

September 1
Lesson 1 (NIV)

FAITHFUL DURING DISTRESS

DEVOTIONAL READING: [Luke 17:22, 26-37](#)

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: [Genesis 18:16-19:29](#)

GENESIS 19:1, 4, 5, 15-26, 29

¹The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

.....

⁴Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. ⁵They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.

.....

¹⁵With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.”

¹⁶When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD

was merciful to them. ¹⁷As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!”

¹⁸But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please! ¹⁹Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can’t flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I’ll die. ²⁰Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn’t it? Then my life will be spared.”

²¹He said to him, “Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²²But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.)

²³By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

.....

²⁹So when God destroyed the cities of

the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

KEY VERSE

When God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived. —Genesis 19:29

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE

Unit 1: God Is Faithful

LESSONS 1-5

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List the salient points of Lot's flight from Sodom.
2. Explain how this account demonstrates both the judgment and the mercy of God.
3. Prepare an explanation (one that could be presented to an unbeliever) of how God's judgment and mercy are displayed through the message of the gospel.

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction

Nickelson, R. L., Kenney, J. A., Williams, M. K., & Gerke, J. (Eds.). (2019). *The NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, 2019–2020* (Vol. 26). Colorado Springs, CO: Standard Publishing.
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A. No "Fair Weather" God

B. Lesson Context

I. God's Warnings (GENESIS 19:1, 4, 5, 15-23)

A. Angelic Visitation (vv. 1, 4, 5, 15-17)

B. Lot's Hesitation (vv. 18-20)

The Small-Town Ideal?

C. Angelic Determination (vv. 21-23)

II. God's Judgment (GENESIS 19:24-26)

A. Upon Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 24, 25)

B. Upon Lot's Wife (v. 26)

Part of the Landscape

III. God's Mercy (GENESIS 19:29)

A. Remembering Abraham (v. 29a)

B. Rescuing Lot (v. 29b)

Conclusion

A. Mercy in Judgment

B. Prayer

C. Thought to Remember

HOW TO SAY IT

Gomorrah Guh-more-uh.

Sodom Sod-um.

Zoar Zo-er.

Introduction

A. No "Fair Weather" God

A farmer built a new barn on his property, and on the roof he placed a

weather vane. Below the weather vane he attached a sign that read “God Is Love.” On more than one occasion, someone passing by would see the weather vane and ask the farmer, “Are you saying that God’s love changes with the wind?”

“Oh no,” replied the farmer. “I’m saying that no matter which way the wind blows, God is love.”

A similar statement can be made regarding many of God’s qualities, including his faithfulness. He is always faithful, regardless of which way life’s winds may blow. God is faithful not only in displaying his grace but also in carrying out his judgment on humanity’s sin.

B. Lesson Context

Lot was a nephew of the great patriarch Abraham. Lot is first mentioned in the Bible in the genealogy of Abraham’s brother ([Genesis 11:27](#)). Lot accompanied Abraham and his household when they journeyed from Ur to Canaan ([11:31](#)). Following a brief time in Egypt, the family returned to an area south of where the tribe of Judah eventually settles centuries later ([13:1, 3](#)). When land disputes broke out, Abraham allowed his nephew to choose the land he wanted for pasture ([13:8, 9](#)). Lot saw that the territory in the vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah was especially desirable, so he settled nearby ([13:10, 11](#)).

The exact location of Sodom and Gomorrah is uncertain; some scholars place them within what later came to be the territory of Moab ([Isaiah 15:5](#); [Jeremiah 48:33, 34](#)). Along with Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah are listed as cities located on the Jordan plain ([Genesis 13:10–12](#); see also [14:2, 8](#)). [Genesis 13:13](#) offers an ominous assessment: “The people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.”

Lot is a puzzling figure in the Bible. He perhaps understood from his uncle Abraham something of the Lord’s righteous standards. Indeed, the New Testament depicts Lot as someone deeply troubled over the wickedness in Sodom. [Second Peter 2:7](#) says that the Lord “rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless.” Verse [8](#) describes Lot as a “righteous man,” who “was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard.” However, Lot also seems to have become attached to life in Sodom despite the tension between his righteousness and the wickedness of the city.

