

Licking the Blade

Genesis 13-19

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Lot is introduced at the end of Genesis 11 as the grandson of Terah and nephew of Abraham. When his father died, Terah took him into his home and raised him alongside of Abraham and took him along when he moved his entire family from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran

Which means they shared the same opportunities and influences, yet when you look at their lives they end up in very different places.

Abraham may have fallen and struggled at times with his faith, sometimes quite seriously, but he kept getting back up and returning to God

As a result, he became known not for his perfection but for his faith

a prime example held up in scripture for what the life of faith is to look like and the model for the central importance of faith

This later earned him the title in Galatians 3:8 as the man of faith, and in Romans 4:11 the father of all who believe

His faith led him to become the one through whom God would begin fix his good creation which had been broken at the fall

And it is through Abraham and his descendants that God's great work of salvation and redemption would be accomplished

And along with it, the fulfillment of His promise that through him and his descendants, all the peoples of the earth will be blessed

This promise was fully realized in the coming of Jesus, his death and resurrection and one day return to usher in Gods kingdom on earth

Lots story on the other hand took a very different turn and provides a sharp contrast with the life of Abraham

For while Abraham chose the path of faith and walking with God, Lot pursued his own desires

This becomes apparent when he separated himself from the godly influence of his uncle and example of faith that was set.

And it led him down a path in which he became one of the most tragic figures in scripture.

After heading out on his own, Lot was captured and taken prisoner by a foreign army and it was Abraham that rescued him.

He had to flee from his home, leaving everything behind, before it was destroyed. His wife was killed as they fled because she looked back, longing for what they had to leave behind.

Afraid of all the nearby people, he ended up living in a cave in the wilderness with his two daughters

Where he ended up getting drunk, committed incest with both his daughters, who then gave birth to sons.

And while Abraham's descendants became the people of the promise, Lot's became the people of Moab and Ammon, who ended up becoming the bitter enemies of his uncle's descendants.

We tend to look at the finished product, to see the end result of temptation and sin but not how we got there

But as we see in the life of Lot, none of this happens all at once, but rather it is usually a long slow slide into sin.

We see, we desire, we choose to do things that move us in the general direction of the sin, we may not cross the line but do start playing around in the neighborhood before we move in and some sin becomes a part of our life

when we look at his story, we do see a clear progression away from God and toward his ruin.

In an article titled, Sin's Peril, Chris Zwingelberg wrote, Radio personality Paul Harvey once told the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin.

First an Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood.

Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf doesn't notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his tongue nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his own warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more, until the dawn finds him dead in the snow.

That is a pretty graphic picture of what sin can do in our lives as well
Drawn by our senses and cravings, temptation draws us in for a taste, and as we give in, we become numb, desensitized to what it's doing to us, our values, and moral bearings
wanting more and more until it controls us

beginning in verse 1 of Gen. 13, we find this progression in the story of Lot

"So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. 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 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 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. And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders 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 to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD." (Genesis 13:1–13)

Verse 10 says Lot looked up and saw the plains of the Jordan, how well watered and attractive they were.

It was prime property, ideal for his flocks and herds and expanding his wealth
And the pull of temptation played on his desires

Gleason Archer said this phrase to look up and see implies more than just seeing with our eye. It expresses knowledge and reveals something of the attitude and character of the person.

He said, it serves as a barometer of the inner thoughts and desires of the man

In this case, what Lot saw, he wanted for himself

You might say he lusted after it

The temptation to look and see in verse 10 led to his desire to choose and take action to obtain it for himself in verse 11

Not that dissimilar to Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden.

Once he got Eve to look up and see the forbidden fruit which then led to her desire to take action and choose to take some
So, she took and ate and her eyes were opened.

by right and by custom, Lot still should have deferred to him as his uncle, elder, and the family patriarch

Instead, Lot put his own desires above his uncle
so, it says he looked, he saw, and he wanted it.

Without any hesitation or consideration for his uncle, he then chose to take the best for himself

James 1:14-15 warns that each of us are tempted when we are dragged away by our own evil desire and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin and when sin is full grown it gives birth to death

That is certainly the path that Lot is on

The more his desires guided his decisions, the further he moved away from Abraham and his influence of faith, and the closer he came to his downfall in Sodom

He didn't set out for Sodom, whose people are referred to in :13 as wicked and sinful, it simply says he moved toward the east, when he looked up liked what he saw and was drawn towards it

Where he would be influenced by them and exposed to their sin

The closer he got the greater the pull

the next thing you know, in verse 13 it says Lot was living among, or near to the cities on the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

Few set out to sin we simply allow ourselves to be drawn to it
We cast a glance in its direction and become curious about what it has to offer,
what we may be missing, what others are doing
Our curiosity draws us, temptation lures us to let down our guard as we start that
gradual slide towards it and are slowly drawn to it

Like Lot, we look, we see, we want, and before you know it, we have made our choice and start moving in that direction

For the next we see of Lot in chapter 14 he has moved into the neighborhood
14:12 it says he was no longer just living in the general area of Sodom where he might visit it once in a while but now, he is actually living in Sodom

He might not agree with their lifestyle and all the things' people were doing there, but there remained an attractiveness to it, and curiosity about it.

