

Russell Kelfer

Remember Lot's Life

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Remember Lot's Life

Precious Savior, loving friend,

We worship You. And as we bow, we ask at this moment that You would still our hearts, remove the debris that has settled in our minds, cleanse out the arteries of our spirit, that the blood of Thy precious word might flow with power and bring glory to You.

Comfort us we pray, Father, in our loneliness, in our weariness, and grant to us a new strength and a new resolve in Christ as we leave this place this morning.

That's our prayer,

In Jesus name,

Amen.

He is one of the most memorable characters in all of Scripture. His is a life etched in the pages of God's word with enough detail attached to it that it paints for us a portrait of the cause and effect of spiritual apostasy. His name is Lot. If Lot were to turn his story into a biography and market it in today's Christian bookstores and we had the privilege of choosing a title, we might pick something like:

"Discovering the Miracle of Spiritual Schizophrenia" or

"Trying to Live in Two Different Worlds" or

"How to Be Saved, But Ineffective" or

"The Chronicles of the Crisis of the Carnal Christian:

A Day by Day Step to Spiritual Ruin."

Lot's lessons may not have been clear to him even at the end of his life. But for us, looking back through the mirror of time, we can view the realities of this living legend all too well, for Lot's situation in life, as ours, was a result of deliberate choices. He was a believer and God delivered him when judgment came. But like the Christian who comfortably crawls up into the safety of his salvation and fails to walk with God, he was left with little to show for his years on earth. Now let's walk along through Scripture and Remember Lot's Life.

Remember Lot's Life

Scene one of the life of Lot opens after the fact, years after his life was over. (This is when the real measure of a man's life can be told.) The curtain opens in Luke 17. Jesus is speaking in verse 22 and He is saying to His disciples that the days will come when they will desire to see the day of the coming of the Son of Man, but they won't see it. Then He tells that as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, that is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be. In verse 26 Jesus tells the disciples to remember as it was in the days of Noah, that is how it will be when the Lord comes again. The people ate, drank, married, and were given in marriage until the very day that Noah entered into the ark. In verse 28 Jesus adds:

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;
But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.
Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Remember Lot's wife

(Luke 17:28-31,32)

To remember Lot's wife, we need a flashback to Genesis 19:23 in the next to the last chapter of Lot's life. Lot and his family were forcibly being taken from Sodom by the angels of the Lord as God prepared a horrible judgment for this perverted society.

The sun was risen upon the earth [it was morning] when Lot entered into Zoar.

Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

And he [God] overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

(Genesis 19:23-26)

Now, what did Jesus mean in Luke 17 when He said "Remember Lot's wife"? Did He mean "Don't look back over your shoulder or you will become a king-sized salt shaker"? I don't think so. Many people use this passage to teach that you shouldn't be looking back over your shoulder and thinking of things that might have been, and that is a good illustration. Others use it to teach us not to look back to the pleasures of this world that we have left behind. That is also a good application. But to get to the full impact of what Jesus meant, let's go back and continue

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Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to save his life it shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

(Luke 17:32,33)

What Jesus was doing is taking Luke 9 and reiterating it to emphasize

If any man was to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

(Luke 9:23,24)

The question was: what is a man's advantage if he were to gain the whole world and yet lose himself or be cast away? In other words, Jesus was saying that you can only look in one direction at a time. You can only walk in one direction at a time. Real Christianity means abandoning even an eye to the things of the world which destroy the things of the Spirit. There is the message of Lot's life and it is told in the message of Lot's wife. *She looked back because that is where her heart was.* Her life was wrapped up in things. Her life was wrapped up in events and accomplishments and activities. She was a believer, but she was a believer who had so identified with this world and its glamour that she held on to it and lost everything.

But remember, the title of our lesson is not *Remember Lot's Wife*, it is *Remember Lot's Life* for his life was a series of choices. These choices led up to this inevitable disaster. Our life is also a series of choices and it is the little choices that are the essence of a man or woman, and often those choices will be reflected in the choices their families make. Lot's wife was merely a reflection of Lot's life. Her desires were where he had taken her and his life ended less dramatically but with no less sadness. We had better remember Lot's life. It will speak volumes of the dangers of the compromised Christian life and the insidious choices that lead us to Sodom.

