

Lesson 8: Living Righteously in a Wicked World (See L8 [Study Guide](#))

Purpose: To strengthen our resolve to hold fast to righteous standards during times of increasing wickedness.

1. Abraham and his family settle in Hebron, and Lot and his family settle near Sodom.

- Read and discuss [Genesis 13](#).

Overview: Abraham “was raised in Ur of Chaldea, then was led by the Lord to settle in Haran (Genesis 11:31; Abraham 2:1-5). The Lord later led him from Haran to the land of Canaan and promised, “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Genesis 12:7). Because of a famine in Canaan, Abraham and his family went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). Genesis 13 begins with Abraham and his family returning to Canaan from Egypt.

- Genesis 13:5-7. “And the land was not able to bear them [Lot and Abram], for their substance was great”.
- Genesis 13:8-9. “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee ... if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right”.

How can we follow Abraham’s example when we have conflicts with family members or others?

- Genesis 13:10-13. “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where”.
- “At first lot ‘lived in the cities of the plain,’ outside Sodom, (Genesis 13:12). Later he lived in the city of Sodom itself ([Genesis 14:12](#)).” (*Lesson Manual*)

What things might we do that are the spiritual equivalent of pitching our tents toward Sodom?

How can we change our behavior before little problems or sins become big ones?

- [Mosiah 2:6](#). King Benjamin’s people “pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple”.

2. Abraham rescues Lot, pays tithes to Melchizedek, and refuses to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom.

- Read and discuss [Genesis 14:1–2, 8–24](#).
- Genesis 14:1-2, 8-9. Kings of the region began to war against each other.
- Genesis 14:10-12. “And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”
- Genesis 14:13-16. “And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants ... and pursued them unto Dan.”
- Genesis 14:17-18. “Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was a priest of the most high God.”
- Genesis 14:19-20. “And he gave him tithes of all.” (See [JST, Genesis 14:36-40](#).) †1. Jim Faulconer
- Genesis 14:21-24. Why did Abraham refuse to accept even a thread as a reward from the king of Sodom?

What might be considered a “thread” of immorality in today’s world? What might be a “thread” of dishonesty?

How do we sometimes accept a “thread” of immorality in the entertainment we seek?

- [2 Nephi 28:20-21](#). “And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security”.

3. The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.

- Read and discuss [Genesis 18:16–33](#); [Genesis 19:1–29](#). (See also [Ezekiel 16:49–50](#); and [JST, Genesis 19:9-15](#).)
- Genesis 18:20-21. “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great ... their sin is very grievous”.
- Genesis 18:23-32. Abraham said, “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

What can we learn about the Lord from Abraham’s conversation with Him?

- Genesis 19:12-15. How did Lot’s sons-in-law react when he urged them to leave?

Why do some people refuse to remove themselves from bad influences even if aware of the danger?

- Genesis 19:17. “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee ... ” (See [Luke 9:62](#); [Luke 17:29–32](#); [D&C 133:14–15](#)).

What does “looking back” represent? How might we sometimes look back?

- Genesis 19:26. What can the story of Lot’s wife teach us about repentance?

What did Lot lose because he “pitched his tent toward Sodom”?

What do we stand to lose when we put ourselves in positions where we know we will be tempted?

How are we affected when we allow ourselves to be surrounded by evil, even if not directly participating?

†2. Bishop Gary E. Stevenson

- Genesis 19:29. “God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow”. †3. Pres. Spencer Kimball
- How can our righteous behavior benefit others? †4. Elder M. Russell Ballard †5. The Packard Family †6. Lenet Read

Next Week: L9 God Will Provide Himself a Lamb; See L9: [Class Member Study Guide](#).

