



Friend of God

The quiet mountains or the lush valley – what would Lot choose? A life of ease beacons as greed took root in his heart, despite Uncle Abram’s generosity towards him. Would Lot come to regret his selfish choice?

LIFE VERSE

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3,4, NKJV).

TROUBLE IN THE CAMP

LOUD, ANGRY VOICES ECHOED across the valley where Abram’s camp had stopped. Lot’s herdsmen were fighting with Abram’s herdsmen—*again*. Both wanted their sheep and cattle to graze on the hillside not far from the tents. When the animals got mixed up, dust and tempers rose. There just wasn’t enough good grass for all their animals.

Something had to be done, and Abram knew it. He had to keep peace in the family. So Abram called Lot over, and together they walked up a high hill to look across the land and valleys before them. Then Abram spoke. “Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. . . . 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” (Genesis 13:8, 9, NKJV).

Is Uncle Abram really offering me first choice? Lot wondered. His eyes darted around at the brown hills, and then down into the beautiful green Jordan Valley below. He saw the twisting silver river and fertile fields filled with abundance. Far to the south gleamed the prosperous twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The whole region looked something like the long-lost Paradise that Adam and Eve had known. *How good it would be to live in such a lush valley, and how rich he could become trading his goods in the cities!* Without hesitation Lot chose the valley.

Think about the choices these two men made. How would you describe Abram? How would you describe Lot?

Abram was the one whom God had called and blessed. This land had been promised to him and his descendants. As Abram was older, his wealth greater, and his position in the family higher than that of Lot, Abram had the right to choose first. Yet he didn’t think about himself, but with self-giving love offered first choice to Lot. Abram chose to live in a right relationship toward Lot.

Faith Talk

Discuss with your parents what you think it means to live in a right relationship toward others. Look for an answer in this week’s Life Verse, Philippians 2:3, 4. As you begin memorizing it, pray that God will give you a heart like Abram’s—to think about others and not just yourself.



RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

READ Genesis 13:8-13 and think:

Are any of these “me first” scenarios familiar to you? Circle the one you do most often:

I look for the biggest cookie on the plate.

or

I will leave that big cookie for someone else to enjoy.

I run to be first in line.

or

It’s OK for others to go in front of me.

I like to choose first so I get what I want.

or

Someone else can choose first; I can be happy with what is left.

I want to have the first turn.

or

I am happy to wait for others to have a turn.

Think through your day. Picture things that happened or draw or write down some of the big moments in your day. Where were the opportunities for you to practice self-giving love by looking out for the interests of others? That might mean putting others first, making sure people have what they need, or standing up for others when they are being treated badly. It’s not always an easy choice to look out for others. When we do, we are living in a right relationship toward them, just as Abram lived in a right relationship toward Lot. When you live this way toward others, you will find that people are more likely to live this way toward you.

Get Outside

Go and look at the sky. Do you see any clouds? The rain falls from clouds heavy with moisture. Some of the water gathers in puddles on the ground, or in lakes or rivers. Water droplets then rise (evaporate) into the air and begin making a cloud until they fall in raindrops to the earth again, completing the water cycle. How does this remind you of a follower of Jesus who lives in a right relationship with others? Draw your thoughts.



SODOM'S LURE

SODOM WAS A BUSINESSMAN'S DREAM. If you had an eye for trade, money could easily be made there. The marketplace hummed with activity. Caravans from the desert brought their treasures to enrich the homes and palaces of the wealthy.

But there was something wrong. Even though wealth and luxury could be seen everywhere, there were signs of poor, needy people who were neglected. Even with the outward show of beauty, the city also had slums. The city's sickening high crime rate and terrible violence couldn't be hidden.

This was no place for a worshipper of God to live, and yet the attractions of the big city drew Lot like a magnet. Lot didn't plan on getting sucked into the evil things in the city. But slowly and steadily he became more and more involved in the city, until one day he moved inside the city gates.

The residents of Sodom didn't follow God, and their behavior was horribly repulsive. But there were some advantages to living in Sodom. With the market closer, it would be easier to buy whatever was needed. Plus, the city was full of amazing art and culture.

When we really, really want something, our desires can overrule our logical thinking and what we know is right. Giving in to temptation is a slippery slope. Read the prayer that Jesus taught in Matthew 6:9-13. Why might this be important? Include these words in your prayer now and talk to God about something that tempts you.

Do

Imagine you are Lot, and you're trying to decide whether or not to move into Sodom. Make a list of pros and cons. What decision would you make?

TROUBLE IN THE CITY

TROUBLE CAME ONE DAY when Sodom was attacked! Read about the battle skirmish in Genesis 14 and draw or write down what happened to Lot and his family.



