

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

Luke 11:1b

Prayer aligns our hearts with God's
will so we can live out his purpose



Standing in the Gap - Abraham [Genesis 18:16-33]

*Learning to Carry Others into God's
Presence Through Prayer.*

Big Idea: Intercessory prayer moves us beyond our own needs and teaches us to carry the needs of others before God.

Intercession . . .

[1] Begins with God's Heart [Genesis 18:16-22]

Application Questions:

Whose burden have I stopped carrying?
Who needs someone to stand before God for them?

[2] Is Praying with Humble Boldness [Genesis 18:23-32]

Application Persistent prayer isn't repeating empty words. It's expressing continuing trust.

[3] Finds Its Fulfillment in Jesus [Genesis 18:33, Romans 8:34]

Application: Prayer changes when "Bless me" becomes "Use me to bless them."

Question, Reading, Challenge, and Prayer

Question: Who is God placing on your heart that needs you to stand in the gap and pray for them?

Reading: Read Genesis 18:16-33, then read 1 Timothy 2:1-4, James 5:16, and Romans 8:34. Notice how Scripture calls God's people to pray for others and reminds us that Jesus Himself intercedes for us.

Challenge: Choose one person each day this week who needs God's help and commit to praying for them by name through the day.

Prayer: [1] Ask God for wisdom from this week's passage about Abraham's faith to pray with humility, boldness, and persistence. [2] Ask the Lord to teach you to look beyond yourself and carry the needs of others.

[Genesis 18:16-22] Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? [Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8] ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." [Amos 3:2] ²⁰ Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, [4:10, 19:13, Isaiah 3:9, Ezekiel 16:49-50, James 5:4] ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. [11:5, 7, Exodus 3:8] And if not, I will know." [Joshua 22:22]

²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, [18:16, 19:1] but Abraham still stood before the Lord. [18:1, Psalm 106:23, Jeremiah 18:20]

[Genesis 18:23-26] Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? [20:4, Numbers 16:22, 2 Samuel 24:17] Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? [Numbers 16:22, 2 Samuel 24:17] ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! [Job 8:20] Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" [Deuteronomy 32:4, Job 8:3, 34:10, Romans 3:5-6] ²⁶ And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." [Jeremiah 5:1, Ezekiel 22:30, Isaiah 65:8]

[Genesis 18:27-33] Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. [Luke 18:1] ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." [Judges 6:39] He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." ³³ And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.



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Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Read Genesis 18:16–33. What stands out to you most about Abraham's conversation with God? What makes this prayer different from many of the prayers we see—or pray—today?
2. Abraham's concern begins with Lot but expands to the entire city. What does this teach us about how walking with God changes what we care about?
3. In Genesis 18:25, Abraham appeals to God's character rather than arguing that Sodom deserves mercy. Why is it important to base our prayers on who God is instead of only on what we want?
4. Abraham describes himself as "dust and ashes" (v. 27), yet he continues asking God for mercy. How can humility and boldness exist together in prayer?
5. Is there someone you've been tempted to stop praying for because you haven't seen change? How does Abraham's persistence challenge or encourage you to keep interceding?
6. Romans 8:34 says Jesus is still interceding for us. How does knowing that Christ prays for you change the way you approach praying for others?
7. One of the applications in the notes said:
"Prayer changes when 'Bless me' becomes 'Use me to bless them.'"
Who has God placed on your heart this week, and how can we stand in the gap for that person together?

Closing Prayer Exercise

End by asking each person to write down one name—a family member, friend, neighbor, coworker, or someone who doesn't know Christ. Pair up and spend a minute praying specifically for that person, asking God to use you to be part of His answer to those prayers.