[Genesis 18](#) begins with an account of the Lord’s visit with Abraham. He was one of three “men” who came to Abraham ([Genesis 18:2](#)). After confirming the Lord’s promise that Sarah would conceive and bear a son ([18:10](#)), the three “looked down toward Sodom” ([18:16](#)). The Lord

told Abraham of his intention to discover more about the extent of the sin within both Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20, 21). Verse 22 records that “the men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord.” At that point the exchange between the Lord and Abraham about sparing the righteous in Sodom occurred. Because the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah became “so grievous” in the Lord’s sight (18:20), he determined that judgment must be carried out on them. Despite Abraham’s intercession and God’s willingness to relent from judgment, both cities would be destroyed for lack of 10 righteous people (18:22–33).

I. God’s Warnings (GENESIS 19:1, 4, 5, 15–23)

A. Angelic Visitation (vv. 1, 4, 5, 15–17)

1a. The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening,

The *two angels* are generally taken to be two of the three men who had visited Abraham (Genesis 18:2). The third of those three “men” is thought to have been the Lord in temporary human form (18:33). This may imply that the Lord is not directly present with Lot in the ensuing discussion.

1b. and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

That *Lot sits in the gateway of the city* may indicate that he holds a leadership position in Sodom. The gateway or gates of a city is the place where important decisions are made (Deuteronomy 16:18; 21:18–21) and business is transacted (example: Ruth 4:1–11). Given the reaction of the men of the town (Genesis 19:9), Lot is more likely there on business.

1c. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

Lot greets his two guests in a manner similar to how Abraham greeted his three guests (Genesis 18:2). In the verses not in today’s text (19:2, 3), Lot eagerly invites the two visitors to spend the night at his house. At first they decline, saying that they will spend the night in the street. But Lot, aware of the wickedness that permeates the city (see the [Lesson Context](#)), convinces them.

4, 5. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.

If this is what happens when innocent people are behind locked doors, imagine what would have happened if the visitors were still out in the street! Two intended sins are in view: those of

homosexual behavior and rape (compare [Romans 1:24–27](#)).

In the intervening verses not in today’s lesson text ([Genesis 19:6–14](#)), Lot tries to dissuade those who surround *the house*, even offering his two daughters instead. The reply he receives promises that he too will be abused. At this, the two angelic guests pull Lot back into the house and strike the hostile crowd with blindness. The pair then plead with Lot to leave the city in order to avoid the judgment that is imminent. Lot begs his two sons-in-law to flee, but they treat his words as a joke.

15. With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.”

As dawn approaches, the urgency of the angels’ appeal intensifies. Note that the terms *angels* and *men* are used interchangeably of the two individuals throughout this account ([Genesis 19:1, 10, 15, 16](#)). The likely speaks both to their appearance as men and their function as messengers, a common usage of the word in both Old and New Testaments. Note that the word translated “angels” here is rendered “messengers” in [Genesis 32:3, 6](#); likewise in the New Testament, see [Matthew 11:10](#) and [2 Corinthians 12:7](#).

16. When he hesitated, the men

grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.

We are not told why Lot resists leaving Sodom. Is he hesitant to leave the wealth he has accumulated? Is he unsure about where he will live next? Later he will try to negotiate with one of the angels as to where he should go (see commentary on [19:18–20](#)).

Whatever the reason, the angels know they cannot wait any longer for Lot to act. They take the foursome by their hands and lead them out of Sodom. The reason for their deliverance is stated plainly: the Lord is being *merciful* (compare [Revelation 18:4, 5](#)). The word translated *merciful* is rare in the Old Testament, occurring only here and in [Isaiah 63:9](#).

What Do You Think?

In what ways can we encourage and help people to escape when they’re trapped in sinful or challenging environments?

Digging Deeper

What does biblical encouragement include that secular viewpoints might not?

17. As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the

mountains or you will be swept away!”

The reason for the instruction *Don't look back* isn't entirely clear. Perhaps it is meant to prevent those fleeing from getting caught in the shock wave since looking back implies slowing down to do so. Another possibility is that looking back would signal a desire to remain in the sinful environment of Sodom (compare [Luke 9:62](#)). Another possibility is that those fleeing are not to stop to engage in any smug satisfaction or gloating that those who may have troubled Lot's family are "getting theirs" (compare [Proverbs 24:17](#)). In any case, what will be descriptive when [Jeremiah 46:5](#) is written later is prescriptive at the moment.

