

A Lot of Tough Love

Bible Study • Study Guide

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, You must be frustrated with the way Your children behave, just like a parent watching their children make poor choices over and over. Please help discipline us with a loving hand as we try to follow Your way. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Have you ever tried to divide the last piece of cake evenly for two youngsters to eat? If one child chooses first, they will undoubtedly eye both pieces carefully and choose what they perceive to be the larger one. Depending on the nature of the child, they may taunt their sibling with "I got the bigger piece!" Then mom tries to put a lid on the impending squabble. Ugh!

God is a parent, too. God is often called "Father" in Scripture.

In the passages below, who is speaking? What are they saying about God's fatherhood?

Psalm 68:5 _____

Isaiah 9:6 _____

Romans 1:7. (Throughout all the books Paul authored in the New Testament, he references God as Father thirty times!) _____

James 1:27 _____

1 John 5:1 _____

This study will walk us through the life of Lot (Genesis 13, 14, 18, and 19) and how God used tough love with him and his family as we might with our own families. Similar to the dividing of the last

piece of cake, Lot and Abram needed to split the land between them because they had outgrown it with the large herds they possessed.

Which piece of land did Lot choose?

Genesis 13:8–11 _____

Uncle Abram, being a good father-figure, was fine with Lot's decision. However, Lot unknowingly put himself in harm's way because a war broke out among the neighboring kings. Lot was captured.

Who came to Lot's rescue?

Genesis 14: 12–16 _____

Have you ever needed to go rescue a child? Describe the experience. Would you take all the resources at your disposal to make sure they were safe again? _____

As an adult with more life experiences, we can often foresee trouble in the path of young ones that they cannot see. In Genesis, Lot settled in Sodom which was not the smoothest move since it was a seat of depravity.

The Lord visited Abraham (Genesis 18:1), and in the midst of their visit, Abraham was told that the next stop was to check on Sodom and Gomorrah.

What was the plan?

Genesis 18:20–21 _____

What did Abraham attempt in order to prevent the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?

Genesis 18:27–33 _____

Have you ever negotiated on the behalf of someone you loved in order to try to keep them out of trouble? Did it work? _____

To give Lot some credit, he does not seem to fall in with all the debauchery surrounding him in Sodom. You can almost hear him saying, "Don't worry. I won't fall into temptation here," somewhat like a student going off to a college known as a party school. When the angel visitors arrive, Lot offers them food and shelter to protect them from the crowd. So far so good.

But when the crowd insists on harming them, who does Lot offer to them instead?

Genesis 19:8 _____

No one will be granting Lot a “father of the year” award for that idea. Thankfully, the angels take control of the situation.

What do they do?

Genesis 19:10–11 _____

Being told that his household needs to leave town immediately, Lot drags his feet. First, he tries to get his daughters’ boyfriends on board, but they think he is joking and do not move.

Lot still does not get his family going, so what do the angels do?

Genesis 19:16–18 _____

Notice that seizing Lot and his family was an act of mercy. Do you ever tell your family they have to get moving when the words seem to fall on deaf ears and you need to take some action? Those who refuse to move, the intended husbands for the daughters, perish in the destruction of the city.

Even after Lot is basically thrown out of the city for his own safety, he makes another request. Lot does not want to go to the woods and asks to settle in Zoar, another nearby town.

Why does he say he wants to go there?

Genesis 19:19–20 _____

Does Lot end up settling in Zoar after being given permission to do so?

Genesis 19:30 _____

Have you ever known a child who begged for a new toy and once they received it, lost interest in it? The “it seemed like a good idea at the time” syndrome has been around forever, it seems. Although Genesis does not tell us why Lot was not happy in Zoar, not settling there causes more problems. His daughters think they are all alone with their father and must start their own clan, and then devise another ungodly plot to populate it. (Genesis 19:31–38)

The Moabites and the Ammonites became the nations descended from this line.

What were their interactions like with the Israelites years later?

Ezra 9:1 _____

If God is our Father, how should we behave?

Malachi 2:10 _____

Does God want to punish us? _____

As a parent, we do not want to punish our children either, but we are instructed to properly train them. (Proverbs 22:6)

God's training for us is the same, and He does so in perfect love. Read the passages below about how much the Father loves you.

John 16:27

1 Peter 1:3

A loving lesson for all God's children is found in Colossians 1:10–14. **(Fill in the blanks.)**

¹⁰ So as to walk in a manner worthy of the _____, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the _____. ¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all _____
 _____, ¹² giving thanks to the _____, who has qualified you to _____ of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and _____ to the kingdom of his _____, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the _____.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, we know we are far from perfect children and we need Your constant guidance and protection. Thank You for being merciful and patient with us as we daily try to follow You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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