thousands of failures. Edison mastered the art of recovering from failure with lessons in hand and sought to pass it on to his workers. Near the end of his career, a former worker, Alfred Tate, penned the following letter to his former boss: "Above all you taught me not to be afraid of failure; that scars are sometimes as honorable as medals."

Citation: Blaine McCormick and David Davenport, *Shepherd Leadership* (Josex-Bass, 2003), p. 27; submitted by Rubel Shelly, Franklin, Tennessee

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Genesis 4:26

. . . At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

Psalm 4:1

Answer me when I call to you,
O my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 4:3

Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord will hear when I call to him.

v. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also rich in sheep and cattle and tents.

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents.

The record tells us that Lot also went with Abram into Egypt and evidently he had a successful tenure there as well, because his possessions increased along with those of Abram's

The **DIFFERENCE** between these two men and their possessions is that:

Abram had flocks, but flocks didn't have him.

Lot had flocks, but the flocks had him.

He is a Christian who is possessed by his possessions.

Benjamin Franklin said:

“There are two passions which have a powerful influence in the affairs of men, these are ambition and avarice.” The love of power and the love of money. Separately each of these have great force in prompting man to action. When united in view of the same object they have produced the most violent effects.”

(source unknown)

Thus Lot became a mean-minded, close-fisted, money-loving man who put things before God.

As I had mentioned earlier:

YOU NEVER SEE LOT AT THE ALTAR.

PAUL, in 2 Timothy 3:1-7, describes the later days and in the description gives us a pretty good description of Lot and what he became:

2 Timothy 3:1-7

But be knowing this, that in the last days hard times will set in. For men will be fond of themselves (selfish), lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy. Without natural affection, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, not loving the good. Traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and turn away from such men as these. For of these are those who are worming their way into houses and captivating silly women having been overwhelmed by their sins, who are being led on by various desires. Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Corinthians 3:15

If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

With the fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrah still smoldering in his britches, Lot is just going to make it in.

2 Peter 2:7-8

and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds),

Anderson says:

Abram had flocks, but the flocks didn't possess him. Lot, on the other hand, had flocks, and the flocks owned him. He allowed the sheep, cattle, and material riches he had accumulated to control his life. Lot was a believer who was possessed by his possessions, who was more concerned with the material than the spiritual. Lot allowed the experiences he had in Egypt to turn his head toward the "good life," to point him toward worldly pleasures and away from a relationship with God. It was a tragedy. There was another tragedy as well. We never see an altar in Lot's life. We never see him coming back to God, like Abram did, saying, "Lord, I really failed you while I was in Egypt. I'm sorry." It's Abram whom we see asking for forgiveness—it's never Lot.

Ben Franklin put it so well when he said: "There are two passions which have a powerful influence in the affairs of men. These are ambition and avarice. The love of power and the love of money are a dangerous combination. . . . When united in view of the same object, they have produced the most violent of effects." It's a tragic statement, but it's descriptive of Lot. He was mean-minded, close-fisted, money-loving; he put things before God.
p. 51

Barnhouse says:

Abram had flocks but the flocks did not have him; Lot had flocks and the flocks possessed him. It is a terrible thing when a Christian is possessed by his possessions. The love of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10).
p. 86

American Children Taught Materialism

A comprehensive *U.S. News & World Report* article from 2004 revealed several surprising statistics regarding kids and consumerism. Researchers found that children, even very young ones, are significantly targeted and influenced by advertisers:

- 26 percent of kids age 2 and under have a TV in their room.
- Advertisers spend \$15 billion a year telling them what's hot.
- The average American child sees 40,000 commercials a year.
- Children recognize logos by 18 months; by 2 years of age, many ask for products by brand name.

The article also revealed that American parents do little to correct this trend; instead, they seem to be encouraging it.

- American kids get an average of 70 new toys a year.
- In 1984, children ages 4–12 spent \$4.2 billion of their own pocket money. In 2004, they were estimated to spend \$35 billion.
- In 2004, children were predicted to influence \$670 billion worth of parental purchases—both small (which snacks to buy) and large (which SUV).

*Katy Kelly and Linda Kulman, "Kid Power," www.usnews.com (9-13-04);
submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec, Canada*

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v. 6 **But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.**

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

But the land couldn't support both of them; they had too many possessions. They couldn't both live there—

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

But the land could not support them while they were living side by side. Because their possessions were so great, they were not able to live alongside one another.

The word **"BUT"** that begins verse 6 forms the **CONTRAST** to verse 5:

they were "moving about" together

"BUT THE LAND COULD NOT SUPPORT THEM WHILE THEY STAYED TOGETHER."

The **REASON** is given:

"FOR THEIR POSSESSIONS WERE SO GREAT THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER."

The magnitude of their possessions plus the size of their herds and flocks had become a separating wedge between them.

There was just not enough pasture land for the flocks of both of them so that they could remain in the same vicinity.

Waltke says:

Ironically, the problem is the “severity” of blessing that causes strife among family.
p. 220

v. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

quarrels broke out between Abram's shepherds and Lot's shepherds. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living on the land at the time.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

So there were quarrels between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. (Now the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land at that time.)

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

But in the midst of the land, with **Canaanites and Perizzites** around them, **quarreling** broke out . . . (The Perizzites were one of several tribes living in Palestine, usually listed with the Canaanites; . . . **The land could not** sustain Abram and Lot dwelling **together**, because the Canaanites held the best parts, so these two men's servants had to scrap for water and food in the rest. When faced with this dilemma, a strife . . . broke out.

Here we have the sad story of strife and conflict between the employees of Abram and Lot. Their problem centers in the fact that there is not enough pasture land for the animals and so the conflict has set in as to whose herds will be in which pastures.

Philippians 2:14-15

Be doing all things without secret complainings and inward questionings; in order that you may become blameless and innocent, children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked (dishonest) and depraved (distorted) generation, among whom you are shining as lights in the world,

The conflict had just shown up on the employee level and had not yet reached Abram and Lot.

Philippians 2:3-4

doing nothing from selfish ambition or from empty conceit, but with humility of mind regarding one another as excelling themselves; not looking out each one for his own interests, but also each one the interests of others.

It is sad here that the Canaanites and Perizzites who are dwelling in the land should witness the conflict that is going on. How tragic it is for those who do not know Christ to observe the difficulties among us as believers. Our immaturity and our inability to forgive and to dwell together in unity. So often times those who do not know Christ fail to listen to what we have to say because of what we are.