Reflect

Read what Priest Melchizedek said when he blessed Abram in Genesis 14:19, 20. Everything we have comes from God, including our money, talents, time, and bodies. Sharing these things with God and others is what it means to be a good steward. How can you be a good steward of your money, talents, time, and body? Why is tithing important? Come to Sabbath School this week ready to share your thoughts.



GOD'S FRIEND

IN THE STILL, cool darkness of the night Abram lay awake. He tossed and turned, concerned about the future and the safety of his people. Would the five kings from the east attack his camp and take revenge on him? He was a peaceful man living in tents with no large army to protect against a powerful enemy.

In answer to his worries, God spoke to him in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward" (Genesis 15:1, NKJV).

What exciting, encouraging words! Just as a shield protects from enemy attacks, God promised to keep Abram and his household safe. But what about the "great reward"? It had been many years since God had first told Abram that his family would become a great nation and inherit the Promised Land. But Abram and Sarai were old, they had no children, and they still lived in tents in the hills!

That night God called Abram out to look up at the sky and count the stars. Of course, counting the stars was impossible! God assured Abram that his own son would be his heir and grow the small family into a great nation, too large to be counted (Genesis 15:5, 6).

Though he could not see how it could happen, Abram trusted God, who had never failed him. He believed God's promise! And God declared Abram to be righteous because he believed. Abram lived in a right relationship with God because he trusted that what God said was true.

Go Outside

Go outside on a starry night. Is there something in your life that you're worried about, or something that seems impossible? God is loving, powerful, and trustworthy. Talk to Him and spend some quiet time just listening as you look up at the stars.

Reflect

Read Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23. Do you have a true friend? What are the characteristics of a true friend? What about you—are you a true friend to someone? What does it look like to live in a right relationship with others?

YOUR FRIEND

- Read:** Read the quote carefully and highlight the parts that stand out to you.
- Clarify:** Look up any unfamiliar words.
- Respond** to the questions below and share your thoughts with a family member or friend.

"When you receive help and comfort, sing to the praise of God.

Talk with God.

Thus you will become a friend of God.

You will rely on Him.

You will obtain a faith that will trust whether you feel like trusting or not.

Remember that feeling is not an evidence that you are a Christian.

Implicit faith in God shows that you are His child.

Trust in God.

He will never disappoint you."

Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 538

1. What three words would you use to describe your relationship with God right now?
 2. What most challenges you from this quote? What can you learn to do?
 3. What do you want to remember? What can you pray about right now?
- God wants you to live in a right relationship with Him and others. Read Proverbs 18:24 and talk with God about your thoughts.

Do

Create a song or some hand motions to go along with this week's memory verse and use these to teach the memory verse to someone else.

COWS FOR TITHE

THE MAASAI MEN IN TANZANIA, AFRICA, have a close connection with their cows. You could even say that they *love* their cows! Life is hard, and when someone dies, it's very sad. But when a man loses a cow, he may grieve for days and nights, telling everyone who will listen about the strength and features of his animal. Yes, the Maasai men value their cows.

That is why a Seventh-day Adventist pastor was amazed when a wealthy man called to give him 100 cows as a tithe! Can you guess this man's name? Abraham. But that isn't the most incredible part of this story!

Abraham, from Tanzania, had read Malachi 3:10: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you *such* blessing that *there will not be room* enough to receive it." And Abraham didn't just read it. He *believed* God's promise!

Because Abraham believed God, he decided to tithe his cows. He went into the corral and began counting. "One, two, three . . ." When he got to 10, he put a tag in its ear and led that cow to the tithed area to give to the pastor. He counted out another 10 and set the tenth cow aside for tithe. This went on a long time. Abraham had a lot of cows! When he had 100 tithe cows, the pastor led them away.

Abraham's neighbors thought he'd gone mad. "Why would you give away your cows?" they asked. They didn't understand Abraham's friendship with God.

Nine months later the pastor received an amazing report! Abraham's heifers (female cows) were beginning to have babies. While the cows usually have a single calf, these mothers were bearing twins! Lots of twins!

When the neighbors heard about Abraham's double reward for his tithing, they said to Abraham, "Call your pastor. I want to give a tithe. We want our cows to have twins too!"

Of course, it wasn't because he wanted twin calves that Abraham gave God His tithe. It was because Abraham was in a relationship with God. He believed God, and he wanted to please Him with his actions.



This week's lesson is taken from Genesis 13:5-18 and Genesis 14. Some insights have also been drawn from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 12 (pp. 132-144). You can listen to chapter 12 from *Patriarchs and Prophets* here: [Patriarchs and Prophets - EllenWhiteAudio.org](https://www.ellenwhiteaudio.org)

