

Genesis 14:21-24

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Abram strongly refuses the King of Sodom's offer. He takes nothing for himself, except for those with him to get their shares.

The king of Sodom said to Abram, *give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.* According to custom, as their rescuer, Abram had a right to both the people and the property that he had recovered. The king of Sodom was bargaining for a portion of the spoils, although he had no legal claim.

Although Abram had the right to retain all, he replied in a manner that showed amazing insight and a great commitment to principle. He said he had *sworn* that he wouldn't take anything not even *a thread or a sandal thong*. He knew that accepting the offer of the king of Sodom would make them allies and Abram did not want to be in his debt. He was happy for the king of Sodom to be in his debt. But Abram wanted no allegiance with the corrupt kingdom of Sodom.

Faith looks beyond the riches of the world to the greater blessings that God has in store. Abram will not be indebted in any way to the king of Sodom *for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.* Abram wanted everyone to know he had not acted as a mercenary (a warrior for hire). He makes it clear that he *will take nothing*. Abram is more concerned with character and example than with material accumulation.

In forgoing his normal share of the booty, Abram speaks only for himself. Any goods or possessions he is to have will come from God *except what the young men have eaten and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.* His share, other than what had not already been consumed by his warriors, will be given back to the king of Sodom. What Abram's *young men had eaten* was necessary to fuel the recovery.

In [Deuteronomy 20:14](#) it is stated that those who go into war with nations far off may confiscate for themselves the spoils taken in battle. Abram foregoes this right, other than what his warriors ate. However, Abram does not expect Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre to give up *their share*. Just as previously when Abram allowed Lot the pick of the land, so here he allows the king of Sodom more than his due.

Abram demonstrates he is a man of courage, foresight, principle, devotion and grace. He uses might to recover what was stolen. He trained the warriors himself, demonstrating that he was a skilled fighter. He hatched a battle plan that was innovative and bold. Even though his primary aim was to recover his nephew and family, he recovered all. He rights a wrong. Then he tithes his winnings to the king-priest and representative of the most-high God. Even though Abram has a direct connection to God and is a formidable ruler himself, he recognizes human authority and considers his service to them as service to God. Then he shows incredible grace as well as principle, treating the corrupt king of Sodom with generosity even though he wanted nothing to do with him in terms of being allied.

Biblical Text:

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.” ²² Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ “I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share.”