(You can download a free LDS Institute manual at: [Old Testament Manual: Religion 301 and 302](#).) † •

†1. **Jim Faulconer:** The name “Melchizedek” is composed of two words, *melek* and *tsaddiq*. The second of these means “righteous.” (See the notes for lesson 6 for more about *tsaddiq*.) The first of these words is a general term for a ruler, from the king on down. So the name “Melchizedek” probably means “my king is righteous.” ([JEF Sunday School Lesson #8](#), @ Times and Seasons.org; February 12, 2006.

†2. **Bishop Gary E. Stevenson:** “Some years ago, John was accepted at a prestigious Japanese university. He would be part of the international student program with many other top students from around the world. Some enrolled with a hope to deepen their understanding of the culture and language, others viewed it as a stepping-stone to an eventual profession and employment in Japan, but all had left home to study in a foreign country.

“Soon after John’s arrival, word of a party to be held on the rooftop of a private residence spread among the foreign student population. That evening, John and two friends made their way to the advertised address.

“Following an elevator ride to the top floor of the building, John and his friends navigated the single narrow stairway leading to the rooftop and began mingling with the others. As the night wore on, the atmosphere changed. The noise, music volume, and alcohol amplified, as did John’s uneasiness. Then suddenly someone began organizing the students into a large circle with the intent of sharing marijuana cigarettes. John grimaced and quickly informed his two friends that it was time to leave. Almost in ridicule, one of them replied, “John, this is easy—we’ll just stand in the circle, and when it is our turn, we’ll just pass it along rather than smoke it. That way we won’t have to embarrass ourselves in front of everyone by leaving.” This sounded easy to John, but it did not sound right. He knew he had to announce his intention and act. In a moment he mustered his courage and told them that they could do as they wished, but he was leaving. One friend decided to stay and joined the circle; the other reluctantly followed John down the stairs to board the elevator. Much to their surprise, when the elevator doors opened, Japanese police officers poured out and hurried to ascend the stairs to the rooftop. John and his friend boarded the elevator and departed.

“When the police appeared at the top of the stairs, the students quickly threw the illegal drugs off the roof so they wouldn’t be caught. After securing the stairway, however, the officers lined up everyone on the roof and asked each student to extend both hands. The officers then walked down the line, carefully smelling each student’s thumbs and index fingers. All who had held the marijuana, whether they had smoked it or not, were presumed guilty, and there were huge

consequences. Almost without exception, the students who had remained on the rooftop were expelled from their respective universities, and those convicted of a crime were likely deported from Japan. Dreams of an education, years of preparation, and the possibility of future employment in Japan were dashed in a moment.

“Now let me tell you what happened to these three friends. The friend who stayed on the roof was expelled from the university in Japan to which he had worked so hard to be accepted and was required to return home. The friend who left the party that night with John finished school in Japan and went on to earn degrees from two top-tier universities in the United States. His career took him back to Asia, where he has enjoyed immense professional success. He remains grateful to this day for John’s courageous example. As for John, the consequences in his life have been immeasurable. His time in Japan that year led him to a happy marriage and the subsequent birth of two sons. He has been a very successful businessman and recently became a professor at a Japanese university. Imagine how different his life would have been had he not had the courage to leave the party on that important evening in Japan.” (“[Be Valiant in Courage, Strength and Activity](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012.)

†3. **President Spencer W. Kimball:** “Our world is now much the same as it was in the days of the Nephite prophet who said: ‘... if it were not for the prayers of the righteous ... ye would even now be visited with utter destruction. ...’ (Al. 10:22.) Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction” (“[Voices of the Past, of the Present, of the Future](#),” *Ensign*, June 1971, 16).

Recommended Reading:

1. Bishop Gary E. Stevenson, “[Be Valiant in Courage, Strength and Activity](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012.
2. President Spencer W. Kimball, “[Voices of the Past, of the Present, of the Future](#),” *Ensign*, June 1971, 16.
3. Elder M. Russell Ballard, “[The Effects of Television](#),” *Ensign*, May 1989, 80.
4. Joel’s Monastery, [OT #8 Living Righteously in a Wicked World](#), February 18, 2014.

