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prevailed and took spoils from Sodom, as well as captives (8-12). It was Lot's uncle Abram who, with his own private militia, rescued the people of Sodom and restored their property (13-17, 21-24). If it was not for Lot dwelling among them, Abram would not have been motivated to save them, and the Sodomites would have remained captives. Nevertheless, the people did not improve their esteem toward Lot.

Later, these people "surrounded" Lot's house with the explicit intent of raping his houseguests (Genesis 19:4-5). When he pleaded with them to do no such thing, they complained to one another about him, whining, "He keeps acting as a judge" (9). Those who persist in immorality have always accused those who disapprove of judgmentalism (Exodus 2:14). Truly, "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), as the immoral continue this tactic against the moral unto the present.

It was not only that occasion, though. The Sodomites said he "keeps" doing this, implying Lot had confronted the people of the city about their godless behavior previously. He was not unkind toward them, as it was because of him they retained their freedom and their possessions. Even so, he had informed them their perversion was an affront to God. Thus, they resented him and intended harm toward those under his roof.

By the following morning, Lot and his daughters had escaped Sodom and the city was a smoking ruin (Genesis 19:12-29). Until then, Lot "tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds." This is the correct attitude of the godly – to be rightly bothered by worldliness. While living on this earth, such behavior will be all around (1st Corinthians 5:9-11), but one must never grow accustomed to it. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1st John 2:15-17).

When Christians attempt to persuade sinners to forsake their iniquity and pursue forgiveness in the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus, often sinners reply that such persuasion is oppressive, even though it is only through love (Ephesians 4:15) and reason (Isaiah 1:18) that the words of the gospel are spoken. In reality, it is the "righteous," like Lot, who are actually "oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked."

YOU WILL LOSE YOUR INFLUENCE

Dominic Venuso, adapted

They warn that if you talk about certain topics, you will lose your influence. If you challenge certain powers, you will lose your influence. If you publicly state your position, you will lose your influence. If you don't put your head down and keep quiet, you will lose your influence. Lose influence with whom?

What they often mean is you will lose influence with the people in charge, with the majority, with the people at the top, with those beholden to the status quo and security of the group itself. Many of these are people who are concerned with their place in the group, their position in the hierarchy, advancing their careers. You don't want to lose influence. But if you are unwilling to say hard and necessary truths, what is the point of your having the position you have? What is your influence even for?

You sometimes have to choose. You can spend your influence on raising a voice for the least of these, for people on the fringes, on rebuking sin, on saying the important things. This may cost you the respect of some folks at the top of the social hierarchy. At the same time, you might be able to have influence with people about to lose all hope because they think they are alone. You may be able to influence people who are neglected or harassed. You might be able to influence people who follow the lead of those in charge but who don't know another way until they see someone take a risk and speak up. You might even be able to influence some of the people at the top.

I'm thinking especially of younger ministers. On matters that you believe are clear, biblical and important, matters about which you have a strong conviction that you have vetted with people you trust and investigated and prayerfully settled on: Commit yourself to an open statement of the truth. Don't fear the loss of influence with sectarian leaders. You are not given your voice to make them feel comfortable or to ingratiate yourself with them or to keep your career secure. You are given a voice to speak as the oracles of God. Take up your cross and follow Jesus. See whom He comforted. See whom He challenged. See His influence, what He valued, and what did not concern Him. Set your mind on the things of God, not the things of man.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"If we read Scripture to change others, but not to change ourselves, we are reading it wrong."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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**"OPPRESSED BY THE FILTHY
CONDUCT OF THE WICKED"**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

God *"delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)"* (2nd Peter 2:7-8).

Lot had *"pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against Jehovah"* (Genesis 13:12-13). Despite his surroundings, Lot retained his own virtue and integrity. He retained his blessings because he walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the path of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1). Although they were his neighbors, Lot never emulated the behavior of the Sodomites, but retained his identity as one of God's saints. He knew to be *"not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2).

While refraining from their wickedness, Lot managed to be a presence for good in the lives of the Sodomites. Sodom was a vassal kingdom, along with four other city-states, subservient to the Elamites (Genesis 14:1-4), but when the vassal states rebelled, they were attacked by Chedorlaomer with a coalition of three other kings (5). The coalition – Continued on page 2 –

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