

Session 3

October 31, 2021

CONFIDENCE IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT

Genesis 13:5-11, 14-18

Just because we love our families doesn't mean that we are immune from conflict. In fact, inter-family squabbles can be some of the most painful experiences we face. In this week's lesson, the good fortune and growing prosperity of the sojourners actually worked against them. Who would have thought that you can have too much of a good thing! Yet even in the conflict, God showed His unwavering commitment to both His plan, and His man.

A real conflict (vv. 5-7). The conflict that arose between the two clans was not personal, but logistical. The result of gaining so much wealth and prestige was larger households, more servants, and bigger herds. The effects of staying together in the land were soon evident. Simply put, there was not sufficient pastureland to support their grazing herds (v. 6). This led to quarrels among the herdsmen (v. 7), which left unanswered would lead to strife between the families involved. The mention of Canaanites and the Perizzites living in the land (v. 7) reminds the reader that the visiting clans were not the only ones vying for pasture. The competition for food would soon spill over to the resident tribes and the conflict had the potential to snowball into an even greater—and more dangerous—situation. For reflection: *What does this story say so far about family conflict and the potential for things to “get out of hand?”*

A reasonable compromise (vv. 8-13). In this scene, the conflict among the hired hands had apparently begun to influence Lot. In his attempt to forestall personal strife in the family, Abraham displayed both wisdom and generosity. As the elder, and the head of the household, he was certainly entitled to the region of his choice. Yet he allowed his younger nephew first pick of the land. The only thing greater than Abraham's display of godly character was Lot's lack of it! Whereas Abraham was filled with *selfless generosity*, Lot was filled with *selfish greed*. The memory of the famine was still fresh in his mind, and the Jordan Valley was so well watered and lush that it conjured thoughts of Eden from long ago and the Nile Valley (v. 10) from which they had been recently expelled. Verses 11 and 12 accentuate not only the differences between the land, but also the contrasts between the men that would ultimately lead to tragedy. Abraham was separated from Lot, but also remained in the rural area, separated from the Canaanites. Lot, on the other hand, was drawn toward the cities of the Canaanites and the great sin they represented (v. 12). For reflection: *Sin sometimes attacks us suddenly, but is often incremental and draws us in. What indications have you noticed so far that Lot was headed for trouble? How might 1 John 2:16 relate to this story?*

A renewed covenant (vv. 14-18). It seems quite likely that Abraham felt the burden of losing the companionship of his nephew Lot and grieved as well over the direction the younger man had taken. At just the right time, God reassured His chosen one. Lot might have taken the best portion of the land for himself, but ultimately it all belonged to Abraham anyway (v. 14). The covenant reviewed for Abraham the promises already made and elaborated upon them. The *size* of the promise stretched as far as the eye could see in all four directions (v. 14). The *duration* of the promise was forever (v. 15). The *number covered* under the promise was “like the dust of the earth” (v. 16). The *surety* of the promise was found in God Himself (v. 17). Once again, as God's

faithfulness to Abraham increased, so Abraham's faith in God increased (v. 18). For reflection:
Can you think of times when your spirit was so low that only God could pick you up? How did His faithfulness to you change your attitude toward Him?