

Defeating Good Intentions

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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

2 Peter 2:1-9

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Our subject today involves Abraham's nephew, Lot.

Lot was a man who apparently was greatly loved by his uncle Abraham.

When God challenged Abraham to follow Him; to leave his home and go unto a place that God would show him on the way, Abraham took his nephew with him.

Even against God's instruction to leave his family behind, Abraham brought Lot with him.

Lot followed Abraham everywhere he journeyed,

from Haran all the way down through Canaan and then down all the way into Egypt and back up into Canaan again to dwell in the plains of Mamre, right in the middle of what is now known as **Israel**.

Abraham was blessed of God and became very rich as he journeyed; Lot,

because he followed Abraham, was also blessed and became very rich as well.

When we read the story of Lot and Abraham in Genesis, one might never notice the greatest blessing that Lot received.

Peter tells us what we otherwise would not know about Lot's spiritual side. Somewhere along the way, Lot became a righteous man.

That only happens one way; just like the Bible describes of Abraham.

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Even though you might never know it by looking at Lot's life or by the choices he made, somewhere along the way, Lot became a believer.

Many of you know Lot's story. He and Abraham became so wealthy, the land could not bear them both with all their herds and flocks and servants.

Abraham gives Lot his choice as to where he wants go, now that they must separate.

Genesis 13:5-13

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.
6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.
7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.
8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.
9 *Is* not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.
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.
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.

We know what happened in Sodom. Lot was drawn there and ultimately spent many years there.

How many we do not know for sure, but it was long enough for his older daughters to marry and for him to have become the mayor of Sodom and serve there as a judge, as other text indicates.

Because we know that Lot was a true believer, we can be reasonably sure that Lot went to Sodom with good intentions...all believers have good intentions; don't we?

And maybe Lot did carry out some of his good intentions but the most important of them all simply did not happen.

Lot, who may have been the only light in the darkness of Sodom, did not let it shine enough to win even his own family to Christ.

When the day came for God to judge the wickedness of Sodom, there were not even ten believers in the whole city.

This world, this city, your neighborhood is facing the same judgement as Sodom; we just read about it.

What are some of your good intentions this morning?

Don't you intend to win souls?

Don't you intend to read your Bible more?

Don't you intend to walk closer with the Lord?

Don't you intend to love and spend time with your family more?

Don't you intend to get faithful in Church?

Don't you intend to be a more faithful servant?

Obviously Lot thought Sodom was a good place to make money; nothing wrong with making money, necessarily.

He no doubt thought he could do a lot of good to help the people of this wicked city; he became their magistrate; likely both the mayor and a judge.

The people of Sodom needed a lot of things, but what they needed most was a soul winner.

Something that Lot probably intended, but never got around to being; thousands perished for lack of just one soul winner.

Your good intentions, though necessary, I suppose, tend to become an evil enemy to you.

They are that which allow you to justify what you are not doing because, after all,

you do intend to get to it.

“Well, I intend to start teaching Bible classes.”

“I intend to start coming to Sunday school.”

“I intend to go back to school and get my degree.”

“I intend to send out my resume.”

We must either defeat our good intentions by turning our intentions into reality while we can or we will end up like Lot at the end of our life with not even the will to intend anything good anymore.

Let me give you a little help in defeating some of those good intentions.

First:

I. Prioritize your life.

A. We should figure out what is most important to us, right?

1. Actually, no.
2. You are already doing what is most important to you; that is the problem.
3. Like what you spend your time on.
4. Some would say, “That’s wrong, I hate my job.”
5. Really? How much time do you spend looking for a better one?
6. Others would say, “I really am going to get a real job someday”.
7. How much time do you spend out looking for one?
8. If you have a checkbook, you can look in there and see much of what is important to you...as well as what is not.

B. What we should figure out is what is most important to our righteous spirit.

1. You are much more than just your flesh and your mind.
2. What really are your good intentions?
3. Making a better living for your family?
Giving your wife a real date night?
Honoring the Lord with your life and with that
with which He blesses you?

Spending more quality time with your kids?
Maybe getting some help for your anger issues?

4. I am not telling you what should be your good intentions; you already have them; even though some should be a higher priority than others.
5. We need to confer with the Lord and find out those things that **MUST** be in our lives and then act on making them a reality.

