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Genesis 18-19

“The Cost of Compromise”

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When you look at Lot, it’s easy to see why many consider him to be one of the most complicated people in the Bible. The reasons are simple: he was a man who lived a life of compromise, indecision, and spiritual weakness. And yet, Peter, in [2 Peter 2:7](#), calls him a *“righteous man”* who was *“tormented in his righteous soul”* by all the filthy lives of the people around him. It’s just hard to reconcile the Genesis account and Peter’s analysis.

It makes you wonder, for example, if he was such a righteous man, how could he live so comfortably in such a sinful city? Why is it, if he was such a righteous man, would he refer to a homosexual mob, *“my friends”*? ¹ Why is it, if he was such a righteous man, that he would offer his daughters to be gang raped? ² Why is it, if he was such a righteous man, that he would allow his daughters to get him drunk so they could have sex with him? ³ All you can say is that Lot’s story is filled with incredibly disturbing incidents and details. But don’t forget that the Holy Spirit inspired both Moses and Peter to write about Lot!

The only thing we can figure is that Lot must have initially seen himself as something of a reformer or someone who could make a difference in Sodom. It wouldn’t be long, however, before he became overwhelmed by all the perversion and depravity going on around him, so he resigned himself to accept it. It’s important to note that he wasn’t a participant – he had enough sense not to do that – but he tolerated all that was going on. In a sense, he became complicit in their sins because he never really did anything to affect change.

¹ [Genesis 19:7](#)

² [Genesis 19:8](#)

³ [Genesis 19:30-38](#)

So Lot became a passive citizen of Sodom. He settled down, had a family, and became a civic leader. As time went on he became immune to the sin around him, and the impact that it was having on his own heart and his family. And God, who sees the heart, saw something valuable in Lot, buried underneath all of his compromise, and he had mercy on him and rescued him. But even in God's rescue effort, it was necessary to forcibly remove Lot and his family from an incredibly perverted place. It's hard to believe this was necessary, but the Bible indicates Lot hesitated to leave!

In many ways Lot is like many people today. They are righteous in the sense that they believe in God, they mean well, and they feel out of place in the world, yet they are strangely attached to it at the same time. They are people whose lives have been marred by personal compromise so that there is really not fruit, no depth in their relationship with God, and no witness to the others. Lot's is an all-too familiar story.

Lot's Story

1. The Bible first mentions Lot in [Genesis 11:31](#).
2. Lot is part of Abraham's immediate family that leaves Ur to go to the Promised Land.
3. He is Abraham's nephew, the son of Abraham's brother, Haran.
 - a. Haran died in Ur, so it's likely that Lot looked at his Uncle Abraham as something of a "father figure."
4. He became wealthy and his flocks grew to the point where there was a competition with Abraham's flocks for pastureland, and they decided to amicably go their separate ways.
5. [Genesis 13:8-13](#) - *"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. 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 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.) 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 men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord."*
 - a. Notice that Lot "pitched his tents near Sodom."

- b. God's commentary is clear when it comes to his perspective on the wickedness of the people of Sodom, and the fact that they *"were sinning greatly against the Lord."*
 - i. This should have been the first clue that Lot should have kept his distance, but no, he went from looking toward Sodom, to living near Sodom.
6. [Genesis 14:12](#) tells us that Lot continued to be drawn, for some reason, toward Sodom and that he ended up living there!
7. By the time you get to [Genesis 19:1](#), Lot has become a civic leader in the community!
 - a. The gates of a city were the chambers were built so business could be transacted, where leaders gather to decide strategy on war, and where the elders of the city would administer justice and make judgments for the city.
 - b. For Lot to be sitting in the gateway means that he was an elder in the town.
8. There was a slow and steady progression of compromise in Lot's life:
 - a. He looked toward Sodom.
 - b. He lived near Sodom.
 - c. He lived in Sodom.
 - d. He became a leader in Sodom.
9. God had to take the drastic measure of sending two angels to rescue Lot before the city was destroyed.
10. How bad was it in Sodom?
 - a. In [Genesis 18:16-33](#), we learn that God had a conversation with Abraham, and in this conversation we find out that there weren't even ten righteous people in the whole city, and if there were just ten righteous people, God told Abraham he wouldn't destroy it.
 - b. The angels (who came in human form) are told by Lot that it wasn't safe to stay in the town square because, by inference, there was an abundance of perverts in the town.
 - c. We know this is true because the Bible tells us that *"all"* the men came from *"every"* part of the city to gang rape the heavenly visitors. ([Genesis 19:4](#))
 - d. The Bible also includes the fact that *"both young and old"* surrounded the house!
 - e. The men of Sodom had fallen to such great depths of sexual sin that they exposed (no pun intended) young boys to their sinful, shameful behavior,

and, perhaps, they even planned to include them in the homosexual orgy they hoped would take place!

- f. It's no wonder **Genesis 13:13** says, *the "men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord."*

11. What does the Bible have to say about homosexuality?

- a. **Isaiah 3:9** informs us that Sodom was known for *"parading their sin."*
- b. **Jude 7** - *"Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."*
- c. God calls homosexuality:
- i. A grievous sin - **Genesis 18**
 - ii. Wicked - **Genesis 19**
 - iii. Detestable - **Leviticus 18** and **Ezekiel 16** (KJV - *"abomination"*)
 - iv. Immoral and perverted - **Jude 7**
 - v. Unnatural and indecent - **Romans 1:26-27**⁴
- d. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** - *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

Compromise Leads To Loss Of Reason

12. When compromise creeps in, you lose the ability to reason.

13. You start saying and doing things that are impulsive and irrational.

14. When you start to blur the lines between what is right and what is wrong in one area, it becomes easier to do the same thing in another area of your life.