Keil & Delitzsch say:

. . . the land did not furnish space enough for the numerous herd t graze. Consequently disputes arose between the two parties of herdsmen. The difficulty was increased by the fact that the Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land, so that the space was very contracted.

p. 199

Parker says:

No doubt their flocks helped to lessen the pasture which had already suffered from want of water, but I wonder whether we are not entitled to say that Abram did not want these strangers to hear any quarrelling amongst the Lord's people. As if he had said: "They are pagans; they are to be sent away from this land; they know not our God; but if we fight and bicker, and if we assail and devour one another, they must think evil of our religion, and they may secretly despise our God. Let us not share our call and our destiny before the worshippers of idols."

p. 202

Radmacher & Allen say:

. . . the point of this phrase is that the land was already populated; Abram and Lot did not come into a region that was empty. They had to compete for available land for their rapidly growing herds and flocks.

p. 28

Thomas says:

Very significantly we read that "The Canaanite and Perizzite dwelled then in the land." This statement suggests not only the circumstance that accentuated the difficulty of obtaining pasturage, but also the fact that the heathen around must have seen and overheard this quarrel between the servants of God's children. Herein lay one of the saddest elements of the matter.

p. 123

Wiersbe says:

Abraham may have failed the first two tests, but he passed this third test with great success. The test was not an easy one, for it involved land and wealth; but Abraham is the example of what every believer should do when there are disputes about material things.

Abraham determined to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker. The problem between Abraham and Lot was not caused by the land, the famine, their wealth (both of them were rich), or even their herdsmen (13:7). *The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart.* Lot's heart was centered on wealth and worldly achievement, while Abraham wanted only to please the Lord. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)
p. 73

Determining Our Quality of Life

From his hospital bed on the eve of open heart surgery, Pastor Bruce McIver asked his cardiologist, Dr. Dudley Johnson, "Can you fix my heart?"

The physician, known for being short and to the point, said, "Sure." Then he quickly turned and walked away.

Following the 12-hour surgery, McIver asked Johnson, "In light of the blocked arteries that I had when I checked into the hospital, how much blood supply do I now have?"

"All you'll ever need," replied the terse surgeon, who again ended the conversation by walking away.

Upon his discharge from the hospital, McIver's wife, Lawanna, asked the doctor, "What about my husband's future quality of life?"

Johnson paused and then said, "I fixed his heart; the quality of his life is up to him."

Bruce McIver, "Stories I Couldn't Tell While I Was a Pastor" (Guideposts, 1991), p. 244-247; submitted by Hugh Poland, Kingwood, Texas

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(Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 2003.

To be alive means to be in conflict. People fight. Sometimes they fight a lot, sometimes a little; sometimes constructively, sometimes destructively; sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly. Sometimes fights end in hugs and kisses and new depths of intimacy; sometimes they end in screaming and loss of control; sometimes they end in coldness and withdrawal.

To be alive means to be in conflict. It's part of the Dance of the Porcupines. People may not be normal, but conflict surely is—at least in our world. It is an inescapable part of being an “as-is” human being.
pp. 130-31

v. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have fighting between us, between your shepherds and my shepherds. After all, we’re family.”

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no quarreling between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are close relatives.”

Psalm 133:1-3

How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron’s beard,
down upon the collar of his robes.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

I call chapter 13 the:

SO-SO CHAPTER.

verse 1—“So Abram.”

verse 8—“SO ABRAM.”

verse 18—SO ABRAM.”

Abram is the older of the two in this situation and he challenges Lot with no strife on **TWO LEVELS:**

1. **BETWEEN HE AND LOT** or
2. **BETWEEN THE HERDSMEN OF THE TWO.**

And then he gives the **REASON:**

“FOR WE ARE BROTHERS.”

Whenever there is strife, it is someone standing for his rights. As Christians we have no rights, we surrendered those to our heavenly Father at the cross of Calvary.

Someone has said:

“No one has a right except the right to spend eternity without Christ. Everything else is ours by grace.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Abram's cautionary note—**Let's not have any quarreling . . .**—must have struck a responsive note in the hearts of Israel when later they read this in conjunction with what happened at Meribah . . . In that wilderness there was no water to drink and the people strove with Yahweh so that Moses smote the rock. Thereafter, Massa (“testing”) and Meribah (“quarreling”) became ominous names because the people out of unbelief provoked Yahweh and were sent to wander in the wilderness until they died . . . Their selfishness exhibited unbelief . . . so that they did not enter the land . . . Here too Lot's choice was totally selfish; so he left Abram and went off toward **Sodom** . . . God's warning . . . was almost like Abram's warning . . .

Henry says:

1. His petition for peace was very affectionate: *Let there be no strife, I pray thee.* Abram knew how to turn away wrath with a soft answer; he made the first overture of reconciliation. The people of God should always approve themselves a peaceable people; whatever others are for, they must be for peace.

p. 28

Kidner says:

Abraham's handling of it is a model of insight, good sense and generosity: his reminder, *we are brethren*, singled out the aspect that mattered in face of an alien world (*cf. 7b*), and his proposal, being selfless as well as practical, resolved the immediate tension without creating any future ones. This wisdom sprang from his faith. By faith he had already renounced everything; he could afford to refresh the choice: and by faith he had opted for the unseen; he had no need to judge, as Lot did, 'by the sight of his eyes'.

p. 118

MacArthur says:

Abram's reaction in resolving the strife between the two households and their personnel portrayed a different Abram than seen in Egypt; one whose attitude was not self-centered. Waving his right to seniority, he gave the choice to his nephew, Lot.

p. 32

Waltke says:

we are brothers. Abraham treats his orphaned nephew as an equal. He puts the peace between family before individual prosperity.

p. 221

v. 9 **Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."**

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

Look around. Isn't there plenty of land out there? Let's separate. If you go left, I'll go right; if you go right, I'll go left."

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself now from me. If you go to the left, then I'll go to the right, but if you go to the right, then I'll go to the left."

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Abram's solution to the strife was magnanimously to give **Lot** the first choice. Here is irony, for one might expect **Abram** to cling to what was promised to him and tell Lot to go find his own place.

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says further:**

The motivation for this concern must not be missed—they were **brothers**, that is, relatives (v. 8). Their common bond shared over such a long period of time was to **Abram** something worth saving. To keep that intact, separation seemed the only possibility.

The **land** again became prominent. Abram offered Lot the choice of the whole land that rightfully belonged to him, Abram

Abram has made a decision to go on with God. Verse 9 begins with a **QUESTION**:

“IS NOT THE WHOLE LAND BEFORE YOU?”

Then the **REQUEST**:

“please separate from me.”

Abram is very generous here because being older he certainly would have the rights to make the first choice, but in this situation he allows Lot that privilege. For if he is to go to the left then Abram will go to the right, and if he goes to the right then Abram will go to the left.

Our rights are always safe with God. Abram realizes that God has a purpose and He has given him a promise. He could lie down and let death do its worst because God’s purpose and God’s promise will always stand. Abram was optimistic that the Lord would not go back on His word. He knew that he had already seen enough evidence that God’s refusal to let him stay in Haran was right. Abram sat contentedly because he had confidence in God’s purpose. Like Abram we will often find that God’s purpose for us seems obscured by setbacks and heartaches, frustrations, tensions and separations. We modern Abrams are sustained by not simply a promise, but by the promise of God, which is in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ embodies the promise of God for us.

The separation does not take place in Egypt but back at the altar where Abram is determined to go on with God and to be one hundred percent obedient in that which the Lord has asked of him.