The Hebrew word translated *mountains* is actually singular; but since the singular can refer to "hill country" in general ([Numbers 14:45](#)), a specific mountain may not be intended. Of primary importance is that Lot and his family move a safe distance away from the judgment that is about to be poured out on two wicked cities.

B. Lot's Hesitation (vv. 18–20)

18. But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please!

As Lot addresses the angels, he uses the same terminology as when he first encountered them at the gate of Sodom ([Genesis 19:2](#)). It is a term of respect and

does not necessarily imply an acknowledgment of divinity.

19. "Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die.

Lot's response to the angels' urgent plea leaves a reader baffled. Three times he has been warned about the destruction coming on Sodom ([Genesis 19:13, 15, 17](#)), and Lot himself has urged his sons-in-law to leave the city ([19:14](#)). Lot readily admits that he has been the recipient of *favor* and *great kindness*, yet he fears going *to the mountains* (see commentary on [19:17](#), above) lest this disaster *overtake* him!

Consider the irony: Lot is more fearful of a disaster that *could* happen than of one that is clearly going to happen—and soon! Thus Lot reveals his lack of confidence in God's deliverance. How can Lot think God is rescuing him from Sodom only to allow him to die before reaching safety?

20. "Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."

Lot suggests an alternative as a place of refuge. The name of the town is not given yet given (see commentary on

verse 22, below), but Lot twice makes a point of the fact that the town is *small*. Perhaps his attitude is that a small place cannot be a sin-filled place, or perhaps that a small sinful place can be overlooked by the Lord.

Abraham’s negotiation with God regarding Sodom has already been noted (Genesis 18:22–33; see Lesson Context). Lot is now engaging in his own brand of negotiation. But the motivation of Abraham and Lot could not be more different. Abraham was concerned that others be spared from judgment. Lot, in contrast with Genesis 19:14, seems interested only in self-preservation. He uses the pronouns *me* and *my* but says nothing about his wife or his daughters. That the three women in his life should also be spared is an afterthought, if any thought at all.

What Do You Think?

Under what circumstances, if any, is it proper to attempt to bargain with God?

Digging Deeper

How can we ensure that our motives are pure when we are tempted to bargain with God?

THE SMALL-TOWN IDEAL?

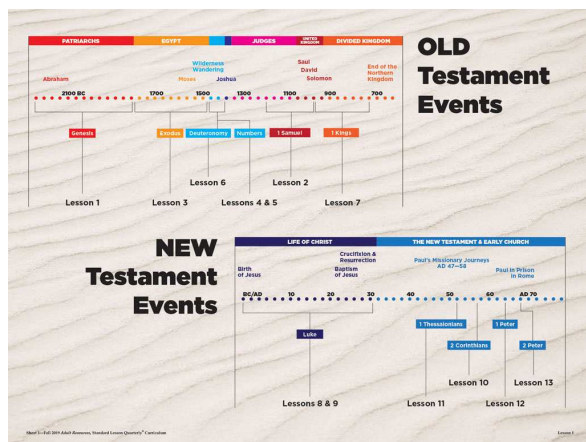
Small-town America is frequently used as an image of utopia. Fictional towns like Bedford Falls, Lake Wobegon,

and Mayberry evoke images of peaceful lives of communal harmony, where any problem can be resolved.

While small towns have much to offer, they are not the Edens of our dreams. Children growing up in small towns are connected to the same internet, watch the same TV shows, and listen to the same music as those in cities and suburbs. Small-town couples go through divorces. Small towns have their share of crime and injustice. Changing one’s location cannot guarantee that one will avoid the ravages of sin.

When escaping the corruption of big-city living in Sodom, Lot asked his angelic benefactors to allow him to relocate to a diminutive town. Tragically, Lot ended up discovering that his problems were personal, not geographical. When you’re running *from* sin, be sure you’re also running *toward* righteousness!

—J. E.



Visual for Lesson 1. Keep this time line posted

throughout the quarter to give participants a chronological perspective.

C. Angelic Determination (vv. 21–23)

21. He said to him, “Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of.

The angel agrees to Lot’s request; Lot is granted permission to flee to *the town*. That the angel promises not to *overthrow* it implies that the town was intended to be included in the impending judgment. Now it will be spared so Lot and family can take refuge there.