In scene two, we fade back to the beginning. As in a movie, we may hear a voice asking these questions: "How did this family end up in such a state of nothingness? Did they lack the opportunity to grow? Were there no Christian seminars in the area? Were there no Bible teaching churches? No Christian radio stations? No tape ministries?" Let's first remember Lot's opportunity. He didn't lack the opportunity to grow. Lot comes on the scene first

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in Genesis 11:

And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

...and Terah died in Haran. (Genesis 11:26,28-32)

So here is the first major event in the development of Lot's life message. He was the son of Abram's brother. He was born probably before Abram married. While he was fairly young (at what age we do not know), his father died. We don't know how his father's death affected Lot, but we do know it affected him. Death affects everyone some way. To some, it weaves into the life the fiber of responsibility and laces it with sobriety and seals it with sensitivity. A sign lights up in one's spirit and says, "all things do work together for good". Other people react differently. Bitterness seeps into the unconscious mind. Resentment comes over new responsibilities. A presumptuous spirit comes forth. The circumstances of life have to grind away at the callousness of disappointment before God can make His mark in their life. We don't know how his father's death affected Lot, but we do know it did affect him and we do know how he turned out.

The second thing we see in Lot's life is the grace of God. Lot is left fatherless, so his grandfather assumes responsibility for him. God takes care of His children. Seeing his life ebbing away, Grandpa quietly places Lot in the hands of Uncle Abram. This was no accident. It was part of the divine plan of God. We read at this point that Uncle Abram had no children of his own. So, Abram gets first hand experience with a handful of a nephew. But look at Lot's opportunity.

Looking back through the pages of history, if you could choose a godly man to raise your children in your absence, of all

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of the millions who have ever lived, no one would argue against godly Abram. What a privilege to be discipled by such a man of God. We will find serious reason to believe that Lot was typified by an ungrateful spirit. He didn't know what he had. So many don't. Many people are too busy blaming their parents for their problems or blaming God for their parents. They forget that God pre-ordained those parents. They forget that God knit them together in their mother's womb; every joint, every muscle, every feature was ordained in eternity past. The color of your skin, the color of your eyes, the color of your hair, all were pre-ordained by an omniscient, sovereign God before the foundations of the world. God placed just the people in your life and in my life that we needed to create the message that God wanted to produce in our lives. Our problem is one of ingratitude. We would rather be blond or tall or thin or have her parents or have his background. How fortunate that we aren't God.

God created Lot and, knowing that his father would be taken, God pre-ordained Abram, the saint of the century, to look after him. Like many of us, Lot didn't appreciate the opportunity he had. In chapter 12, God appears to Abram, gives him that precious call and that precious promise. God told him to go by faith to a land that he had never seen; He would make of Abram a mighty nation and through him all the world would be blessed.

So Abram departed, as the LORD spoke to him; and Lot went with him: (Genesis 12:4)

Guess who gets a free ride into the land of God's blessing at the hand of Uncle Abram? None other than Lot. No doubt you say that Lot was grateful that God had counted him worthy to be included in such a dramatic faith venture. Don't count on it. When was the last time you made a list of the people God used in *your* life both before and since you became a Christian who influenced your life for God's glory? And when was the last time you took that list and sat down and wrote each one of them a letter or made a phone call and just said, "Thank you for the part you played in my life." You don't know what that does to somebody's heart. When was the last time you stopped to thank God for the people that had a *bad* influence in your life that God turned into good? Have you ever called to tell them that you loved them? You see, God makes *no* mistakes. So often the people in our lives who shape our lives are not appreciated until long after their lives are over.

