

And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" **Luke 9:35**

Store In My Heart

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It is important to remember that gratitude is not all that is mentioned here. First Paul tells us to rejoice, not the "be happy" of the world but true joy that comes from knowing God and that He is always with us to help in the difficulties and struggles of life.

Also, one who has devoted their life to the service of God should be the happiest person on earth. For no matter what happens to us here, those who are true servants of God know that Heaven awaits.

Keeping in close touch with our Maker and remembering that all things come from Him will help us handle the difficulties and struggles with a joyful heart.

God wants us to rejoice!



Lot's Choice

George Hutto

Lot is sadly missing from the list of the faithful in **Hebrews 11**. Although he is called a righteous man by the Apostle Peter, his choices in life left a trail of misfortune for himself, his family, and his descendants. God had blessed both Abraham and Lot with gold, silver, and cattle – so much so that their herdsmen quarreled about grazing land. Abraham said to Lot:

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (**Genesis 13:8-9**)

At this juncture Lot made a bad decision. He "pitched his tent toward Sodom." Likely because of that decision, his wife was turned into a pillar of salt, his sons-in-law mocked him, his daughters seduced him, and he spawned two nations of idolatrous people. (**Genesis 19**)

The Butterfly Effect is the meteorological theory that even the smallest perturbations, such as the flapping of a butterfly's wings, can alter the course of much larger events, such as a tornado, in the days ahead. If butterflies can effect such changes, we humans are surely immersed in the goings on in the world. From decisions in combat, to the upbringing of children, to the simple words and examples we share with others, our decisions and actions can have profound effects in the lives of others, and even in national/world-wide events.

God sets some things as absolutes which set parameters to our lives, such as the Creation, the crucifixion of Christ (**Acts 2:23**), the judgment, and the answering of prayers; but within large limits we all mold, shape, and affect one another.

What factors contributed to Lot's bad decision?

Lot was selfish. There is no indication in the text that he considered giving preference to Abraham. Abraham was older, he received the promises, and he was the leader of the clan from Ur of the Chaldees. We must give Lot credit for following his uncle when God directed him to the land of Canaan, however, Lot's character was not exactly like that of Abraham.

From stories like Lot's, New Testament teaching is distilled into passages like **Philippians 2:3-4**: *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

Paul's admonition to the church members at Corinth was this: Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same

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We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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For Our Information

Brenda Keisler got a shot for her hip pain that seems to be working well.

Ruben Keisler still has several issues doctors are trying to help.

Marsha Clayton is still in the hospital recovering from her recent surgeries.

Tonight we start in 2Kings 5:1.

Wednesday we will start in the book of Hebrews 1:6.

Make plans to join us for these studies.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (**1Corinthians 1:10**)

Abraham did not suffer as a result of giving Lot the choice. Immediately after the record of Lot's decision, God reassures Abraham that the land will belong to his descendants. (**Genesis 13:14-18**) God loves a cheerful giver and makes sure that he or she has the things necessary for a good and fruitful life. (**2Corinthians 9:7-8**)

Lot was materialistic and worldly. He was missing that essential insight, shared by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the city which God is preparing for the faithful. (**Hebrews 11:13-16**) While Lot was looking at the city lights of Sodom, the Patriarchs were looking by faith at the eternal city in heaven.

Lot might have had help from his wife and daughters when deciding where to pitch his tent. Jesus said "*Remember Lot's wife,*" referring to her inability to resist looking backward at the world, even as the angels took her by the hand, leading her to salvation. (**Genesis 19**) We must not grow so attached to the things of the world that we devalue heaven. His daughters were certainly not a good influence. (**Genesis 19:30-38**)

Had Lot pitched his tent more toward heaven, the atmosphere at home would surely have been different. Laying up treasures in heaven is every man's and woman's job – the good deeds, the faithful support of the godly, and simple devotion to God.

The godly life is more likely to be lived with the minority. Jesus said that the broad way leads to destruction, and that the way to life is narrow, that few will go into life. (**Matthew 7:13-14**)

Lot was Short-sighted. He was like the Christian who fails to add the virtues to his life – "blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (**2Peter 1:8-10**) The term myopic is used, meaning near-sighted. Some people can see things which are immediate and up close, but they cannot see the future in the distance. While Abraham was considering the promise of many nations and the blessing for all the nations, Lot was thinking about Sodom and the beautiful plains.

What can I do to insure blessing for my wife, my children, my neighbors, my descendants? Peter's discussion goes like this: "*...Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*" (**2Peter 1:5-7, ESV**)

Life is like driving a car. Consider the size of the rear-view mirror compared to the size of the windshield. Yes, we need to see where we've been, but the most important view is where we're going. Some of us are even required to wear glasses to help us see in the distance.

A note of hope to those who have made their bad choices in the past. This same apostle Peter uses Lot as an example for how God can deliver the righteous while reserving the ungodly for the last day. (**2Peter 2:7-9**) While Lot was not listed with the Patriarchs, he certainly was better than the citizens of Sodom. He protected those visitors who came for his salvation. His soul was vexed by the outrageous behavior of his neighbors.

There is much to be said for knowing right from wrong. There are generations of people who call evil good and good evil (**Isaiah 5:20**), and masses who don't know the difference. Those who do know the difference have it within their power to repent, to take action for their own salvation.

Perhaps the butterfly effect of their obedience will effect a great salvation, like a tornado, for those close to them, for those far away, and even for the nations.



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!