2 Timothy 2:4

And the Lord’s bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.

Here we have a marvelous example of humility and a love of peace in the elder giving away to the desires of the younger.

There is a similar separation in the New Testament, although I do not believe that it was quite as peaceful, when Paul separated from Barnabas and the two went their separate ways of ministry.

Here is a most important lesson, we must learn to trust God to keep for us what He gives us, and must never seek to possess it by worldly means, because we stand upon the earth for God, we are not therefore to become earthly. This land was God's gift to Abram to know this fact and yet knowing it to let it all go and leave the outcome to God. This is the work of the cross in a man.

Philippians 2:3-8

doing nothing from selfish ambition or from empty conceit, but with humility of mind regarding one another as excelling themselves; not looking out each one for his own interests, but also each one the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, looked not upon this being equal with God a prize to be grasped eagerly, but emptied Himself, having taken the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross.

Boice says:

So Abram, wiser of the two, determined to nip it in the bud. He suggested that the two should part company. He said, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your hearthsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left" (vv. 8-9).

Here was a mature and sensitive move on Abram's part. As the older man and the leader in the entire adventure, it was his right to have first choice. But he had learned something important. When he had gone to Egypt, he had chosen for himself and had gotten into great difficulty. Now he was content to leave the choices with God and to trust God for his future provision. He did not need to take care of "number one." God would do that. p. 481

Bush says:

It would be difficult to point out a finer exemplification of the truly noble, disinterested, and generous spirit which reigns in the bosom where the love of God has taken up its abode. It was on this trying occasion that the practical nature of Abraham's religion most strikingly developed itself; and that we may place this in its strongest light, let us for a moment consider the manner in which a man of the world would have acted upon such an emergency, and then mark the instructive contrast. Would not he have argued thus?—'There can be no question that if the land will not maintain our whole company, it will at least maintain me and all that belong to me. Let not my nephew therefore seek to appropriate to himself what has been in so peculiar a manner promised to me. I have both the right to claim the country, and the power to enforce that right, and though I would not do any thing that is not equitable and kind, it cannot be expected that the elder should yield to the younger, or that I should undervalue the promises or the gifts of God, by being so unnecessarily ready to transfer them to another. If strife or hostility be awakened, the peril be to him who awakens it; I have wherewithal to defend myself and to punish my opponents.' Such would have been unquestionably the opinion of nine tenths of mankind, and so prevalent is this selfish mode of reasoning and acting, that we scarcely feel that there would have been any thing objectionable, had this been the language and conduct of the patriarch himself.

p. 214

Gangel & Bramer say:

No longer making his own choices without consulting God, Abram left this dispute in heaven's hands. Lot could have made a choice that moved Abram out of the promised land area. But if that should happen, the problem was God's.

p. 124

Hartley says:

Abram displayed compassion, confidence, and insight as he placed his nephew's wishes above his own position and ambition. His leadership on this occasion strongly contrasts with his timidity before Pharaoh.

p. 143

Hartley says further:

Abram's kind dealings with Lot reveal that Yahweh had rightly chosen him as the vessel of his promise. Though he stumbled from time to time, Abram continued to serve God faithfully and rise above each failure. God honored him with enhanced promises and blessed him richly.

p. 145

Henry says:

His proposal for peace was very fair. "Why should we quarrel for room, while there is room enough for us both?" He offers him a sufficient share of the land they were in. He gives him his choice, and offers to take up with his leavings: *If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right*. There was all the reason in the world that Abram should choose first; yet he recedes from his right. It is a noble conquest to be willing to yield for the sake of peace; it is the conquest of ourselves, and our own pride and passion, Matt. v.

p. 28

Hughes says:

Such nobility of character! Abram, as the older man and the leader of the faith expedition, the one to whom the promises we made, could have appealed to his position, which was unassailable in Semitic culture. But he did not. Confident and unthreatened, he was selfless and generous—"Take your choice, my nephew and brother."

What a change from the calculating, self-serving schemer that he was in Egypt. In Egypt he had trusted nothing but his own shrewdness. Now Abram is so remarkably different. He takes no thought for tomorrow (cf. Matthew 6:25-34). The contrast between the two narratives could not be more defined. In the former, Abram was consumed with survival. In the present, he risks all in light of the promise.

p. 200

Hughes says further:

Fellow believers (Abram's spiritual seed), when we truly believe the promises that are ours in Christ, when we truly understand and believe that we are seated right now in him in the heavenly places, when we understand that all things are ours in Christ, we will cease our grasping. As Alexander Maclaren put it:

The less of our energies are consumed in asserting ourselves, and scrambling for our rights, and cutting in before other people, so as to get the best places for ourselves, the more we shall have to spare for better things; and the more we live in the future, and leave God to order our ways, the more shall our souls be wrapped in perfect peace.

pp. 200-201

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Waiving his right to dictate, he gave the freedom of choice to Lot. The conduct of Abraham was not only disinterested and peaceable, but generous and condescending in an extraordinary degree, exemplifying the Scripture precepts . . .

p. 26

Keil & Delitzsch say:

To put an end to the strife between their herdsmen, Abram proposed to Lot that they should separate, as strife was unseemly between . . . men who stood in the relation of brethren, and left him to choose his ground.

p. 199

Radmacher & Allen say:

. . . Abram acted with kindness, not wanting to fight his nephew's family and herdsmen. Abram gave Lot his choice. In doing this, Abram not only showed a lack of self-interest, but also confidence in God's continuing provision for him.

p. 28

Stigers says:

The immediate cause of the proposal of Abram to Lot was the strife that arose between the herdsmen as to who could pasture where. The actual reason was to lay before all readers considerations of the character of faith. Must one who believes have the best of things and must he find fulfillment in areas governed by an unbelieving world in order to maintain his faith? Events say he does not.
p. 145

Waltke says:

The magnanimity of the patriarch of the clan and the uncle of the orphan is truly remarkable. The social superior humbles himself before the inferior to preserve peace, thereby proving himself the spiritual superior. Abraham's faith gives him the freedom to be generous . . .
p. 221

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms) Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Copyright – Chad Helms, 2006.

All of our faults only come from being still attached to and centered on ourselves. It is our ego that wants to use our virtues to its own end. Renounce, therefore, without ever hesitating this miserable ego even in the most minor things where the spirit of grace would have you understand that you are still looking for satisfaction of ego. Here is total and true crucifixion; all the rest is only superficial and touches the surface of the soul. All those who seek to die to their old selves by any other means only end up leaving their life on one hand and then picking it back up with the other. It is never successful.

You will find through experience that when—in order to die to yourself—you take the path that I've proposed to you, God leaves nothing to the soul. He pursues your soul relentlessly until he had removed the very last breath of its own life therein, in order to have your soul live in him in an infinite spirit of peace and freedom.¹²
p. 176

v.10 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. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

Lot looked. He saw the whole plain of the Jordan spread out, well watered (this was before GOD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), like GOD's garden, like Egypt, and stretching all the way to Zoar.

