

Lot and the Fear of the World

By David DeWitt

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. And he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." They said however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square." Yet he urged them strongly... But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like..." When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of the two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out, and out him outside the city.... But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords! Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die" (Genesis 19:1-19).

The generally righteous person who does not impact his household or community probably fears the world more than God

- Abraham was a bedouin sheep herder living in a tent. But when Lot separated from him, *Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom* (Genesis 13:12). By the time the angels came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot is living in a house instead of a tent. ...*and he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house"* (Genesis 19:2-3). When the angels pulled he and his wife and two daughters out of the city, he wanted to live in another city, the small town of Zoar. *"Now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved"* (Genesis 19:18-20). Abraham became a strong influential part of his community. He was respected and honored and even voluntarily served by his neighbors (Genesis 14:13, 24; 21:22-23; 23:4-6). But Lot was at odds with his neighbors. *But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them"* (Genesis 19:9).
- It's not just that Lot became like those he lived with. Quite the contrary. Peter tells us Lot was ... *oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men and while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds* (2 Peter 2:7-8). **But neither was Lot able to influence those he lived with.** Even his own sons-in-law did not listen to him. *Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city." But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting* (Genesis 19:14).
- What's the difference between a righteous man like Noah, Abraham, and Joseph, who made an impact and those like Lot who didn't? One answer seems to be **Lot's fear of the things of this world**. He seems to be afraid to live on his own, outside the cities, so he settles in a city, even though it's wicked and its wickedness bothers him. He is afraid of the homosexuals of the city, so he offers them his virgin daughters. He's afraid of living in the mountains after leaving Sodom (19:18-19).

An Application—Possibly you know people like Lot. Good people generally. Those who hate evil and love good. But **they are too afraid to take a stand if it means trusting God and taking on the world.** They will talk against the bad guy but not stand up to them. They seem to be afraid, but it's not a fear of God.