22. “But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.)

Once more the angel urges haste. The promised judgment will not occur until Lot has reached *the town* to which he has asked to flee. The name of the town, *Zoar*, comes from a Hebrew word that can indicate small size or insignificance (Judges 6:15; Zechariah 13:7). Perhaps today we would call it something like Smallville.

Ironically, Lot and his daughters will later leave Zoar and live “in the mountains,” where the angels had first commanded him to go (Genesis 19:30).

23. By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land.

Dawn was approaching when the angels urged Lot to leave Sodom (Genesis

19:15). Now the sun is fully up as Lot enters his city of refuge, *Zoar*.

II. God’s Judgment

(GENESIS 19:24–26)

A. Upon Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 24, 25)

24. Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens.

The promised destruction of both *Sodom and Gomorrah* begins as *burning sulfur* rains down from the Lord on the thoroughly corrupt cities (compare Job 18:15; Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 30:33; 34:9; Ezekiel 38:22). The names of Sodom and its twin city Gomorrah became synonymous with human depravity and the outpouring of God’s wrath as a result (Jeremiah 23:14; Zephaniah 2:9; Jude 7).

25. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.

When Lot first viewed Sodom and its territory, he had found “the plain of Jordan” to be “well watered, like the garden of the Lord” (Genesis 13:10). Now nothing is spared from the wrath of divine judgment; the *cities*, their inhabitants, and all plant life is gone.

What Do You Think?

How can we use biblical accounts like that of Sodom and Gomorrah to communicate the nature of God to unbelievers?

Digging Deeper

How do [Matthew 11:23](#); [Romans 9:29](#); [2 Peter 2:4–10](#); [Jude 7](#); and [Revelation 11:8](#) inform your answer?

B. Upon Lot's Wife (v. 26)

26. But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

To this point in the record, little has been said regarding *Lot's wife*. When she has been mentioned previously, their daughters have been included as well ([Genesis 19:15, 16](#)). Now this woman looks *back*, perhaps out of a wistful longing to gaze one more time on the city where she has resided. Or, more distressingly, maybe she desires to return. The result of such disobedience of a clear command from the angel ([19:17](#)) is immediate: she is turned into *a pillar of salt*.

Some have noted the presence of salt formations found along the shores of the Dead Sea, near which Sodom and Gomorrah were likely located. Lot's wife thus becomes a kind of monument to the high price of disobeying God. Unlike other monuments, however, she blends in with the surrounding territory and is lost; not

even her name is remembered.

Centuries later, Jesus will allude to this incident in warning people to be prepared for his return. The verse is short: "Remember Lot's wife!" ([Luke 17:32](#)). This suggests that Lot's wife lost her life because she was unprepared to accept the mercy extended to her ([17:28–31](#)). The folly of Lot's wife illustrates other teachings of Jesus, including trying to save one's life and losing it ([Matthew 16:25](#); [Luke 17:33](#)) and his warning not to put one's hand to the plow and look back ([Luke 9:62](#)).

What Do You Think?

What steps can we take to protect ourselves from the temptation to "look back" in unhealthy ways ([Luke 9:62](#))?

Digging Deeper

How do [Ezekiel 16:43](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9–11](#); [1 Peter 1:18, 19](#); [2:10, 25](#) speak to healthy ways of looking back?

PART OF THE LANDSCAPE

The Dead Sea earns its name. Though fed by the Jordan River, the sea has no outlet streams. Water escapes only through evaporation; any minerals swept in stay put. The high salt content—nearly nine times that of the oceans—prevents almost all organisms from surviving

there. Tourists are routinely warned to seek medical attention should they accidentally swallow the water.

Like the Dead Sea, Sodom and Gomorrah became depositories for whatever “washed in.” As wickedness accumulated, the cities became more lethal. As salts make the Dead Sea toxic to most life, so sinfulness in Sodom and Gomorrah choked out righteous living.

We surmise that Lot’s wife may have been comfortable in Sodom’s sinful environment. As a consequence of looking back, she received a permanent home on the shore of the Dead Sea. What sins tempt your heart to look back in longing?

—J. E.

