

BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2023 – WEEK 3

Lot: A Friend of the World

You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.

– James 4:4 NLT

- **The downfall of a saint**

- I used to have Lot figured out
- The book of Genesis seems to paint him as Abraham's foil

Abraham

Called by God
A friend of God
Selfless
Gracious
Faithful
Hoped for the future

Lot

Came uninvited
A friend of the world
Self-centered
Greedy
Pragmatic
Lived for today

- But then I ran into 2 Peter 2:7-8

God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. – 2 Peter 2:7-8 NLT

- **The case for Lot's righteousness**

- Innocence by association
 - Lot was benefiting from his close relationship with Abraham
 - He was essentially Abraham's adopted son
 - When his own father died, he became Abraham's ward
 - He had traveled all the way from Ur to Canaan
 - He had accompanied Abraham to Egypt
 - But when they parted ways, he chose a different path

*So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and **Lot with him**, into the Negeb.*

Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai... – Genesis 13:1-3 ESV

***Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.** – Genesis 13:5-6 ESV*

- Abraham allowed Lot to have the first choice of pastureland
- And Lot chose well

*So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, **while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.** Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD. – Genesis 13:11-13 EASV*

- But Lot's choice was motivated by greed
- And his decision would have consequences
- He ended up moving his family into Sodom
- But God had plans for Sodom and its inhabitants

So the LORD told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know." – Genesis 18:20-21 NLT

- But Abraham knew Lot was living in Sodom
- So, he interceded on his nephew's behalf
- "But God had plans for Sodom and its inhabitants

"Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? Surely you wouldn't do such a thing..." – Genesis 18:24-25 NLT

- God agreed to spare as few as 10 righteous people living in Sodom
- But He only found ONE: Lot

At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!"

*When **Lot still hesitated**, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. – Genesis 18:15-16 NLT*

- God's saving of Lot seems to indicate his righteousness
 - The Lord knows how to save the godly from trials (2 Peter 2:9)
- Lot was distressed by the corruption around him
 - He still had a conscience (2 Peter 2:7)
- Lot was tormented (continually) by the sin around him
 - He was sensitive to the sinfulness of his culture (2 Peter 2:8)
- Lot was positionally righteous
 - Not based on his good deeds or stellar decision making
 - But based on God's declaration

Righteousness – the character or state of being right or just in the sight of God

- Based on a **belief** in God
- Made possible by the **grace** of God
- **Surrounded by sin** – Genesis 19
 - From green grass to gross immorality (Genesis 13:10-11)
 - Lot went from the well-watered plains of a morally depraved city
 - A love affair with the world always starts out subtly
 - From waiting on God to sitting at the gate (Genesis 19:1)
 - As Abraham's ward, Lot was having on the promises of God
 - But he got impatient
 - He wanted his blessings now
 - So, he turned to the world to meet his needs
 - From dependence to independence
 - God blessed him with possessions
 - But he wanted power, prominence, and position
 - Independence from God never brings satisfaction
 - From righteous loved ones to lovers of unrighteousness
 - Lot abandoned the godly influence of Abraham
 - He chose to live with the ungodly instead
 - He chose wickedness over righteousness
 - From commitment to compromise
 - Lot had been circumcised just like Abraham

- It was a sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:10-11)
- Yet Lot was not living in keeping with the covenant
- He spent 20 years compromising his convictions
- From conviction to complacency
 - He shows no conviction over the sinfulness of his community
 - He makes no plea for God to spare his neighbors
 - An entire city is about to be destroyed
 - But he shows no concern – except for himself

We can become so **comfortable** with sin that we become **complacent** about it rather than **convicted** by it.

“When compared with previous generations of believers, we seem among the most thoroughly at peace with our culture, the least adept at transforming society, and the most desperate for a meaningful faith.” – Chuck Colson, *The Body*

- Lot showed reluctance to leave
 - He had to be dragged out
 - Once out, he wanted to settle in another city
 - His wife proved her heart was still in Sodom
- From compromise to consequences
 - A love affair with the world always produces worldliness

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. – 2 John 2:15-17 NLT

- Lot’s two daughters had been influenced by Sodom
- They get him drunk and have sex with him
- The result:
 - Future enemies: The Moabites and Ammonites
 - Idolatry and immorality:
 - Baal-Peor – a Moabite deity that the Israelites worshiped when they had illicit sexual relationship with the Moabite women (Numbers 25:3)
 - Molech – an Ammonite deity to which the Israelites sacrificed their own children (Leviticus 20:2-5)
- From salvation to seduction
 - Lot had shared in the blessing of Abraham

- He even shared Abraham's belief in Yahweh
- But something was missing
 - He had not fear of God
 - He feared men
 - But not enough to separate himself from their influence
 - He didn't fully understand or appreciate God's love for him
 - He preferred the love of the world instead
 - He enjoyed the adoration that came from power, prominence, and possessions
 - He lacked a desire for intimacy with God
 - He allowed the world to become a distraction
 - He was more passionate about his own needs than he was about God
 - He preferred a seat at the gate rather than a place in God's presence