Starting with:

II. Plan a schedule.

A. All Christians operate primarily on a weekly schedule.

1. Your life is made of time. God says we ought to redeem the time; we ought to make it count.
2. We worship on Sunday and then we go out into the world and move from one event to another to another until we come back to worship next Sunday and then we start it all over again.
3. If you are not operating on a Christian schedule with worshipping the Lord at the very beginning of it; you will be hard pressed to gain any ground until you fix that first.
4. If there is something important that ought to be in your life and you do not have a place for it somewhere in that weekly seven-day block of time...it is nothing more than a good intention and will remain so until you assign time to it.
5. Many have well said that “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”.
6. If you are not saved, you definitely ought to block out some time to find out why and fix it; but we are speaking primarily to Believers today.

B. What are some of the more important things that should already have some of your seven-day block of time devoted to them?

1. Worship?
2. Prayer?
3. God’s Word?
4. Your job?

5. Sleep?
6. Serving the Lord?
7. Family time?
8. Individual member family time?
9. Your second job?
10. Recreation?
11. Personal pleasure?
12. Commuting?
13. All the things necessary in your life and important to you must own a piece of your seven-day block of time.
14. And they must all be in some reasonable sort of balance.
15. You can even get out of balance by giving too much time to the Lord.
16. Even being overmuch righteous is not healthy for us.

Ecclesiastes 7:16 Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?

17. This is especially common for some of us who are not willing to let the work of the Lord go undone because others are not stepping up.
18. There must also be some unscheduled time so that when life or the Lord changes your plans, you have some space in your week to reschedule essential things so that they don't just become unfulfilled good intentions.

III. Provide a proper environment.

A. Life is not just about time; you also must always be some place.

1. Your good intentions will never become part of your reality without some sort of organized environment to live in.
2. How much time do you waste looking for that tool you need?
3. How many times were you late paying your bills because they were in some stack of paper you haven't kept track of?

4. How many times whether at work or at home did you have to do it again because you didn't it right or well the first time?

B. Time and effort must be given to take care of what God has blessed us with.

1. You must maintain your vehicle. "What do you mean I need a new engine? I intended to change the oil."

2. Do you take care of your house; your clothes; your hygiene; your health?

3. Are you lazy?

C. People who defeat good intentions must change the way they think.

1. Do you care about what God has given you?

2. You get to live in Texas, which is almost a suburb of heaven; do you throw trash on her roads?

3. Do you run to the emergency room every time one of the kids gets a temperature or you get a tummy ache because you know someone else will have to pay for it?

4. The average cost of an ER visit; like when they give you a prescription and send you home, is a little under \$2,000.

5. You must take responsibility for your actions or your life will never amount to anything more than a long list of unfulfilled good intentions.

That means we must be willing to:

IV. Pay the necessary price.

A. Something must go.

1. In order to add something that up to now has been just a good intention to your seven 24-hour blocks of time; something has to go.

2. Fortunately for many of us, there are a number of things that really need to go anyway.

3. Some of that TV you've been watching really ought to go.

4. A bunch of that time on the computer is not productive and some of it is downright evil anyway.

5. All that gossip on Facebook cannot be good for your soul.
6. There may be a fair amount of time you simply don't have anything particular planned for anyway.

B. Are you willing to pay the price?

1. Whether the cost is little or great, there are some things worth the price.
2. Is a better marriage worth setting aside a date night or a day date lunch?
3. Is a closer relationship with your children worth helping them with their homework or tucking them into bed and praying with them or reading them a story?

C. Sometimes the price is high.

1. Lot went after that better job in the city and lost his family.
2. What is it worth to you to be in Church every Sunday with your family?
3. What is the value of the souls you will win if you sacrifice the time to teach Basic Bible Truths faithfully every week?
4. Sometimes you must sacrifice some otherwise really good things; there are a lot of good things I simply cannot do because I have chosen the best over the good.

Conclusion:

You have procrastinated long enough!

Jesus died and was buried and rose again to save you from your sins...and you are going to think about it some more?! "I'm just not ready yet"?

For you to know this and still be putting off trusting Jesus and getting saved...justice would demand that Jesus forget about you and go on to someone who wants Him!

When saved people keep putting off the good intentions the Lord would have you to do...it kind of makes you a lot like lost people who keep putting Jesus off.

I know you have good intentions; Jesus gave you the heart for them when He saved you.

He has also given you the power to carry them out.

It kind of boils down to one thing; **will you** pay the price to see them through?

There is someone that defeated their good intentions; someone that sacrificed their time; someone that paid their debt of love to the Lord and gave of themselves to bring the good news of the Gospel to you.

That means that you now owe that same debt of love as well.

Are you willing to pay the price?

Will you sit down with the Lord this week and implement even just one of those good intentions the Lord has placed in your heart?