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Our story picks up in Genesis 13 as Abram and Sarai journey south into Canaan. Verse 2 tells us that Abram's tax return looked very impressive. It says Abram was very rich in cattle and silver and gold. God had not asked Abram to give up his possessions. As we shall see soon, Abram was not possessed by his possessions. In verse 3, we see that he went back to where he had first pitched his tent at Bethel. Once again, he worshipped the Lord. Here was the mark of God's man. Wherever he pitched his tent, he had an eye to God. Lot was able to learn how to walk with God by watching his uncle. Abram made some big mistakes. In the next chapter he tries to pass his wife off as his sister to protect himself. But, by and large, in Abram was the making of God's best. My friend, when you get the opportunity to learn from a man or a woman who knows God like that, stay close by. You can observe, ask questions, listen, and learn. Learn the way Joshua did from Moses, the way Timothy did from Paul, the way the twelve did from Jesus. That is our part of the disciple-making process. Follow men who are still learning and learn from them. But don't follow men who have stopped learning; they are not going anywhere.

As we remember Lot's life, we come to chapter 3 and we are forced to remember Lot's presumptuous spirit. In verse 5 we read that Lot had a tidy nest egg of his own. He had a bunch of cattle, a bunch of servants, and a bunch of money of his own. In fact, verse 6 goes on to say that between the two of them, they had so many animals and so many servants and so many goods that there was barely enough room to keep them apart. So verse 7 tells us that Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen began to argue. They couldn't get along. Verse 7 ends by saying that the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in the land. A literal translation of this verse would be that while God's saints were fussing, His enemies were all over the place. That is always true. What precious energy Christians can use squabbling among themselves. That energy needs to be directed at the real enemy.

We have seen Lot's lack of gratitude; now it blossoms into full-fledged greed. He has the most presumptuous spirit since Cain. Listen, however, to the power of a peace-maker.

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife I pray thee
between me and thee and between my herdmen and thy
herdmen for we be brethren. (Genesis 13:8)

Now listen to the generosity of a man whose security is in

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God. He can give it all away because it is God's anyway.

Is not the whole land before thee? Abram asked. Separate thyself, I pray thee from me. If you want to take the land on the left, I will take what is on the right. If you want to take what is on the right, I will take what is on the left.

(Genesis 13:9)

Abram was telling Lot that *things* were not worth friendships. He said, "You take whatever you want, and I will take whatever is left." Now here we find the first of at least four major decisions that Lot would have to make and on every count, he chose the way of the world.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

(Genesis 13:10,11)

In other words he said to himself, "This looks like paradise." Lot's eyes turned olive-green with dollar signs flashing in them. Here was his chance to make some big bucks off of Uncle Abram. He was doing this to the man who took him in like a son, taught him to worship, and cared for his flocks. It sounds like a group of relatives at a funeral or at the reading of the will, doesn't it? Uncle Abram had become a chump who had made a bad business move to Lot. Lot was ready to cash in. "Let's shake on that, Uncle Abram," Lot replied, "You have a deal. I will take the whole plain of Jordan. You can have the rest."

Now remember, Abram was in no danger. We will discuss that in the next lesson. God was taking care of Abram. He was a picture of the spirit-filled Christian resting in God, letting God vindicate him in due time. Not wicked Lot. Here was a man with a presumptuous spirit. A presumptuous spirit can be defined as we look at the Hebrew words, and the Greek word used in these passages. It means "proud, self-willed, arrogance based on an incorrect supposition of rights". It means to take for granted. There are at least two ways we can be presumptuous. We can be presumptuous with God and we can be presumptuous with man. Lot did both.

How are we presumptuous with God? Here are a few illustrations:

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1- We become presumptuous by trying to re-define the boundaries of God's will to suit our needs or desires. An example would be a prayer for a better job. What if it is not God's will for you to have a better job? What if the needs of your life don't demand a different job? Presumption.

2- We become presumptuous with God when we act as though God's will were dependent upon ours. "Now Lord, You can move, I am ready," we may say. God never stopped moving. Presumption.

3- We can be presumptuous by acting in the flesh as though we were walking in the spirit. We can deceive ourselves and in the process think that we have deceived God as well.

4- The fourth way is to do for God what God wants to do for Himself. We see a need in the church, in our lives, in our family, in our ministry, then instead of waiting on God for directions, we build an ark out of plywood and glue and expect some brownie points from God. Not so. Presumption.

