

Imperceptibly Changed

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

“I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door.”—Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 356.

Suggested Readings: Conflict and Courage, p. 15. Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 110–113. My Life Today, pp. 87, 88.

Sunday January 18

1. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

a. It is said that you can tell what you are like by the friends you choose. What is shown by the place where we choose to dwell? Proverbs 13:20.

[Proverbs 13:20](#)

[20] He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

“Like attracts like. Like appreciates like. Holiness allies itself with holiness, faith with faith.”—Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 705.

b. In the history of Abraham and Lot, there are some very important lessons. When given the choice of where to live, where did Lot go? Genesis 13:11–13. Was this a wise plan?

[Genesis 13:11-13](#)

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

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

[13] But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

“Evil associations are always detrimental to piety and devotion, and principles that are approved by God may be undermined by such associations. God would have none of us like Lot, who chose a home in a place where he and his family were brought into constant contact with evil. Lot went into Sodom rich; he left with nothing, led by an angel’s hand, while messengers of wrath waited to pour forth the fiery blasts that were to consume the inhabitants of that highly favored city and blot out its

entrancing beauty, making bleak and bare a place that God had once made very beautiful.”—Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 89.

“In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families.”—Christian Education, p. 225.

Monday January 19

2. MOTIVATION

a. What was the motivating reason for Lot’s choice of Sodom? Genesis 13:10. What about us—how may the place where we live be affecting us? Luke 8:14.

Genesis 13:10

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

Luke 8:14

[14] **And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.**

“Lot chose Sodom as a place of residence because he looked more to the temporal advantages he would gain than to the moral influences that would surround himself and his family.”—The Signs of the Times, May 29, 1884.

b. What did Lot lose by living in the city of Sodom? Genesis 19:23–26, 36–38.

Genesis 19:23-26

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

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

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

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

Genesis 19:36-38

[36] Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

[37] And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

[38] And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

“The dwellers in Sodom were corrupt; vile conversation greeted [Lot’s] ears daily, and his righteous soul was vexed by the violence and crime he was powerless to prevent. His children were becoming like these wicked people, for association with them had perverted their morals. . . . It is Satan’s purpose to attract men and women to the cities, and to gain his object he invents every kind of novelty and amusement, every kind of excitement. And the cities of the earth today are becoming as were the cities before the Flood.”—Conflict and Courage, p. 48.

“What did [Lot] gain so far as the things of this world are concerned? His possessions were destroyed, part of his children perished in the destruction of that wicked city, his wife was turned to a pillar of salt by the way, and he himself was saved so as by fire. Nor did the evil results of his selfish choice end here; but the moral corruption of the place was so interwoven with the character of his children that they could not distinguish between good and evil, sin and righteousness.”— The Signs of the Times, May 29, 1884.

c. What can we learn from Lot so that we do not repeat the same mistake? Proverbs 1:10, 15, 16.

Proverbs 1:10

[10] My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Proverbs 1:15-16

[15] My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

[16] For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

“If we place ourselves under objectionable influences, can we expect God to work a miracle to undo the results of our wrong course? No, indeed. Get out of the cities as soon as possible.”—The General Conference Bulletin, March 30, 1903.

Tuesday January 20

3. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

a. Abraham made a different decision. Where did he make his home? Genesis 13:12.

Genesis 13:12

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

“After the separation from Lot, Abraham again received from the Lord a promise of the whole country. Soon after this he removed to Hebron, pitching his tent under the oaks of Mamre and erecting beside it an altar to the Lord. In the free air of those upland plains, with their olive groves and vineyards, their fields of waving grain, and the wide pasture grounds of the encircling hills, he dwelt, well content with his simple, patriarchal life, and leaving to Lot the perilous luxury of the vale of Sodom.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 133.

b. What were the results in his family? Genesis 18:18, 19.

Genesis 18:18-19

[18] Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

[19] For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

“[Abraham’s] godly example and righteous course, united with his faithful instructions to his servants and all his household, led them to fear, love, and reverence the God of Abraham.”—The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 93.

c. What can we implement into our own life from Abraham’s example? Proverbs 22:6.

Proverbs 22:6

[6] Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

“Who will be warned? We say again, Out of the cities. Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way.”—Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 355.

“Fathers and mothers should feel that a duty devolves upon them to guide the affections of the youth, that they may be placed upon those who will be suitable companions. They should feel it a duty, by their own teaching and example, with the assisting grace of God, to so mold the character of the

children from their earliest years that they will be pure and noble and will be attracted to the good and true. Like attracts like; like appreciates like. Let the love for truth and purity and goodness be early implanted in the soul, and the youth will seek the society of those who possess these characteristics.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 176.

Wednesday January 21

4. PREPARED FOR DUTY

a. Character is developed by many things, including our surroundings and associations. What was developed in the life of Elisha in his country home? 1 Kings 19:19.

1 Kings 19:19

[19] So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

“The attention of Elijah was attracted to Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who with the servants was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. He was educator, director, and worker. Elisha did not live in the thickly populated cities. His father was a tiller of the soil, a farmer. Far from the city and court dissipation, Elisha had received his education. He had been trained in habits of simplicity, of obedience to his parents and to God. Thus in quietude and contentment he was prepared to do the humble work of cultivating the soil. But though of a meek and quiet spirit, Elisha had no changeable character. Integrity and fidelity and the love and fear of God were his. He had the characteristics of a ruler, but with it all was the meekness of one who would serve. His mind had been exercised in the little things, to be faithful in whatsoever he should do; so that if God should call him to act more directly for Him, he would be prepared to hear His voice.

“The surroundings of Elisha’s home were those of wealth; but he realized that in order to obtain an all-round education, he must be a constant worker in any work that needed to be done. He had not consented to be in any respect less informed than his father’s servants. He had learned how to serve first, that he might know how to lead, instruct, and command.”—The Youth’s Instructor, April 14, 1898.

b. How did this prepare him for God’s work? Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Luke 16:10

[10] He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much:
and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

1 Corinthians 10:31

[31] Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to
the glory of God.

“Elisha waited contentedly, doing his work with fidelity. Day by day, through practical obedience and the divine grace in which he trusted, he obtained rectitude and strength of purpose. While doing all that he possibly could in cooperating with his father in the home firm, he was doing God’s service. He was learning how to cooperate with God.”—The Youth’s Instructor, April 14, 1898.

Thursday January 22

5. CHANGED FROM WITHIN

a. As we decide to follow the Lord’s plan and live in country places, what will surround us? Ecclesiastes 3:11 (first part); Genesis 1:31.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

[11] He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time

Genesis 1:31

[31] And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

“I look at these flowers, and every time I see them I think of Eden. They are an expression of God’s love for us. Thus He gives us in this world a little taste of Eden. He wants us to delight in the beautiful things of His creation, and to see in them an expression of what He will do for us. He wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life. . . . If God controls our minds, what shall we be?—Christian gentlemen and Christian ladies. God can fill our lives with His peace and gladness and joy. He wants His joy to be in us, that our joy may be full.”—The General Conference Bulletin, March 30, 1903.

b. As we behold the beautiful things of God’s creation, what will happen? Romans 1:20 (first part).

Romans 1:20

[20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

“I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places. Here there await rich blessings for those who will grasp them. By beholding the scenes of nature, the works of the Creator, by studying God’s handiwork, imperceptibly you will be changed into the same image.”—Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 356.