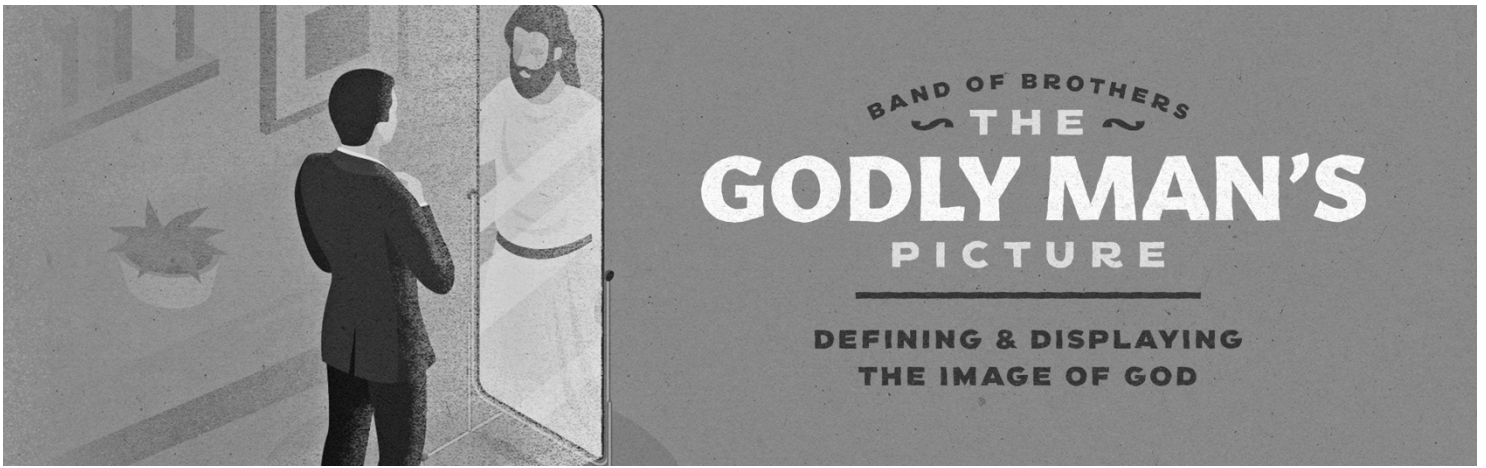
For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth. But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. – Philippians 3:18-20 NLT

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Look at James 4:4 located on the front page of this handout? In what ways have you seen friendship with the world make you an enemy of God? What does that look like in real life?

How did Lot's love affair with the world begin? What are the subtle temptations the world offers that can end up drawing our heart away from God? How do we stop it?

Compromise, conformity, and complacency can be deadly in the life of a believer. How have they tended to show up in your own life?



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SUMMER SERIES 2023 – WEEK 4 HOMEWORK

WEEK 4 – Abraham: The Friend of God

...and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

— James 2:23 ESV

Now that we’ve looked at Lot, it’s time to unpack the life of his uncle, Abraham. In James 2:23, we read, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.” In 2 Chronicles 20:7, King Jehoshaphat prayed to God, “Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?” It is difficult to read those two passages and not be struck by the fact that Abraham was called God’s friend. But what made this man a friend of God? What had he done to deserve such a one-of-a-kind distinction? What kind of friend does God desire? Let’s take a closer look at the life of Abraham to see if you can discover the answer to those questions.

- Read Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19. What one quality did Abraham possess that the author of Hebrews emphasizes?

Now read Acts 7:1-8. This passage contains the sermon that Stephen preached that resulted in his stoning. He started out by giving the Jews in his audience a brief history lesson. In verse 5 he states that God promised to give Abraham the land of Canaan, but then appears to contradict himself. What does he say?

Read Genesis 12:6-10. Abraham obeyed God’s call and eventually ended up in Canaan. But what does Abraham encounter when he finally arrives in “the land of promise?”

- Read Genesis 13:1-11. God had promised all this land to Abraham and his descendants. So, what stands out about Abraham’s decision to let Lot choose first?

What could Abraham have easily concluded once Lot chose the “well-watered” valley of the Jordan?

Look at verses 14-18. What does God confirm with Abraham and what is his response?

- Read Genesis 15:2-3. What one problem does Abraham raise that he thinks might throw a monkey wrench into God’s plan?
- Read Genesis 16:1-4. What plan did Abraham’s wife come up with to “help” God out?
- Read Genesis 17:1-8. Thirteen years has passed since the birth of Ishmael and Abraham still finds himself waiting on God’s promise. What does God confirm in these verses despite Abraham’s advanced age?

Read verses 15-19. What is Abraham’s response to God’s announcement that Sarah was to deliver a baby?

- Read Genesis 21:1-5. Another ten years has passed, and Abraham is now 100 years old. What kind of thoughts do you think have passed through his mind during the passing years?
- Read Genesis 22:1-18. Abraham waited a total of 25 years to see God’s original promised fulfilled. How do you think Abraham felt when he heard God’s command concerning Isaac?

How would you have responded if you had been in Abraham’s sandals?

But what did Abraham do?

- Finally, read Romans 4:16-22. According to Paul, what was the primary characteristic of Abraham’s life and how did he exhibit it?

Look at verse 20. What happened to this characteristic as Abraham grew older?