5- The fifth way is to expect God to act because of who we are instead of because who He is. I don't know about you, but I can tell you that those of us who may have the privilege of serving or teaching, Satan has an opportunity to say to us, "Boy, God sure is impressed when you walk up there in front in your blue suit and tie and teach that class." God is not impressed. God is saying to us, "I will be impressed with a pure heart and right attitudes. That would impress Me. I am not impressed by teaching or serving or talents, I am impressed by your heart." We are presumptuous when we think that God has some special favor for us because of what we have done or because of who we are.

Let me ask you some questions to help you discern if you have a presumptuous spirit toward God.

- 1) Do you expect God to bless you because of who you are or because of who He is?
- 2) Do you expect God to honor you because you have a quiet time? Do you think some angel in heaven appears before God and tells Him to give you extra points for today. Then when the day goes badly, you have the right to get angry and shake your fist at God and say, "I had my quiet time, Lord, what do you want?"
- 3) Do you assume that God owes you certain things that other Christians have to work for?

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- 4) Are you angry or resentful when difficult circumstances come into your life, but when it happens to others you claim that God is working "all things together for good"?
- 5) Do you assume other Christians who dislike you or differ from you are "out of fellowship"?
- 6) Are those who rebuke you always viewed as judgmental?
- 7) Does your prayer life focus on *your* needs or the needs of *others*?
- 8) Do you tell God what to do and then call it faith?

Here are some key examples of presumptuousness in your relationship with God.

1- The spies went out into the land. Ten of them came back and said it was a bad situation. Two came back and said, "Let's go!" (Numbers 14:44) Those two were Joshua and Caleb. The people voted with the majority. They refused to go. God then called them together and Moses spoke to them and gave them God's sentence, "You want to go in, but you won't. You will die in the wilderness. Your children will go in, but YOU CANNOT GO." They said, "Well, we blew it, but God owes us another chance. We will go up now and defeat them." Moses said, "Don't go, the presence of God will not go with you." They didn't hear a word Moses said and went storming off into the sunset without the presence of God. They came back defeated, bloody and beaten. Presumption.

2- Another illustration in the same story is that God won't let his children down. God won't let us fail. Not true. God sometimes lets His children fail to teach them, to train them, to discipline them. I will give you a personal example. One week I had a series of circumstances and did not have a chance to prepare a lesson and I came before the Lord late one Saturday night and I said, "Lord, I need a miracle." He said, "You do every week." I sat down and it just seemed to flow. I got up the next morning and praised the Lord and said, "That was so neat." The next Saturday night, I sat down at my desk. That week, I had a lot of time to prepare, but I couldn't help but remember how neat it was for God to just make it happen the week before. I said, "O.K. Lord, here we go. It is ten o'clock Saturday night." Nothing happened. I said, "Lord, you didn't hear me. I am ready." Presumption. The Living Bible says that some men ruin their own chances and then blame it on the Lord.

3- The third example is, "Lord, I am sorry, I got caught."

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(Deuteronomy 1:45) We are looking at the same incident. Moses said that the people came and cried to the Lord after the battle. The Lord didn't hear them. Why? Because the people were not sorry that they had failed God; they were sorry they got caught. They were sorry they got clobbered. It is presumptuous to think that God is moved over our tears when our tears are because we have been disciplined. Ask yourself, "What brings repentance to my life?" Is it the fact that you have grieved the heart of God or the fact that you have merely been found out? Presumption.

Exodus 14:11-12 tells how the children of Israel were moaning, groaning and complaining, "Oh, Lord, why did you bring us here to die? Didn't You have enough graveyards in Egypt?" The assumption is: "Now that I am a Christian, God will remove the roadblocks, pave the highways, erect giant floodlights on the side of the road, and send a welcome wagon to escort us to heaven." My friend, you deserted the enemy's camp when you became a Christian. You have joined the army of the King. You are about to be involved in a battle such as you have never seen before. The Christian life is warfare. It is presumptuous to think that God will remove all of your problems. He will rather give you new power to be the victor over your problems.

