

*Genesis*  
Chapter 13:5-18

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✠ **Gen 13:5-7** <sup>5</sup> *Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. <sup>6</sup> Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. <sup>7</sup> And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.*

When I first read this, the first thing that came to mind is the church, and how there are sometimes people that want to follow one person's way, and others who want to follow somebody else's way. And what ends up happening is, the church will split up, we see this kind of strife even in the books of Acts.

✠ **Acts 15:36-41** <sup>36</sup> *Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." <sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup> But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. <sup>41</sup> And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.*

There seems to always be divisions and strife in the church and this is a sad thing.

And what causes them?

Pride:

✠ **Prov 13:10 (NLT)** *Pride leads to arguments; those who take advice are wise.*

Hatred:

✠ **Prov 10:12 (NLT)** *Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love covers all offenses.*

Someone who enjoys arguing:

✠ **Prov 26:21 (NLT)** *A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.*

A hot-temper:

✠ **Prov 29:22 (NLT)** *A hot-tempered person starts fights and gets into all kinds of sin.*

Conceit, Greed & Ignorance of God's word:

✠ **1 Tim 6:4-5 (NLT)** <sup>4</sup> *Anyone who teaches anything different is both conceited and ignorant. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, fighting,*

*slander, and evil suspicions. <sup>5</sup> These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they don't tell the truth. To them religion is just a way to get rich.*

Jealousy & selfish ambition:

✠ **James 3:16 (NLT)** *For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil.*

And how do you overcome if you have some of these problems, or if someone else in the church does?

Humbleness:

✠ **Phil 2:3 (NLT)** *Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.*

Reminding them of God's word:

✠ **2 Tim 2:14-17 (NLT)** <sup>14</sup> *Remind everyone of these things, and command them in God's name to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them. <sup>15</sup> Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. <sup>16</sup> Avoid godless, foolish discussions that lead to more and more ungodliness. <sup>17</sup> This kind of talk spreads like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of this.*

Staying out of it i.e. Don't get involved in arguments:

✠ **2 Tim 2:23-26 (NLT)** <sup>23</sup> *Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. <sup>24</sup> The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. <sup>25</sup> They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth. <sup>26</sup> Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.*

✠ <sup>7</sup> *And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.*

The last sentence seems to have been just kind of stuck there for no particular reason. But if we look at the next verse we will see why it's there.

✠ **Gen 13:8** *Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.*

Abram is saying, "Hey Lot, we're family, we shouldn't let the world around us cause division or arguing among us."

You see it may have been that Abram had one of the two (Canaanites or Perizzites) as his servants and Lot had the other. And these guys possibly didn't like each other, so there was constant arguing.

Also today there are people in the church who are non believers, and because they are not believers and are ignorant of God's word they will cause strife and division in the church with their own ways. They just don't follow the ways of God, and they think that they are right and others are wrong and that their way should be followed.

They are the one's who says, "just do it, you know it's OK" or "It's the right thing to do." Instead of praying about it and seeking God first.

✠ **Gen 13:9-11** <sup>9</sup> *"Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."* <sup>10</sup> *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. <sup>11</sup> Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.*

Abram was being humble in this situation. He could have said, "you go this way and I'll go that way." But no, he was humble and gave Lot the choice of which way he desired to go.

Mine, mine, mine, that's the way the world has taught us today. "You deserve it", "Just do it", "Go for it", all phrases we no to well, but that's not the way of God. You see in the garden, God could have said to satan, "Mine". But He didn't, God gave us the free choice just as Abram gave Lot the choice, and what did Lot choose? Land that was like the land of Egypt. It appears Lot liked Egypt, and not just for its beauty, but probably more for it's pagan ways. But then again, Lot was not an evil man; in fact, in the book of 2 Peter, Lot is called a righteous man.

✠ **2 Peter 2:7-8** <sup>7</sup> *and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked* <sup>8</sup> *(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)--*

But even though Lot was a righteous man, he didn't always make the right choices. But we have all made wrong choices for the wrong reasons, even as Christians.

✠ **1 John 2:15-17** <sup>15</sup> *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

Lust of the Eye's, God gave me an example of this when I was driving home from work the other day. I didn't know why or how I would use it in this week's study, but now God has shown me.

God is so good to me!

We all are attracted to beautiful things, and we think if something looks good, it must be from God.

*Let's say that there are two drinking implements in front of you. The first is a beautiful hand blown crystal goblet and the other is an old coffee cup all chipped and cracked with even the handle broken off.*

*Now, which one would you choose to own or drink out of?*

*Before you choose, there is one thing I forgot to tell you, the crystal goblet is clean on the outside, but laced with arsenic on the inside and it cannot be removed, whereas the coffee cup is perfectly clean inside.*

*Now which one would you choose?*

You see just because things look good doesn't always mean that they are good for you. Even with a pastor or teacher or any ministry, we can't look at the outward appearance and make our choice that way. Kind of like the old saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." This is a man made saying, but God is the one who thought it up in the first place. Here is the way God sees things.

† **1 Sam 16:7** *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

There are many people who have no idea what I look like, but they go through the study each week on the Internet. If they did see me, would that possibly persuade some not to learn from it?

I think the best way to choose someone is to never see them, that way you are not choosing them in anyway based on their looks, but rather their ability.

So, I would rather be an old broken coffee cup that is useful, then a pretty crystal goblet that destroys and is only good for show.

The place Lot chose was a very beautiful place, but the key word is "was".

✚ *that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD,*

Sin took the beauty and turned that beauty into something less attractive. But then I'm getting ahead of myself.

✎ **Gen 13:12-13** <sup>12</sup> *Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.*

It seems that Abram got the bad end of the deal, reading how beautiful the land was that Lot had chosen. Abram was now stuck living amongst the Canaanites, but Lot chose to live near Sodom. Either way, they were both in pagan lands that served other gods.

Even with us sometimes we are set in a place of work or where we live that is not the best as far as neighbors or co-workers go, kind of like Abram was. But then sometimes we choose to be there just like Lot did.

Verse 13 even says, ***“the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.”*** But still Lot chose to be right next to them, and as we read on, we will see that he gets even closer than being a neighbor.

✎ **Gen 13:14-18** <sup>14</sup> *And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; <sup>15</sup> "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. <sup>17</sup> "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." <sup>18</sup> Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.*

God was promising to Abram what is now called Israel. And God promised it not only to him but his descendants also. And even more so telling Abram that He will make his descendants like the dust of the earth.

Have you ever been at the beach and tried to pick up a handful of sand and try to count the number of granules in the sand? It seems impossible, but with God all things are possible, as long as it's His will not just ours. Remember that Abram and Sarai had no children at this time, but still God made this promise to him.

What's going on in your life right now?

Are there things that seem just impossible, maybe even so bad you wonder if even God can help you out with this one? It's OK to say yes because we have all been there, and God has always brought us through it. Now ask yourself, are you praying God's will in this situation or yours? You may say, "God doesn't want me to go through this or go without this or that."

How do you know, did you ask Him?

You will hear this verse over and over from me, but it is something we should always remember whenever we are going through anything, good or bad.

† **Isaiah 55:8-9** <sup>8</sup> *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.* <sup>9</sup> *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

You can question God as to why, or seek His will.

Finally:

✠ <sup>18</sup> **Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.**

Finally we see Abram back in the same place for the third time. As many times as he left he still ended up right back where God wanted him to be. And there he worshipped the Lord.

Don't get comfortable in your walk with the Lord so that you wander off. Stay in that place of worshipping Him.

Remember it's only practice of what we will do for the rest of eternity in heaven!