The NET Bible translates verse 10:

Lot looked up and saw the whole region of the Jordan. He noticed that all of it was well-watered (before the Lord obliterated Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, all the way to Zoar.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Lot looked up (lit., "lifted up . . . his eyes") and saw . . . the whole plain (circle) of the Jordan Valley. This valley was lush and fruitful, well watered, like the garden of the LORD. (Zoar was a small town in the plain to which Lot and his family would flee, . . . Before that it was called Bela, . . . This may be a solemn reminder of the first look on such a garden land with intent desire . . . But certainly an ominous note is struck in the temporal clause—before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—as if to say that what appealed to Lot was to be short-lived. Without a concern for Abram, Lot made the choice, the greatest mistake of his life.

Lot's eyes are the binoculars of his heart. His greed sucked in the well-watered plains of Jordan. Circumstances often times reveal what a man really is.

The mind that is not surrendered to God is always hankering after the things that faith has already given up.

The eye-gate is one of the avenues through which temptation assail the soul.

1 John 2:16 speaks of the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Walking by sight is most of the cause of our failures and our sorrows. One need only look at a number of scriptural illustrations to see how Satan uses the eye-gate to the accomplishment of his purposes.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

This is what God said to **ADAM** as He placed him in the garden. But now notice how the Devil came. He said Eve your missing something by just listening to God's Word. He's holding back something that He does not want you to see, therefore He said in:

Genesis 3:5

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The **DEVIL** promised to show you something. He said, “You’ll see something you haven’t seen before.” God had said, “See and find out for yourself.” We read the dire result in:

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

The story of **ACHAN** in Joshua 7, when he stole the things from Jericho and as a result the children of Israel were defeated at Ai. Here is Achan’s confession in:

Joshua 7:21

When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

I SAW,

I COVETED, and

I TOOK.

2 Samuel 11:2

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,

JESUS speaks of this matter when He said:

“If thy eye be single the whole body shall be full of light.”

In the **THREE-FOLD TEMPTATION OF JESUS** all of his temptations were originally through the eye. Satan showed him the stones and challenged him to turn them into bread. Again it is through the eye when he took Him up to the pinnacle of the temple where He could look all about Him on the city of Jerusalem. Then again from a high mountain he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. But the Lord Jesus faithfully resisted each of these temptations with a Scripture passage from the book of Deuteronomy.

James 1:14-15

But each one is being tempted when he is taken in tow and lured by his own desires. Then when the desire has conceived, it is giving birth to sin; and this sin when it has run its course, brings forth death.

As Lot lifts up his eyes he sees the valley of the Jordan that it is well-watered in every place and it's like the garden of the Lord or the garden of Eden, and it's like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

We find that Lot is still very much attached to Egypt in his heart as he contemplates the decision. Evidently it was the trip to Egypt that turned his heart away from his single-hearted devotion to God and got him encumbered with many possessions and of thinking only of that which is temporal rather than that which is eternal.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

2 Corinthians 4:18

while we are not looking at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Barnhouse says:

Lot's eyes were the binoculars of his heart. The greed that was there sucked in the view of the well-watered plain, and he made the fatal choice.

It is the circumstance that reveals what a man really is.

Circumstances do not make or mar a man any more than a storm fells a tree. The rot in the heart of the tree or the shallow root system is revealed by the storm, but the flaw had been there all the time waiting for the first wind to discover it to the eyes of the world.

The choices are made in the secret citadel of the heart long before the herdsmen commence to drive the cattle to the well-watered plain where all may see the shamelessness of open disgrace.

p. 89

He says further:

Abram had left Egypt behind, and forever. Lot was still comparing portions of the promised land with what he saw in Egypt and was choosing that which was most like the best in the world.

p. 89

Boice says:

In the last chapter we saw the downward path of unbelief illustrated in the case of Abram. There is a downward path for Lot too. Only, Lot's fall is worse. Abram fell through lack of confidence in God, but Abram had not put anything in place of God. Lot had. He chose things over God, and the results were terrible.

The first step in Lot's fall is that he *looked toward Sodom* (Gen. 13:10). This looking was not a mere looking with the eyes, for Abram himself would have done that. Abram as well as Lot knew that there was a fertile plain along the Jordan River and that the cities of the plain were in it. Lot's looking was a looking with the heart, which was a longing. He was in the hill country with Abram. He had been prospered by God, as had Abram. But he was not satisfied with that. He wanted the things he imagined he was still missing. He wanted what Sodom represented. So with covetous eyes he looked in that direction.

p. 483

Phillips says:

Before we enter into the significance of God's restraint, we must digress to see how Lot acted when he was given his opportunity. For if Abram acted with divine restraint, Lot acted with carnal resolve. There were three things that marked Lot's choice.

In the first place, Lot was *weak in his devotions*. He had "flocks and herds and tents," we are told, just like Abram, but Abram had something Lot did not have. Abram had an altar. There is no hint that Lot had any such thing or that he paused to say: "Lord, in this matter of such great importance to me and my family, what would You have me do?" Lot had no quiet time, no devotions, no period of waiting on God. He had no altar. He was weak in his devotions.

He was consequently *worldly in his desires* (13:10). He did not ask: "Is this a good place to raise children?" He asked: "Is this a good place to raise cattle?" He had two reasons for choosing Sodom and the well-watered Jordan valley, a "religious" reason and a real reason. The Jordan valley was "even as the garden of the Lord"—that was his religious reason. It was "like the land of Egypt"—that was his real reason. Lot had enjoyed Egypt. He had not profited at all from the spiritual exercise of Abram as a result of their sojourn in that land.

A man who is weak in his devotions and worldly in his desires will inevitably be *wrong in his decisions* (13:11-13). Lot chose all the plain of Jordan and separated himself from his godly uncle. Before long he had his tent pitched toward Sodom, and the Holy Spirit adds the significant note: "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly." Lot had made the wrong choice.

p. 123

Wiersbe says:

Abraham had caused trouble in Egypt because he was out of place, and Lot caused trouble in Canaan because he was out of place: *His heart was really in Egypt* (Gen. 13:10).

p. 74

Christians Struggle with Opposing Desires

We want to be a saint, but we also want to feel every sensation experienced by sinners; we want to be innocent and pure, but we also want to be experienced and taste all of life; we want to serve the poor and have a simple lifestyle, but we also want all the comforts of the rich; we want to have the depth afforded by solitude, but we also do not want to miss anything; we want to pray, but we also want to watch television, read, talk to friends, and go out.

It's a small wonder that life is often a trying enterprise, and that we are often tired and pathologically overextended.

—Ronald Rolheiser, president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas

Ronald Rolheiser, The Holy Longing (Doubleday, 1999), p. 9; submitted by Kevin Miller, Wheaton, Illinois

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v.11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

Lot took the whole plain of the Jordan. Lot set out to the east. That's how they came to part company, uncle and nephew.

The NET Bible translates verse 11:

Lot chose for himself the whole region of the Jordan and traveled toward the east. So the relatives separated from each other.

