

IV: Rest in God's provision (vv. 13–18)

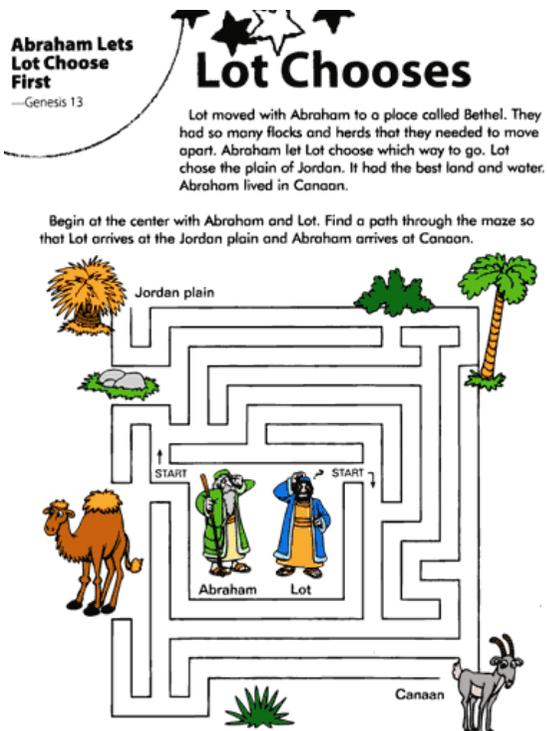
God had a plan and a place for Abraham. The Lord would provide. Abraham trusted this. We see his trust displayed when he built an altar to the Lord. He believed God would make good on His promises (Gen. 12:1–7). He didn't feel the need to fight with Lot or battle for his own preferences. This is contentment in action.

As Christians we have the ultimate provision from God. We don't necessarily have a piece of land; we have a Person. God gave His Son for us. He died and rose again to secure our place with Him (Jn. 14:1–4). That is why we can be content. We have Him as our portion and treasure.

We don't have to get our way to solve a conflict. God has a better way. Stand down. Trust Him. Look to Christ as your joy. Find your contentment in Him.

Let us Pray:

Father, we thank You that You are always give us what we want but you always provide us with what we need. Help us to value others and their needs over our own so we can live in the joy and contentment only you can give. Amen.



*May God's blessing surround
you each day.*

*As we trust in and walk in his
way;*

*May His presence within,
Guard and keep us from sin;
Go in peace, go in joy, go in
love.*

Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

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Contentment only God can give



“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
Philippians 2:4

Good morning and welcome to this weeks church service.

Our hymn this week is GUIDE ME O THOU GREAT REDEEMER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFqX9J7HNdM>

- 1 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.
- 2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.
- 3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

The Rolling Stones sang, "You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometimes, well you just might find, you get what you need." Many of us think this way. There are things that we want, even demand, that we know we will never get. But biblically speaking, you can always get what you want. When your heart is aligned with God's heart, when He is enough for you, you only want what He wants to give you. Of course you pray, seek, and labour for some things that will never come to pass, but in the end you are content with God whatever God decided for your life. The Psalmist said "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you" (Ps. 73:25). Abraham understood this and it enabled him to stand down when faced with a conflict with Lot.

You can always get what you want!

Reading: Genesis 13 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acprgHC27Hg>

From this reading we learn four key elements to handling conflict.

I: Having much can sometimes cause conflicts (vv.1–7)

This conflict between Abraham and Lot arose because of the physical blessings they received. Each of them possessed many flocks, servants, and herds. This put a strain on the land and caused strife between the herdsmen (v. 7). Verse 6 tells us "their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together."

Many of us tend to think more is always better. If we had more money or time or friends, we would be happier and at peace. But rarely is that the case! We tend to put joy on hold until we obtain some goal that we think we must achieve. But we get there only to find out that we desire even more or what we pursued isn't all we hoped it would be. We often pursue a promotion only to find ourselves getting home much later, sleeping less, and devoting less time to family and church. Conflict can arise over having much.

II: Value people over possessions (vv. 1–9)

Abraham would rather not be with Lot than be at odds with him. This is an important truth. Abraham yields to Lot's choice of any part of the land Lot desires. He stands down. He does not have to win this battle. He says, "Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left" (v.9). Abraham appears to value Lot over the land. He refuses to let possessions trump his love for a person.

Part of learning to stand down comes from recognizing the value of people. People matter more than possessions. We may get what we want at times, but in the process lose the person. Thomas Watson, the founder of IBM, entered a meeting once where many of the companies problems were being discussed. On the table sat a stack of papers which identified some of the biggest threats to their future success. After much discussion Watson walked over to the pile and swept his hand through the pile sending papers all over the room. He said, "There aren't categories of problems here. There's just one problem: Some of us aren't paying enough attention to our customers." He then turned and walked out People matter. And they matter more than possessions.

III: Learn the danger of greener grass (vv.10–13)

Lot chose greener pastures, literally! The lush and fertile land of the Jordan Valley drew his attention. The writer indicates that this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (v.10), and that the men of Sodom were wicked (v.13). We get an indication that this was the wrong decision for Lot. Abraham does not seem to care which land he gets. The allure and beauty of the land did not appeal to him.

What appears to be a better situation can, in the end, bring us great harm. We must guard against thinking that the "grass is greener on the other side." This can be a source of pain and frustration for us, and it can cause much turmoil in our relationships.