4. "If you are really there, Lord, prove it." (Exodus 17:7) Moses was supposed to speak to the rock, but he got a little stick happy and struck the rock instead. In the process, the children of Israel had murmured, and God had spoken and called the place Massah and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel. They had tempted the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" God hates that. It isn't wrong to ask God to reveal His will if you are looking for direction. But remember this: God will not continually prove His existence to you. He may reveal it to reveal His will, but He doesn't have to. The heavens declare the glory of God. That is all you need. God often proves Himself in silence. In the absence of discipline and the presence of mercy the quietness of His grace is revealed. Be careful that you don't give God instructions as to how He can acceptably reveal His will to you. That is His business, not yours or mine.

The second aspect of a presumptuous spirit is man's presumption toward man. Here are some questions for your presumption list toward one another.

- 1) Do I assume others are interested in every detail of my

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life? Tape your telephone conversations sometime and see who you talk about.

- 2) Do I need to call attention to my spirituality or does my life do so?
- 3) Must I always have the right answers?
- 4) Are younger Christians uneasy in my presence?
- 5) Do I interrupt conversations?
- 6) Do I borrow at will and lend grudgingly?
- 7) Do I keep what I borrow too long and assume I have the right?
- 8) Do I assume the parking spot near the door is mine or perhaps God has saved it for someone who needs it worse?
- 9) Do I have a rising level of expectancy that God owes me at least what He gave me last week?
- 10) Do I take people for granted?
- 11) Am I irritated over the presumption of others?
- 12) Am I irritated over this quiz?

Much of the behavior in today's society is based upon presumption. Society says that the world owes me a living when in reality we owe the world a life.

So Lot had a presumptuous spirit. He thought presumptuously that God owed him an uncle like Abram and that God owed him a fat flock and many servants. He had eaten off of a silver spoon so long, he couldn't even understand how to use one that was made of stainless. He presumed that God owed him the best of all the land available. He presumed that he needed it more than Abram or deserved it more than Abram did. He didn't ask to be born did he? Therefore, take what is available, hurt whoever is necessary. That is the cardinal rule of a presumptuous spirit. The presumptuous Christian has fewer friends, less maturity and a weaker testimony than anyone else in the flock of Christ.

So Lot will be remembered as an illustration of ingratitude and presumption, but his final downfall comes in Chapter 13,

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. (Genesis 13:12,13)

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Now every city in the world is famous for something. San Antonio is famous for the Alamo. One city may be famous for a landmark, another for its cultural heritage, another for its smog or its traffic, or its strikes. But Sodom was known for its perversion. God had no place at all in its midst. Its reputation was well-known for drinking and immorality of all forms, especially homosexual behavior. It was rotten to the core. As the angels of the Lord appeared there in chapters 18 and 19, it became clear just how degenerate a place can become. But from a distance it had glamour, a sensual, tempting kind of glamour. It had a glamour that caused the heart of Lot to beat a little faster. *Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.* That literally means that Lot turned his heart toward Sodom. Do you remember when Jesus, in John 1, made the statement that He came and dwelt among us? It literally means that He “pitched his tent” among us. He came and personally identified Himself with our sin to deliver us from it. Abram had pitched his tent toward Bethel where he had built an altar for the Lord. He identified himself with God. Lot turned his heart toward Sodom. Lot never intended to turn his back on God. Certainly it was not his intent to see his family go downhill and degenerate into nothingness. But his heart flickered with double-mindedness, and he pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Every Christian pitches his tent in some direction. Some pitch their tents toward the altar of God. All they can see is the glory of God. The sides of their tents serve as walls to block out the very temptations of the world. They are not hermits, they are realistic; but they give no place to the devil. If a certain magazine or program stirs up offensive thoughts, or clouds the Lordship of Christ, there is no second thought; it goes. If certain people or places might damage their testimony, those things must go. Purity of mind and faithfulness of heart are worth whatever price they must pay. They are willing to lose their life to find it.

