

Life of Abraham: The Test of Prosperity

Key Scriptures: Genesis 13:2-18

² Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD. ⁵ Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ So 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. ⁹ "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." ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. ¹² 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. ¹³ But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. ¹⁴ 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; ¹⁵ "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶ "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. ¹⁷ "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." ¹⁸ 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.

Key Point: Faith chooses God's promises over what looks prosperous.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Would you rather have a small house with an amazing view, or a big house with no view at all?

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- "Have you ever made a decision that looked great at first but turned out to be a mistake? What did you learn from it?"
- Abram retraced his steps back to the altar at Bethel and Ai. What does his "pilgrimage of repentance" teach us about what true repentance looks like in our own lives?
- What do you find more spiritually challenging—seasons of hardship or seasons of success?
- Abram gave Lot the choice of land, even though as patriarch he had the right to choose first. What does this reveal about his faith and priorities?
- Why do you think the narrator introduces details about the people who dwelt in the land (v. 7 & v.13)? What do we learn?
- What are some modern examples of making decisions by what "looks good" instead of seeking God's direction?
- Lot moved closer and closer to Sodom until he was living in the city. What warning does this progression give us about flirting with sin or living near temptation?
- How does the example of Jesus in Rom. 5:6-11 & Phil. 2:4-8 challenge you in your endeavors to resolve conflict and find reconciliation with others?

Start doing: This week there will be decisions you need to make. Before you decide, ask yourself "will this enhance my relationship with God?"

Prayer: Do you have any specific decisions or areas of life where you could use prayer from others asking God to guide you? Take some time to pray that God would help you walk in Abram's steps rather than Lot's steps as you move forward. If you feel comfortable, share these issues with your study group so that they can pray with you and for you.

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