

# Abraham's Prayer

**Genesis 18:22-33**

**Week of February 22 - 28**

Last week we looked at prayer as honest, open communication with God. Yet you may still be wondering: Just how honest does God really want me to be? Am I allowed to question God? Or argue with God? In this lesson we will look at Abraham's prayer for Sodom, an example of extreme boldness in prayer tempered by recognition of who God is.

**Key Point:** God welcomes our boldness and persistence in prayer.

**Key Verse:** Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing – to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" **Genesis 18:23-25**

## Segment 1 – Boldness in Prayer

**Open your time of study with prayer:**

Father, I have so many questions and doubts when I pray. I wonder if you listen to me. I wonder if you care what I have to say. Please help me to know what is true about prayer and what is true about you, that I may come before you with increasing faith. Amen.

**Read Genesis 18:16-33, out loud if possible.**

1. What is your reaction to the way Abraham speaks with God in this passage? What impresses you most about this conversation?
2. How does God respond to Abraham's bold questioning? Do you think Abraham's prayer pleased God? Why or why not?

**Pray:**

*This is our Lord's will... that our prayer and our trust be, alike, large. ~ Julian of Norwich*

Think about some of the ways this conversation could have gone differently. God could have said, "What I plan is just, simply because I said so!" Or he could have said, "Save your breath Abraham, there aren't even 10 righteous people in the city." But God didn't. What can we learn from this?

Spend some time in prayer now, focusing on **Genesis 18:22-33**. The Bible, the Word of God, is "living and active" (Heb. 4:12), not just words on a page. Reading the Bible can be a type of prayer, a way for God to communicate personally with us. If this is new for you, try praying with the following pattern:

- Invite God to be with you. Ask him to reveal what he would like for you to know in these verses.
- Read Genesis 18:22-23 at least twice, out loud if possible.
- What word or phrase stands out to you?

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- Hold this word or phrase in your mind. Think about the words. Listen for what God may be saying to you through this word or phrase of the Bible. Record your thoughts/images/feelings/impressions:

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- Repeat this process: Read the verses completely through at least twice, out loud if possible.
- Does a different word or phrase stand out to you?

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- Hold this word or phrase in your mind. Think about the words. Listen for what God may be saying to you through this word or phrase of the Bible. Record your thoughts/feelings/impressions:

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3. How did you encounter God through this time of prayer? What did you learn?  
What did God reveal to you?



Enter a time of prayer. Choose one of the names of God above, or any other name from scripture and begin your prayer by focusing on that name of God. What does God want to reveal to you about himself through this name? You may wish to use the questions below as a guide – filling in the blank with the name of God you chose.

- What does it mean for God to be (the) \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What does it mean for God to be MY \_\_\_\_\_?
  - How do I need God (the) \_\_\_\_\_ in my life right now?
  - What attitudes or actions in my life need to change if I fully trust God as (the) \_\_\_\_\_?
6. What did you learn through this time of prayer? How did God deepen or challenge your understanding of who He is?
7. In this time of prayer, did God bring to mind anything you need to allow him to change in your life?

### **Segment 3 – Persistence and Intercessory Prayer**

#### **Open your time of study with prayer:**

Father God, I see so many things around me that I would like to change. I see friends who are hurting or struggling and a world that has so many problems. Please help me to bring these concerns to you, trusting your love and power. Amen.

#### **Read Genesis 18:16-33, out loud if possible.**

“Intercessory Prayer” is a big phrase that simply means praying for others. We “intercede” on their behalf by praying for them.

8. Why do you think Abraham is willing to risk such boldness before God as he prays (intercedes) for someone else in this prayer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Do you think Abraham was right to be so persistent in his prayer for the cities? (From 50 righteous, down to 10 righteous?) Did he stop too soon?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Read Luke 18:1-8. What does Jesus teach about being persistent in prayer?

#### **Pray:**

*This is our Lord's will... that our prayer and our trust be, alike, large. ~ Julian of Norwich*

I (Laura) attended an evangelism seminar once that encouraged us to get to know people by asking: “If God could work a miracle in your life today, what would you want it to be?” I don’t know how I feel about that question as an evangelism tool, but it did get me thinking a great deal about my prayers. I believe God can work miracles... yet frequently my prayers do not reflect that. Are my prayers too small?

Give some thought to “big” prayers – for others, and for yourself. No matter how big or “impossible” it may seem, or no matter how many times you have prayed for it before, I encourage you to bring it to the Lord now. Be honest with God about what you long for, your questions or doubts, your hopes and thoughts. Then make sure to be open to hearing what God may be trying to tell you about the situation.

Enter a time of prayer now.

- If God could work a miracle in your life, what would you ask for? Lift this up in prayer.
- Take time to listen – Ask God if there is anything he is trying to tell you or teach you through this request and this prayer.
- If you could ask God to work a miracle in the life of someone else, what would you ask for? Intercede in prayer on behalf of this person.
- Take time to listen – Ask God if there is anything he is trying to tell you or teach you through this request and this prayer.
- Is there anything you have “given up” praying for? Take time to exercise persistence in prayer now. Lift up an ongoing request, no matter how many times you may have prayed about it before.
- Thank God for hearing your prayers, loving you and caring for you enough to listen and respond to your needs.

11. What did you learn or experience during this time of prayer? Did God reveal to you anything about himself or his will? Did you learn anything about your own life?