Lot chose for himself—Abram let God chose for him.

Lot chose this which is appealing to the eye and journeyed eastward separating himself from Abram.

Lot has a heart of stone, a conscience which is seared, hard eyes and a greedy heart. Lot is younger and is immature. He's materialistic and he has the tendency to compromise rather than to stand for his convictions. He exercises poor judgment. He becomes immoral. He has little time for God. He's a man that is willing to sacrifice principle for passion.

As we mentioned earlier, there's no altar in Lot's life.

Endeavoring to find a New Testament counterpart, we would have to say that **LOT IS A LOT LIKE JUDAS ISCARIOT.**

Is not this the spirit of Lot, who bartered the altar of Abram's camp for the plains of Sodom because the grass looks green and beautiful.

Abram is a man of faith—Lot lives by sight.

Abram is generous—Lot is greedy.

Abram is looking for a city whose builder is God—Lot wants a city whose builder was man and destroyed by God.

Abram is the father of all who believe—Lot is the name of perpetual infamy.

Abram becomes heir of the world—Lot ends up in a cave.

Lot chose the richest portion. Abram let him have it without demour. But it left Abram still dwelling in the highlands of Canaan. Lot had not usurped his inheritance for in the outcome the plain was divinely excluded from it. Those who know God have no need to protect their rights, because they believe in Him they learn to bear the cross daily and to rely upon Him for the outcome.

Barker & Kohlenberg say:

. . . God's promise to Abraham. Just as the first statement of the promise was preceded by Abraham's separation (10:32; 12:1), so the second statement of the promise is put in the context of Abraham's separation from his closest kin, Lot.

p. 22

Barnhouse says:

The humility, the kindness and generosity of Abram had not melted Lot. His heart was a heart of stone. His conscience was seared as with a hot iron (I Timothy 4:2). His hard eyes had looked upon the lush country, and his greedy heart would not be moved from the choice. Lot knew well the character of the city that lay in the plain below, but the grass was green to the bellies of the cattle, and Lot found that heavenly. Like his beasts, he was ready to lie down in the wealth of the Sodom country, and like them his earthly soul was being fattened for slaughter. Abram became the father of all the faithful; Lot became the father of all the compromisers.

p. 90

Gangel & Bramer say:

Lot based his decision on appearances, and it turned out to be his undoing; Abram now had the entire **land**. We should not assume that Lot chose Sodom because of its wickedness; likely he had no idea of the behavior in those cities. The passage actually focuses on his shallow selfishness.

p. 124

Hughes says:

Again, Lot's choice was by sight alone. It was the biggest mistake of his life.

p. 202

Lange says:

2. *Lot's Choice, and the Separation* (vers. 10-13). The bold, unblushing, self-seeking features in Lot's character come clearly into view here. He raises his eyes, and with unrestrained greediness chooses what seems to him the best.

p. 398

MacArthur says:

An excellent yet selfish choice, from a worldly point of view, but disastrous spiritually because it drew Lot into the wickedness of Sodom . . .
p. 32

Parker says:

Now let us look for a moment at Lot's choice. The well-watered plain of Jordan is a great prize for any man, and Lot has made sure of it. His estate is large, and is favoured by the sun and the clouds. Is there, then, any drawback? Read: "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." A great estate, but bad neighbours! Material glory, but moral shame! Noble landscapes, but mean men! But Lot did just what men are doing to-day. he made choice of a home, without making any inquiry as to the religious state of the neighbourhood.
p. 202

Stigers says:

This choice by Lot made rather final the rapture between him and Abram.
p. 146

Waltke says:

So Lot chose for himself. Lot selfishly intends to advantage himself by disadvantaging his uncle.
p. 222

Wiersbe says:

While in Egypt, Abraham thought first about himself (Gen. 12:12-13); but when he returned to his altar in Canaan, he put God first and others next. As the “elder statesman” of the camp, Abraham had every right to decide the issue and tell Lot what to do; but he gave Lot first choice. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10). The spiritual Christian does not insist on his or her own rights but gladly yields to others.

p. 74

(Facing Your Giants by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: W Publishing. Copyright – Max Lucado, 2006.

And you. Does one prevailing problem leech your life?

Some are prone to cheat. Others quick to doubt. Maybe you worry. Yes, everyone worries some, but you own the national distributorship of anxiety. Perhaps you are judgmental. Sure, everybody can be critical, but you pass more judgments than a federal judge.

What is that one weakness, bad habit, rotten attitude? Where does Satan have a stronghold within you? Ahh, there is the fitting word—*stronghold*: a fortress, citadel, thick walls, tall gates. It’s as if the devil staked a claim on one weakness and constructed a rampart around it. “You ain’t touching this flaw,” he defies heaven, placing himself squarely between God’s help and your

- explosive temper,
- fragile self-image,
- freezer-size appetite,
- distrust for authority.

Seasons come and go, and this Loch Ness monster still lurks in the water-bottom of your soul. He won’t go away. He lives up to both sides of his compound name: *strong* enough to grip like a vise and stubborn enough to *hold on*. He clamps like a bear trap—the harder you shake, the more it hurts.

Strongholds: old, difficult, discouraging challenges.

pp. 102-103

The most important phrase in verse 11 is:

“THE TWO MEN PARTED COMPANY.”

The restraint of God’s blessing upon Abram’s life hinged on the continuing relationship with Lot.

Obedience frees God to act.

Separation leads to blessing.

v.12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

Peterson paraphrases verse 12:

Abram settled in Canaan; Lot settled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.

The NET Bible translates verse 12:

Abram settled in the land of Canaan, but Lot settled among the cities of the Jordan region and pitched his tents next to Sodom.

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Lot **pitched his tents** next to **Sodom**, where **the men** were **wicked . . . sinning greatly** before **the LORD**. Later chapter 19 clarifies their wickedness.

One can safely leave to God the disposition of His promised blessings.

Withdraw from maintaining any of his rights which distinguishes a man who fully trusts in God, Abram is willing to trust the Lord to show him where he should go and to put him in the place of His choosing.

Now that the separation has taken place, Abram settled in the land of Canaan.

Psalm 87:7

As they make music they will sing,
“All my fountains are in you.”

It says that Lot settled in the cities of the valley and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

Lot was a man who had too great a concern for temporal interests and too little concern for his soul. He moves his tents as far as Sodom. He moves into an environment that is very bad for him. Plus he became a bad Lot. He not only pitched his tents there, but soon he was living there, and became extremely selfish and lived in a house in Sodom and took up a place of leadership in that city.

I see him doing **FOUR THINGS**. He:

1. **BOUGHT LAND**,
2. **HIRED AN ARCHITECT**,
3. **BUILT A HOUSE**, and
4. **GOT INTO POLITICS** and was **ELECTED** to the city council.