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†4. **Elder M. Russell Ballard:** “In the Church, we often state the couplet, ‘Be in the world but not of the world.’ As we observe television shows that make profanity, violence, and infidelity commonplace and even glamorous, we often wish we could lock out the world in some way and isolate our families from it all. ...

“Perhaps we should state the couplet previously mentioned as two separate admonitions. First, ‘Be in the world.’ Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, ‘Be not of the world.’ Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right. ...

“Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it” (“[The Effects of Television](#),” *Ensign*, May 1989, 80).

†5. **The Packard Family:** “During Father Packard’s long absence, family solidarity had been Mother Packard’s major concern. She had two purposes: first, to improve herself and her own skills so she could earn a livelihood, and second, to spend every possible moment ‘living it up’ with her family. She made sure to carry on the traditions that she and Forrest had started, and one of those was to have fun, no matter what they did. The children learned to play the piano and to sing. They held regular family nights in which the children performed musically and did dramatic readings. After the work was done in the evenings they played games or had popcorn or a taffy pull or some other fun activity that kept her family members wanting to be home together.

“Floyd Packard, now a Regional Representative, remembers those fun family evenings: ‘Mother would play games with us every night, often until 1 a.m. or later. A real key was that while we were playing she would teach the principles of the gospel in an atmosphere that was easy to accept. There wasn’t much arguing, either, because when some of us started to argue, Mother would stop the game.’

“‘A team of horses couldn’t have pulled us away from home,’ adds his brother, Bill. ‘If there was a choice of playing with Mom or our friends, we always chose Mom.’

“Esther found many ways to teach her children the gospel. She paid them five dollars for every Church book they read, for example, and ten cents for every Church song they memorized. But principally, she taught them to work, and she taught them gospel principles while she worked with them.” (“[The Packard Family](#),” *Ensign*, Feb. 1984, 33)

†6. **Lenet H. Read:** “Dorothea Speth Condie lived with her family in Dresden, Germany during World War II. February 13, 1945, the allies bombed their city. Many homes nearby were set ablaze. Eventually their own home began to burn and they were lucky to escape. Most of the neighborhood homes were already burned or burning, and they realized they needed to flee. But the fires had caused a huge firestorm and the streets had huge bomb craters. The family quickly decided they must flee to the Elbe River about four blocks away, and there was a straight, wide street which led directly to its banks. For safety, they did not all go together. The father and one sister began to lead the way. The rest were to follow. But they were surprised when the father went to a narrow, indirect, side street instead of the wide street. It seemed more dangerous because of its narrow path through burning buildings. The mother cried out to him to take the wide street. But he could not hear. Finally another sister said, “Mom, let’s follow Dad; he holds the Priesthood!” The family followed down the narrower, less direct way.

“They reached the Elbe safely. Shortly after, a neighborhood woman arrived as well. But she was alone and in great anguish. She and her husband had tried to come down the wide street. Her husband, with longer legs, was ahead. Suddenly he burst into flames. An invisible liquid phosphorous from the bombs had poured out upon the street. Anyone who stepped upon it was immediately set ablaze.

The family knew it was following the priesthood which had saved them. (from “Let’s Follow Dad—He Holds the Priesthood,” *Behind the Iron Curtain*, collected and translated by Garold and N. Davis & Norma S. Davis; retold by Lenet H. Read at ldsgospeldoctrine.net; accessed March 1, 2014.)

More Recommended Reading:

1. Bruce Satterfield, “[Melchizedek: LDS Sources](#),” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*; accessed March 1, 2014.
2. Nancy Jensen, “[Old Testament Lesson #8](#) Living Righteously in a Wicked World,” @ LDS Gospel Doctrine Plus; February 12, 2010.
3. Renon Klossner Hulet, “[The Packard Family](#),” *Ensign*, Feb. 1984.

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