

FIREPROOF Your Relationships THE BEGINNING

Proverbs 17:1(NIV) Better than dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

I. Four fire hazards that we need to be on the look out for in our relationships...

1. Comparison

2. Apathy

Proverbs 24:30-31 (NIV) I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.

3. Control

4. Criticism

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV) Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

II. Three things that Abram did that helped his relationship with Lot that we can glean from...

Genesis 13:1-18 (MSG) So Abram left Egypt and went back to the Negev, he and his wife and everything he owned, and Lot still with him. By now Abram was very rich, loaded with cattle and silver and gold. He moved on from the Negev, camping along the way, to Bethel, the place he had first set up his tent between Bethel and Ai and built his first altar. Abram prayed there to GOD. Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also rich in sheep and cattle and tents. But the land couldn't support both of them; they had too many possessions. They couldn't both live there—quarrels broke out between Abram's shepherds and Lot's shepherds. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living on the land at the time.

Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have fighting between us, between your shepherds and my shepherds. After all, we're family. Look around. Isn't there plenty of land out there? Let's separate. If you go left, I'll go right; if you go right, I'll go left."

Lot looked. He saw the whole plain of the Jordan spread out, well watered (this was before GOD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), like GOD's garden, like Egypt, and stretching all the way to Zoar. Lot took the whole plain of the Jordan. Lot set out to the east.

That's how they came to part company, uncle and nephew. Abram settled in Canaan; Lot settled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.

The people of Sodom were evil—flagrant sinners against GOD.

After Lot separated from him, GOD said to Abram, "Open your eyes, look around. Look north, south, east, and west. Everything you see, the whole land spread out before you, I will give to you and your children forever. I'll make your descendants like dust—counting your descendants will be as impossible as counting the dust of the Earth. So—on your feet, get moving! Walk through the country, its length and breadth; I'm giving it all to you."

Abram moved his tent. He went and settled by the Oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to GOD.

What did Abraham do here?

1. He valued the relationship.
2. He was willing to give to the relationship.
3. He had a trust in God that took pressure off the relationship.

III. Questions to ask ourself...

1. How do I value the relationships in my life?
2. What am I willing to give?

Paul said this in Galatians 5:13 (NKV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

3. Do I believe that God can help in my relationships?

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