Wiersbe says:

Lot had a tent but no altar (Gen. 13:5), which meant he did not call on the Lord for wisdom in making decisions (James 1:5). Instead of lifting up his eyes to heaven, Lot lifted up his eyes to the plain of Jordan (Gen. 13:10) and stopped there. *The eyes see what the heart loves*. Abraham had taken Lot out of Egypt, but he could not take Egypt out of Lot. Outlook helps to determine outcome.

p. 74

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.**

“*Stand still;*”—keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice; and it will not be long ere God shall say to you, as distinctly as Moses said it to the people of Israel, “Go forward.”

p. 412

v.13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

Peterson paraphrases verse 13:

The people of Sodom were evil—flagrant sinners against GOD.

The NET Bible translates verse 13:

(Now the people of Sodom were extremely wicked rebels against the Lord.)

Lot saw only the well-watered plains—God saw the wickedness of the city.

Romans 1:32

such are those who, knowing the requirement (ordinance) of God, that those who are practicing such things are worthy of death, they are not only doing the same, but also are giving hearty approval to those who are practicing them.

It always pays to seek the Lord's will and trust Him when selecting a direction for life. The Psalmist said:

Psalm 37:4-5

Delight yourself in the Lord
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:

Psalm 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.

God's restraint in what looks good is for our benefit.

If we allow God to do the seeing for us, He will guide us. Our need is to trust Him fully.

1 Corinthians 2:9

but even as it has been written: "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, so many things as God prepared for those who are loving Him.

Mark it down as a **PRINCIPLE OF LIFE**:

MAN IS MORE OFTEN CHANGED BY HIS ENVIRONMENT THAN CHANGING HIS ENVIRONMENT.

Lot, with his worldly ambitions, selecting an immoral environment, is writing the final chapter of a life which could have been useful for God—Simply because he chooses to remain in the flesh rather than to operate in the power of the Spirit and to trust God to guide and direct his life and to provide for his every need.

Bush says:

A very emphatic mode of expression, implying not only the depraved character common to all mankind in this unrenewed state, but the most vile, unblushing, abominable, and awful exhibitions of that character. They were not only wicked, but desperately wicked; they were not only sinners, but high-handed and heaven-daring sinners.

p. 218

Hughes says:

The description of the Sodomites as “wicked, great sinners” is a rare phrase that suggests they were living at a level lower than normal sinners. Chapter 19 will grotesquely bear this out.

p. 201

MacArthur says:

Lot’s decisions put him in dangerous proximity to those cities whose names would become a byword for perversion and unbridled wickedness. Their evil is the theme of chapter 19.

p. 32

Radmacher & Allen say:

Lot’s choice of the more favorable land led him into territory that was populated by the worst of the Canaanites, the infamous evil people of **Sodom** (chs. 18; 19). The rest of the peoples of Canaan were given 400 years before their idolatry and wickedness demanded judgment (15:16).

p. 29

Wiersbe says:

Lot had a great opportunity to become a man of God as he walked with Abraham, but we don’t read of Lot’s building an altar or calling on the Lord. First, Lot looked toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10); then he moved toward Sodom (13:11-12); and finally, he moved into Sodom (14:12). Instead of being a pilgrim who made progress, Lot regressed into the world and away from God’s blessing.

p. 74

There are **TWO THINGS** that are said about the **“MEN OF SODOM”** here in verse 13. They were:

1. **“WICKED”** and
2. **“SINNING GREATLY AGAINST THE LORD.”**

This is the Lord’s evaluation of the homosexual lifestyle.

What a serious charge against the Lord!

DAVID faced this situation when he confessed his sin in:

Psalm 51:4

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are proved right when you speak
and justified when you judge.

JOSEPH faced the same situation, although he did not succumb to the temptation. We see the statement in:

Genesis 39:9

No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”

v.14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 14:

After Lot separated from him, GOD said to Abram, “Open your eyes, look around. Look north, south, east, and west.

The NET Bible translates verse 14:

After Lot had departed, the Lord said to Abram, “Look from the place where you stand to the north, south, east, and west.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This third section in this chapter provides the solace: Yahweh confirms His promise. The strong break in the narrative is marked by (lit.) “Now Yahweh. . . .” Verses 14-17 explain why **Abram** could give **Lot** the choice of all the land—Abram had the sure promise of God. He had the sense that in God he had abundant possession. Knowing that God’s promise was genuine, Abram was indifferent to what Lot would choose. A person who has the promise of God’s provision does not have to cling to things.

In verses 14-17 Abram is contrasted with Lot. Lot had been active in taking what he thought was best. Now Yahweh reworded the ideas, instructing Abram with several commands. Abram was told to **lift up . . . his eyes . . . and look . . .** which Lot did on his own. Abram was waiting for God to **give** him the land; Lot just took it. God restated that He would give **the land** to Abram as a possession. Better that God give it than that someone take it. God also told Abram his descendants would be as numerous as **the dust of the earth . . .** He then was invited by God to **walk through . . . the land** and see his possession. Chapter 13 closes the way it began, with Abram settling down (this time **near the great trees of Mamre . . . at Hebron**, 22 miles south of Jerusalem) and making **an altar to Yahweh**.

Back in verse 4 we have “Abram [calling] on the name of the Lord.”

Now, here in verse 14, we have the **LORD RESPONDING** to Abram.

This is possible after Lot had departed from him.

The Lord’s message is the reaffirmation of the **ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**:

“LIFT UP YOUR EYES FROM WHERE YOU ARE AND LOOK NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND WEST.”

Now that Lot has lifted his eyes and made a selfish choice. The Lord turns to His faithful servant and commands him to lift up his eyes and see what the Lord has in mind for him. He can **“LOOK TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND WEST”** and all the land which he looks at, the **LORD MAKES A PROMISE**:

“I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.”

Henry says:

I. When it was that God renewed and ratified the promise: 1. After the quarrel was over. 2. After Abram’s humble self-denying condescensions to Lot for the preserving of peace. 3. After he had lost the comfortable society of his kinsman, and his heart was saddened, then God came to him with these good words and comfortable words. Lot perhaps had the better land, yet Abram had the better *title*. Lot had the paradise, such as it was, but Abram had the promise.

p. 28

Keil & Delitzsch say:

After Lot's departure, Jehovah repeated to Abram (by a mental, inward assurance, as we may infer from the fact that . . . "said" is not accompanied by . . . "he appeared") His promise that He would give the land to him and to his seed in its whole extent, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, and would make his seed innumerable like the dust of the earth. From this we may see that the separation of Lot was in accordance with the will of God, as Lot had no share in the promise of God; though God afterwards saved him from destruction for Abram's sake. The possession of the land is promised . . . "*for ever.*" The promise of God is unchangeable.
p. 200

(God's Best Secrets: Daily Devotional Meditations by Andrew Murray) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – unknown, 1977.

God is a God who hides Himself from the world, and all that is of the world. God would draw us away from the world and from ourselves. He offers us instead, the blessedness of close, intimate communion with Himself. Oh that God's children would understand this!

Believers in the Old Testament enjoyed this experience. "*Thou art my hiding-place.*" "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" "*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.*"

(March 16)

(Surrender: The Heart God Controls by Nancy Leigh DeMoss) Chicago, IL: Moody. Copyright – Nancy Leigh DeMoss, 2003.