Compromise Leads To Loss Of Respect

15. **Genesis 19:12-14** tells the story of Lot's sons-in-law, who laughed at him when he gave them the warning of impending danger.

⁴ *"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."*

- a. They don't take Lot seriously, because he's been living with them, never saying a word, never trying to affect change, and never witnessing to them.
- b. Now, all of sudden Lot says, "Hurry! Get out of here. God's going to destroy this place!"

Compromise Leads To Loss Of Resolve

16. **Genesis 19:15-16** - *"With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.'"*
17. This mess started in the evening and continues on without resolution until *"the coming of dawn."*
18. What in the world would take ten hours for you to try to figure out what the right thing to do would be? There was no sense of urgency for Lot!
 - a. The facts:
 - i. A homosexual mob was outside, ready to break the door down.
 - ii. Angels - from heaven, by the way! - told Lot and his family to run for their lives because God was about to "smoke" the whole city!

Compromise Leads To Loss Of Reputation

19. **Genesis 19:30-38** tells the account of Lot's daughters and their disgusting plan to have sex with their father.
20. The fact that Lot's daughters even thought of this scheme shows just how much damage living in the city of Sodom had done to them.
21. It's likely they had been exposed to all kinds of deviant sexual behavior.
22. Lot will forever be remembered as the guy who got drunk and fathered children by his daughters.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

2. Read [Genesis 19:1-16](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about times in your life when you made a decision to compromise in the “little things.”
 - a. What did it cost you to compromise in the end?
 - b. How did the Lord deal with you and the circumstances/situation?
 - c. What was the impact to your witness for the Lord?
4. Have there been times in your life when you’ve made decisions that brought you closer to the place of complete compromise? (Refer to #8 above)
5. How is the road to compromise paved with all kinds of terrible consequences, etc.?
6. Our culture has a lot in common with Lot’s, in that sin is becoming more acceptable and open.
 - a. How are Christians supposed to live in times like these?
 - b. Do you think Believers’ only hope is to “go Amish” and completely retreat from the culture?
 - c. How can Christians influence the culture and to what extent should they become involved in the lives of people who are immersed in the worldly system that exists today?
 - d. Read and discuss [Genesis 19:6-7](#).
 - i. How is that Lot can call the wicked men of Sodom, “*my friends*”?
 - ii. How have you made “*friends*” with the world?
7. Read and discuss [Genesis 19:23-26](#).
 - a. Interesting facts about Sodom include:
 - i. There is no trace or evidence for the location of Sodom and Gomorrah, but the best guess is that they are under what became the Dead Sea.
 - ii. [Genesis 14:3](#) - “*All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (the Salt Sea).*”
 - iii. The salinity of the Dead Sea is 34%, which is twice the percentage of The Great Salt Lake in Utah, and almost 10 times the amount of the Atlantic Ocean!
 - iv. It’s as though God pounded his fist into the earth - leaving behind the deposits of sulfur and salt - which created a fault line (Jordan Valley Rift) that runs from Damascus, Syria, to North Africa (1/5th of the earth’s circumference!
8. Read and discuss the Scriptures in #11a thru #11d.

9. Do you know a man or woman who was or is involved in a homosexual lifestyle?
- a. Pastor Gary made the following points regarding homosexuality:
 - i. “The truth is, our culture and the media have perpetuated two main lies about the sin of homosexuality, saying that (1) people are born that way, and (2) approximately 10% of the population are homosexuals.
 - ii. Scientists have not found a so-called “gay gene,” but even if they do that wouldn’t change God’s view on the matter, because in the same way that just because a gene has been found that makes certain people predisposed to alcoholism, there is no “free pass” from God – God still calls drunkenness a sin.
 - iii. The lie of 10% is trumpeted to make people think this is more normal and accepted than it really is.
 1. According to a USA Today article from May 2011, the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that the actual percentage is about 1.4%.⁵
 2. Today, liberal theologians espouse the view that homosexuality was not the sin of Sodom; their sin was being inhospitable!
 - b. Do you believe the Lord can heal and bring people out of the homosexual life?
 - c. Are you personally acquainted with someone the Lord has delivered from homosexuality?
 - d. Have you or are you ministering to a homosexual person?
10. Read and discuss #14 above.
- a. Examples of this would include cheating on your taxes, your company expense account, may be steps of compromise that lead to cheating on your spouse, because one compromise often leads to another.
 - b. What happened to bring you to the place where you realized your actions/words were irrational and impulsive?
11. Read and discuss [Genesis 19:12–14](#).
12. Spend time talking about the times when you’ve been tempted, like Lot, to look toward Sodom.
- a. How have you “lived near Sodom, lived in Sodom, and become a part of the culture of Sodom”? (See #8 above)

⁵ http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-05-23-Sex-survey-revelations-on-gay-identity_n.htm#

13. Spend time talking about times in your life when you've had "I've got to run for my life!" experiences.
14. Read and discuss the following quote: "It takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but you can lose it in a minute." – Will Rogers
 - a. Spend time talking about times when your reputation has taken a hit because of compromise.
 - b. Have you been able to restore your reputation over time?
15. When you think about Lot's wife turning back to look at Sodom, do you think you're too comfortable in the culture, and would you be tempted to want to stay if you were to get a warning like she received?
16. Would you say you are someone who tolerates the sin in our culture or are you burdened and broken over lost people?
17. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: remember that there is forgiveness and freedom in Christ (God's forgiveness, grace and mercy are available to restore men and women from a homosexuality); listen to the voice of the Lord and avoid the pain of dealing with the results of big or small compromise; be someone who honors God, lives for God, and witnesses for God; whose convictions are strong and unmovable in the relative culture they live in; choose to run from the temptation to compromise; remember that compromise in the little things leads to a loss of reason, respect, resolve and reputation.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).