III. God’s Mercy (GENESIS 19:29)

A. Remembering Abraham (v. 29a)

29a. So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham,

When God is said to remember, it signifies that he is committed to acting on a person’s or group’s behalf in fulfillment of his word. Previously, God remembered Noah and protected him and his family from the flood (Genesis 8:1). Later, God will remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24) and provide deliverance for his suffering

people. This same sense is intended when God’s people are commanded to remember his acts or laws (Exodus 20:8; Numbers 15:39, 40; Deuteronomy 7:18; 16:12; etc.). Lot’s deliverance is attributed not to anything he did but to Abraham.

What Do You Think?

How can we best use “God remembered” passages such as Genesis 8:1; 30:22; Exodus 2:24; and Revelation 18:5 to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable?

Digging Deeper

Considering Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; and Hebrews 10:15–17, what are some wrong ways to use “God remembered” passages?

B. Rescuing Lot (v. 29b)

29b. and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

The implication is that Abraham’s intercession in Genesis 18:16–33 results in Lot’s rescue. The Lord didn’t find 10 righteous people there, such as would spare the city (18:32). But he did find one.

Conclusion

A. Mercy in Judgment

On hearing the names Sodom and

Gomorrah, most people think immediately of God's wrathful, fiery judgment that befell those cities. God's mercy, however, is also evident when we read of Lot's rescue. Lot acknowledged that he had been shown grace and kindness in being spared. Even so, he still wanted to negotiate regarding the place to which he could flee ([Genesis 19:19](#)). Rather than losing patience with Lot, the angel granted his request.

The flaws in Lot's character seen in this account should not draw our attention away from the strength of God's character. Lot's behavior may puzzle us, but God's behavior shouldn't. The goodness of his mercy and the terror of his judgment both stand out. We are to be genuinely grateful that on the cross Jesus took the judgment that we deserved so that God could display his mercy to us.

Like Lot, we too may be disturbed by the godless trends of our culture (compare [2 Peter 2:6-10](#)) and the increasing contempt we see for the Bible and for Christian faith. But we can also become very attached to the pleasures of this world, which, as Jesus noted in the parable of the sower, can choke the spiritual life from us ([Luke 8:14](#)).

B. Prayer

Father, both your judgment and your mercy are revealed, not only in this

account but throughout your Word. May we give thanks that in the cross of Jesus "mercy triumphs over judgment" ([James 2:13](#)). We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

What happened to Sodom illustrates God's mercy even in judgment.

VISUALS FOR THESE LESSONS

The visual pictured in each lesson (example: page 13) is a small reproduction of a large, full-color poster included in the *Adult Resources* packet for the fall quarter. That packet also contains the very useful *Presentation Tools* CD for teacher use. Order No. 1629119 from your supplier.

INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

On the board write these words:

Godparent / Mentor / Counselor / Guru

Ask the class to tell how these words overlap in meaning. (*Expected response:* They refer to those who advise and oth-

erwise look out for the best interest of someone else.)

Stimulate discussion by posing one or more of these questions: 1—If you have one or more godparents, what function have they served in your life? 2—In what ways has a mentor benefitted you? 3—What qualifies a person to be considered a guru (a spiritual instructor)?

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Celebrity Godparents” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have students work individually for no more than a minute or in pairs for a few minutes to complete as indicated.

After either activity say, “It is not unusual for people, even after they become adults, to have an older and wiser adult looking out for their best interests. In the Bible, we find a similar situation concerning Abraham and his nephew Lot. Let’s take a look.”

Into the Word

Divide the class into three groups, giving each group a handout (you prepare) according to the following: **Lot Group:** Genesis 19:1, 15–22; 2 Peter 2:5–10 / **Wife and Sons-in-law Group:** Genesis 19:12–14, 23–26 / **Abraham Group:** Genesis 18:22–33; 19:29.

Ask groups to read their assigned Scripture passages and be prepared to answer the following interview questions

as they take the role of the person or persons after which their groups are named.

1—What was life in Sodom like?

2—What would have been your long-term plans for living in Sodom?

3—How did you hear that disaster was about to come to Sodom? What was your reaction to that news?

4—What was your life, if any, like during and after the destruction of Sodom?

After 10–15 minutes, reassemble the class. Act as the interviewer while groups respond to your interview questions.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Surprising or Expected?” exercise from the activity page. Have students work in small groups to complete as indicated.