Though she had always feared what would happen if she were to relinquish control of her life, Lynda began to experience blessings she had never known in all the years she was trying to hold on to the reins.

A *huge* weight was lifted off my shoulders. I didn't want to be in control any more. My journey has not always been easy, but it has been wonderful and life-changing. I had to "let go" of a lot of people in my life—but I have God and my family. I have a beautiful peace of mind and serenity. And I hold my head high every day, because I know I have been forgiven. I will *never* be the same person again—ever.

Lynda's whole perspective on this matter of control has changed. Today she tells others, "Even if you are stubborn and think you will not submit to anyone, you will always be submitting to someone or something—and that can be extremely dangerous. Even life-threatening."

Surrendering her will to Christ's control in relation to her marriage brought about a dramatic change in Lynda's life.

p. 44

v.15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

Peterson paraphrases verse 15:

Everything you see, the whole land spread out before you, I will give to you and your children forever.

The NET Bible translates verse 15:

I will give all the land that you see to you and your descendants forever.

God will do better for those who trust Him than they could do for themselves. Twice here in the context we meet the phrase, “lifting up the eyes.” But how great the contrast.

Lot lifted up his eyes at the dictates of worldly prudence to spy out his own advantage. Abram lifted up his eyes not to discern what would best make for his material interests but to behold what God had prepared for him.

How much better it is to keep the eye steadfastly fastened on God till He says to us:

“lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where you are northward, southward, eastward, and westward, for all the land which you see to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever.”

v.16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

Peterson paraphrases verse 16:

I'll make your descendants like dust—counting your descendants will be as impossible as counting the dust of the Earth.

The NET Bible translates verse 16:

And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth so that if anyone is able to count the dust of the earth, then your descendants also can be counted.

The Lord now, after making the promise about the land, also adds on the promise of the descendants which are going to be his.

Back in chapter 12 we noticed that he was going to be the father of a great nation, and now the Lord speaks of the magnitude of that great nation, by speaking of the descendants that are going to be his.

The Lord says **TWO THINGS** back in verse 15:

1. **“I will give to you”** and
2. **“your offspring”—“land.”**

Then in verse 16:

“I WILL MAKE YOUR OFFSPRING LIKE THE DUST OF THE EARTH.”

v.17 **Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”**

Peterson paraphrases verse 17:

So—on your feet, get moving! Walk through the country, its length and breadth; I’m giving it all to you.”

The NET Bible translates verse 17:

Get up and walk throughout the land, for I will give it to you.”

Back in verse 15 the Lord said:

“I will give.”

Then in verse 16:

“I will make.”

Now in verse 17:

“I AM GIVING IT TO YOU.”

The Lord gives the **COMMAND** and then a **REASON**.

The **COMMAND**:

“GO, WALK THROUGH THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE LAND.”

The **REASON**:

“FOR I AM GIVING IT TO YOU.”

Now that the Lord has shown him what is going to be his and made the promise of his descendants, it is time for Abram to move into action. He can now arise and walk about the land through its **“LENGTH AND BREADTH”** because this is the land that the Lord is going to give to Him.

Who can measure the magnitude of blessing that comes into the life of those who are willing to separate themselves unto the Lord and to be obedient to His will.

Wenham says:

The command “walk to and fro” . . . throughout the land probably represents a symbolic appropriation of the land. By so doing Abram would legally take possession of it . . .
p. 298

Joshua 1:3

I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has he power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has He love? Well, there is not a drop of love in His heart which is not yours; you may dive into the immense ocean of His love, and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Hath He justice? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for He will by His justice see to it that all which is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you
p. 6

v.18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.

Peterson paraphrases verse 18:

Abram moved his tent. He went and settled by the Oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to GOD.

The NET Bible translates verse 18:

So Abram moved his tents and went to live by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron, and he built an altar to the Lord there.

For the **FOURTH AND FINAL TIME** in the passage we have the little word **“SO”** that begins verse 18:

1. verse 1—**“So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev,”**
2. verse 8—**“So Abram said to Lot,”**
3. verse 11—**“So Lot chose for himself,”** and
4. verse 18—**“SO ABRAM MOVED HIS TENTS AND WENT TO LIVE NEAR THE GREAT TREES OF MAMRE AT HEBRON, WHERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD.”**

This **TAKES US BACK** to verse 4 in our passage:

“and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.”

He moved to the place by the OAKS OF “MAMRE.”

The word “MAMRE” means “vision” and here he has his tent and he builds an altar.

So Abram is back in the place of fellowship with the Lord, so that the Lord can bring further blessing into his life and can direct his steps as he stays in this place of blessing.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . the renewal of the promise was acknowledged by Abram by a fresh tribute of devout gratitude.
p. 26

Kidner says:

The oaks of Mamre (cf. on 12:6), some twenty miles south of Bethlehem, became the chief centre of Abram’s movements, near which he would purpose his only property, the burial cave of Machpelah. Meanwhile, tent and altar epitomized his way of life.
p. 118

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Come boldly, O believer, for despite the whisperings of Satan and the doubtings of thine own heart, thou art greatly beloved. Meditate on the exceeding greatness and faithfulness of divine love this evening, and so go to thy bed in peace.
p. 553

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

It is a blessed thing to be teachable as a little child, but it is a much more blessed thing when one has been taught the lesson, to carry it out to the letter.
p. 585

(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer) Camp Hill, Pa: Christian Publications, Inc. Copyright – Christian Publications, Inc., 1982.

In full accord with the few texts we have quoted is the whole tenor of the inspired Word. It is summed up for us in the Hebrew epistle when we are instructed to run life's race "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). From all this we learn that faith is not a once-done act, but a continuous gaze of the heart at the Triune God.
p. 90

Believing, then, is directing the heart's attention to Jesus. It is lifting the mind to "behold the Lamb of God," and never ceasing that beholding for the rest of our lives. At first this may be difficult, but it becomes easier as we look steadily at His wondrous person, quietly and without strain. Distractions may hinder, but once the heart is committed to Him, after each brief excursion away from Him, the attention will return again and rest upon Him like a wandering bird coming back to its window.
p. 90

(Prayer Notes by Don Barker) Received from Don Barker, April 2006.

Lord, most of the time our hearts are occupied by earthly things. Most of the time we are worried about our handicaps, our pains, our bills, our conflicts with other people. But today, Lord, in this place and with these brothers and sisters, our hearts are not occupied by earthly things but by heavenly things. As we go through our lives, help us to be less concerned about earthly things, which are temporary, and more concerned about heavenly things, which are eternal. Jesus is the One who taught us how to do this, so help us to keep our eyes on Jesus.
p. 2

**(A Treasury of Wisdom: Daily Inspiration from Favorite Christian Authors
compiled by Ken and Angela Abraham) Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour.
Copyright – Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1998.**

We must know before we can love. In order to know God, we must often think of Him; and when we come to love Him, we shall also think of Him often, for our heart will be with our treasure.

p. 40

CONCLUSION:

As we compare Abram and Lot we see that:

ABRAM represents that which is of the **SPIRIT** and

LOT represents that which is of the **FLESH**.