Holding out in the belief that it didn't affect him since he wasn't participating with them.

But once you open the door, its hard of not impossible to close it again

Just think of the entertainment industry and what we used to watch in the 60's then compare that to what we commonly see on TV today. The floodgates have been opened to all types of things we would never have allowed before.
And we are shocked by the violence we see on our city streets and hate coming out of people's mouths yet refuse to make the connection with all the violence we watch nightly on our TV's and computers

Dag Hammarskjold – you cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal, play with falsehood without forfeiting your right

to truth, play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind. He who wants to keep his garden tidy, doesn't reserve a plot for weeds.

by the time God sends his angels to the city to destroy it for its wickedness, 19:1 says as they entered the city they are greeted by Lot who was sitting in the gateway of Sodom

that in itself is a very telling statement

we have city hall and court buildings and governmental offices, various places which serve as the centers of our cities where decisions are made.

Back then it was the city gate where all the major decisions were made and cases tried.

The gateway was the place where the city leaders and ruling councils gathered and made important decisions

By stating that Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city, it is saying he had become one of the leading citizens and had become a member of the ruling council

He may not have participated in the wickedness going on all around him or agreed with it for 2 Peter 2 says he was distressed by it, yet he could apparently live with it and turn a blind eye to what was going on otherwise what's he doing in the city square?

He had become desensitized to sin so much that now, as a leading citizen he was giving his unspoken support to it.

What a far cry from the nomad raised with and by Abraham, the man of God and of faith

There is a way which seem right to a man, but in the end leads to death.

Lot didn't just fall into sin, his desires drew him to it step by step

He looked up and saw that which was pleasing to him and gave rise to desire.

He then chose to pursue it above all else
Then he began playing around in the neighborhood for a while
Moved on into its presence and eventually came to accept it

If we are not careful that will happen to us as well
We can play around sin so much that we become desensitized to it
We may not participate but we can live with it and perhaps even excuse it in others

Someone once said, sin is like a stray cat. If you let your kids feed it some old baloney, the next thing you know, it's having babies under your front porch.

You cannot play around with fire without getting burned
And you cannot play around with sin without facing some serious consequences

Charles Swindoll told the story of a quaint little village north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where, as he put it, a shining new red brick building was built, designed to be the new city hall. It also housed the police and fire departments. It was a small building but the people of the town loved it.

In the matter of a few months of its opening, however, the building began to show some obvious cracks. The windows wouldn't close all the way. Before too many weeks, the doors were ajar and wouldn't shut. The floor buckled. Finally, the sidewalk in front of the building cracked.

In the period of less than a year, the building had to be condemned. When a careful and expensive examination was made, it was found that deep below the surface, they had built too close to some old mining work. The mine below had weakened the entire foundational area, so that slowly but surely, the building was cracking, shifting, sinking, dropping, and breaking into pieces all because of the flaw underneath.

Swindoll went on to say, the moral of this isn't difficult to grasp. If you piddle around with temptation long enough, playing with it, lingering near its bait over and over again, then down in the heart and life of your character, there will be permanent damage. That vulnerable flaw or weakness will lead to serious moral damage that you cannot imagine.

That was certainly true in Lots' case.

He fooled around so long in and around Sodom, with its sin and immorality, that it couldn't help but make an impact

He ended up bringing Sodom's immorality home with him when he committed incest with his daughters

I've heard people try to justify playing around with temptation and sin by misquoting Psalm 37:4 to say God promises to give us the desires of our heart so therefore what they are drawn to can't be wrong.

this leaves out the very important, and essential caveat at the beginning which says,

Delight yourself in the Lord and then he will give you the desires of your heart

That was the difference between Lot and Abraham

Lot looked and saw and chose to pursue the desires of his heart and look where it got him.

Abraham sought to walk with the Lord, to take his delight in Him and in 13:4 God did give him the desires of his heart when he told him to look up and see all God was promising him and his descendants.

Where is your delight?