After either activity, make a transition to the Into Life section by saying, “Note that the people in today’s lesson had varying degrees of faith as connected with their self-interest. Let’s think about how we can use today’s lesson effectively in our interactions with those who are less mature in the faith—newer believers who need to be aware of the tension between God’s holy judgment and his gracious mercy.”

Into Life

Have learners pair up and give each a handout (you prepare) of the text of 2

Timothy 2:11–13. Instruct pairs to prepare an explanation of the tension between God’s holy judgment and his gracious mercy by summarizing the account of Sodom (**Genesis 19**) and comparing it with **2 Timothy 2:11–13**, which is an early song of the church. After several minutes of work, encourage presentations as time permits.

Option. Include on the handout this question for deeper discussion:

1—Is *tension* the best word to use to describe how God’s divine attributes of gracious mercy and holy judgment relate to one another? Why, or why not?

2—What word might you pick instead? Why?

(Be prepared to discuss proposals such as *balance*, *symmetry*, and *correlation*.)

To print the reproducible activity page, simply click the highlighted text below to create a pdf file on your hard drive. Then open the pdf file in Acrobat Reader and print.

Activity Page (September 1—Faithful during Distress)

FAITHFUL DURING DISTRESS

Lesson 1, Genesis 19:1, 4, 5, 15–26, 29, NIV

CELEBRITY GODPARENTS

A godparent is an adult chosen by the parents of a young child to take an interest in the child’s upbringing and personal development. Parents usually choose a friend or colleague for that role with the understanding that this person will remain close to the family over the years. Many celebrity couples have chosen a well-known friend to serve as a godparent. Can you make a guess as to which celebrity has been selected to be godparent to which celebrity godchild?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| ___ 1. Willie Mays | | |
| ___ 2. Dolly Parton | a. Usher | e. Angelina Jolie |
| ___ 3. Aretha Franklin | | |
| ___ 4. Steven Spielberg | b. Drew Barrymore | f. Miley Cyrus |
| ___ 5. Jamie Lee Curtis | | |
| ___ 6. Sugar Ray Leonard | c. Khloé Kardashian | g. Jake Gyllenhaal |
| ___ 7. Ben Vereen | | |
| ___ 8. Jacqueline Bisset | d. Barry Bonds | h. Whitney Houston |

SURPRISING OR EXPECTED?

Genesis 18, 19 tells the story of how degrees of faith and doubt affected the lives of real people. Review the elements of this account that follow. When we look at these elements, some may be surprising while some may not. Mark each of these elements as being expected by you (E) or as being surprising to you (S). There are no right or wrong answers. What is important is that you can explain why you marked each statement as you did.

- ___ 1. Abraham argued with Yahweh for the sake of Lot and his family (Genesis 18:22–33).
- ___ 2. Lot sat at Sodom’s city gates, probably indicating that he had assumed a leadership role in that wicked city (Genesis 19:1).
- ___ 3. Even though Lot recognized the sinfulness of Sodom, he remained there with his family (2 Peter 2:5–10).
- ___ 4. Lot’s sons-in-law scoffed at the idea that Sodom would be destroyed (Genesis 19:12–14).
- ___ 5. Even though disaster was imminent, Lot hesitated in getting his family out of the city (Genesis 19:15–17).
- ___ 6. Lot argued with his rescuers about how far from the city he should run (Genesis 19:18–22).
- ___ 7. Lot’s wife disobeyed the command not to look back at the evil city and remained in that area permanently—as a salt pillar (Genesis 19:23–26)!
- ___ 8. Ultimately, it was Abraham’s bold faith, not Lot’s, that was responsible for the rescue of Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19:29)

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THE CROWN OF CREATION

Teacher Tips by Jim Eichenberger

This series addresses an issue that you may have noticed in your congregation. While members may generally agree about religious practice, they are miles apart when it comes to godly thinking. How can a Bible study leader help a group develop a Christian worldview?

A Christian worldview is supported by certain pillars. One of those examines the nature of God, who created the universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). God is separate from all creation, the entity who loves his creatures.

A second pillar is that of our having been created in God's image (*imago dei*). Not only did God create everything out of nothing, he also chose to make one species of his creatures in his own image. We reflect the very nature of the Creator. This premise affects the way Christians think about all people.