ABRAM WALKED BY FAITH and

LOT WALKED BY SIGHT.

ABRAM WAS GENEROUS AND SPIRITUAL and

LOT WAS GREEDY AND WORLDLY.

ABRAM LOOKED FOR A CITY WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER WAS GOD and

LOT MADE HIS HOME IN A CITY THAT WAS MADE BY MAN AND LATER DESTROYED BY GOD.

ABRAM became the **FATHER OF ALL WHO BELIEVED** and

LOT became the **FATHER OF THOSE WHO PERPETUATED INFAMY**—namely the **AMONITES** and the **MOABITES**.

ABRAM was made **HEIR OF THE LAND OF CANAAN**,

LOT LOST ALL OF HIS POSSESSIONS WHEN SODOM WAS DESTROYED.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: If you are out of the will of God, retrace your steps back to the point of departure and then deal with the disobedience and seek the Lord's face for further instructions, and wait until He makes known His way before you proceed.

LESSON #2: Who can measure the negative impact of strife among brothers?

LESSON #3: You don't have to stand for your rights when the Lord has promised. You can trust Him to overrule in the situation and to be faithful to make provision of that which He has promised.

LESSON #4: When you leave or miss the Lord's will, it is best to go back to the place you left.

LESSON #5: Abram went back to "where he first built an altar. There Abram called upon the name of the Lord" (verse 4).

LESSON #6: What man sees and what God sees are two different things.

LESSON #7: Man's ways and God's ways are two different paths as well.

LESSON #8: Lot chose for himself and Abram let God do his choosing.

LESSON #9: The key phrase is in Genesis 13:11: "The two men parted company." When they did, God was free to bless Abram.

LESSON #10: A wicked environment will probably change you before you change it.

LESSON #11: New assurances of His promises come to those who are obedient in separation.

LESSON #12: Obedience frees God to act.

LESSON #13: Separation leads to blessing.

The Lord says **THREE THINGS** in the blessing He gives to Abram at the conclusion of the passage:

1. “[I will give] all the land that you see,”
2. “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth,” and
3. “Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Hardly any other chapter in the Bible describes faith so marvelously. Here was the patriarch as a genuine believer in and worshiper of Yahweh—whose faith functioned in a conflict. Lot, walking by sight, chose on the basis of what appealed to him. His choice was self-seeking and self-gratifying. But such a choice became dangerous and short-lived, for all was not as it appeared to be on the surface. Abram, on the other hand, walking by faith, generously let Lot choose first. Abram was unselfish, trusting God. He had learned that it was not by his own plan that he would come into the possession, or by jealously guarding what was his. He acted righteously and generously. One who believes that God is pledged to provide for him is not greedy, anxious, or covetous.

Anderson says:

Notice again how Genesis 13 concludes. The Lord in effect told Abram, “You let Me choose and look what you get. That isn’t all, either. I’m obligating Myself to you. Your descendants are going to be as numerous as the ‘dust of the earth.’” Abram, overjoyed as he emerged from this moment of fellowship, went to the city of Hebron by the oaks of Mamre and put up his tent and altar. He was in union, on clear speaking terms, with God.

Like Abram we all need to be on speaking terms with the Lord, don’t we? Once we know Him, it’s necessary for us to declare our dependence on Him daily. When we’re at the center of His will, where we leave our hero Abram at this point, that’s where the abundant life starts.

p. 65

YIELDING CONTROL

During a visit with a friend suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, I asked what lessons God was teaching her as she traveled down this difficult road. Her immediate response was, "Loss of control."

She had always been a highly organized, independent person whose corporate job involved long hours and frequent travel. Now she had to depend on others for everything from getting dressed to brushing her teeth. Unable to move her arms or legs, she had control over only what she thought and what she said. She knew that soon she would even lose her power of speech. "I used to stress over my job," she said, "and never really gave it to the Lord. Now, with almost all control gone, I can stress about [my physical limitation] or surrender it to Christ."

The question facing each of us is, "Will I retain control of my life or yield it to the Lord today?" To live only for what I want is to be controlled by the sinful nature. Paul said that this leads to death, "but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

To one degree or another, we will all lose control of our lives as we grow older. Yielding control to God is a choice we can make every day—starting today. —David C. McCasland

*Although I may not understand
The path You've laid for me,
Complete surrender to Your will—
Lord, this my prayer shall be. —Sherbert
© 1978 William F. Sherbert*

**TRUE FREEDOM COMES NOT FROM CHOOSING OUR WAY,
BUT FROM YIELDING TO GOD'S WAY.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, May 5, 2003)

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

IT TAKES TWO

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

EPHESIANS 4:1 NIV

One story in circulation claims that a mother and son were eager to attend a concert by renowned Polish pianist Ignacy Paderewski. When the house lights dimmed, the mother discovered that the child was missing. As the curtain rose, the mother noticed in horror that her little boy was sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy’s ear, “Don’t quit. Keep playing.” Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a tense situation into a wonderfully creative experience.

Whether this story is true or not, it is a perfect example of the relationship we have with our heavenly Father. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. But with the hand of the Master, our life’s work can be beautiful. Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen for the voice of the Master, whispering in your ear, “Don’t quit. Keep playing.” Feel His loving arms around you. Know that his strong hands are there, turning your feeble attempts into true masterpieces.

Remember, God doesn’t call the equipped; He equips the called.
(May 4)

Alexander Maclaren says:

But another lesson is also taught. After the interruption of the Egyptian journey, Abraham had to begin all his Canaan life over again. Very emphatically the narrative puts it, that he went to 'the place where his tent had been at the beginning,' to the altar which he had made at the first. Yes! that is the only place for a man who has faltered and gone aside from the course of obedience. He must begin over again.

p. 86

Alexander Maclaren says:

A soul truly living in the contemplation of the future, and filled with God's promises, will never be eager to insist on its rights, or to stand on its dignity, and will take too accurate a measure of the worth of things temporal to get into a heat about them. The clash of conflicting interests, and the bad blood bred by them, seem infinitely small, when we are up on the height of communion with God. An acre or two more or less of grass land does not look all-important, when our vision of the city which hath foundations is clear. So an elevated calm and 'sweet reasonableness' will mark the man who truly lives by faith, and he will seek after the things that make for peace.
p. 88

Alexander Maclaren says:

The elder and superior gives the younger and inferior the right of option, and is quite willing to take Lot's leavings. Right or left—it mattered not to him; God would be with him, whichever way he went; and the glorious Beyond, for which he lived, blazed too bright before his inward sight to let him be very solicitous where he was. 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' It does not matter much what accommodation we have on shipboard, when the voyage is so short. If our thoughts are stretching across the sea to the landing at home, and the welcome there, we shall not fight with our fellow-passengers about our cabins or places at the table.

p. 89