Lot was so typical of many of us. He never planned to take the low road. We all know that to actually involve ourselves in that which is degrading and immoral and deadly is wrong. But neither did he plan to take the high road of total commitment to the Lordship of Jehovah, losing his life to find another. Lot was like Mr. Average Christian. On the outside, he lived a relatively moral and obedient life, while toying on the inside with what it would be like to live in the Sodom of his world. We see this in our own lives when we sneak looks at magazines or movies

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that include just enough smut to be reputable to the world but detestable to God, by reading novels with just enough immorality to excite the imagination, by watching television programs with a pious attitude of self-righteousness but an inner joy of fantasizing over the world's kind of lifestyles. We thrive on just enough to engrave pictures of impurity on our minds as we decry to our Christian friends the indecency of it all, and we love every minute of it. It is called "pitching your tent toward Sodom". God calls it double-mindedness. He says it can be characterized by this: You will be unstable in all your ways.

So there was Lot's first major mistake. He identified with the pleasures of this world. He thought it would have no damaging effect on his life and his walk with God. You ask, "Did it?" It reduced his life to ashes. This poem explains the principle:

LOT PITCHED HIS TENT TOWARD SODOM

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom
The Scripture doth record
And as he looked to Sodom
His eyes turned from the Lord

T'was just an idle glance at first
But then a searching eye
He turned away and glanced again
Then finally by and by

He moved his home to Sodom
A natural move to make
Forgetting that, where man goes,
He must his family take

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom
The rest is history
Oh, God, had he not faced that way
How different things would be

He pitched his tent toward Sodom
And never realized
His very vision of his God
Was fading from his eyes

Check out which way your tent is pitched
It's not too late to find
You still can pitch your life toward God
And leave the world behind.

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If only youngsters heading away from home to college for the first time could realize this truth: It will not be the big compromises that lead you down the road to spiritual disaster or uselessness. It will be the little ones, the glances you take toward Sodom. Some college campuses *are* Sodom. That sorority or fraternity or club that you just *have* to join because everybody else is doing it. That drinking party you just *have* to go to because everybody else goes. That guy or that gal that wants just *one* date with you, but isn't a Christian, Don't buy the lies. The first time you compromise, do this: Write on a page in your Bible, "Today I pitched my tent toward Sodom." Maybe God will get your attention.

All of us, young and old alike, need to be reminded that the Christian life is not a game. We are not alternating between cheering for two different sides. We can't root for the side that is winning and when the score flip-flops, become confused and frustrated until we're not sure what side we're on. The Christian life isn't like that. The Christian life is not a license to choose your way of life and the liberty to do it *your* way. It *is* a way of life and the power to do it God's way. For some of us, God is asking us for our life and we are sending Him donations.

Some of you may understand what pitching your tent toward Sodom means. You have walked in unbroken fellowship in the past. Your eyes were only on the Lord; your heart would beat faster at the very mention of His name. Then, somewhere along the way, the spark flickered. You glanced toward Sodom. At first you dismissed the thought; then you looked again. As we shall see in the next lesson, the little inner compromises gradually began to snuff out the fruitful Christian life. We can become so self-righteous we don't even know it has happened. We think we have so much time. How presumptuous we are before God. I believe it may be tent-moving time for some of us, whatever it takes, lest we be remembered as Lot was. Perhaps we can't reconstruct spiritual experiences of the past. We shouldn't have to as we grow in Christ into more faith. We ought to need fewer experiences to sustain us. But we can recapture the relationship. We can recapture the fellowship, the abiding walk in joy, and the spirit-filled life. Some of us need to go away for a few hours and rebuild an altar at Bethel and bend down before a holy God and worship. We need to so pitch the tent of our lives that we do not even *face* the direction of Sodom again. Should we start to

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glance that way, may a glow from the eastern sky remind us to remember Lot's wife and finally, to remember Lot's life.

It simply must not become a pattern for ours.

Let's pray.

Our Father and our God,

So subtle it is! We pitch our tents toward Sodom in our heart, and on the outside we pretend to be facing the altar at Bethel; and we become double-minded in all our ways. You know our hearts. By Your grace this morning, speak to us, convict us, and encourage us to pull up stakes, and pitch our tent toward Bethel once again.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

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