



ABRAHAM AND PRAYER (Genesis 18.16-33)

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Introduction

In polls, most people, even people who aren't religious, admit to praying sometimes.

- Many modern people want spirituality without religion.
- They often think they have to settle for either moralistic religion or relativistic spirituality.
- But the Bible gives us a third alternative.

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Genesis 18.16-33

¹⁶When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

²⁰Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

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Genesis 18.16-33

²²The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. ²³Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" ²⁴What 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? ²⁵Far 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?" ²⁶The Lord said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

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Genesis 18.16-33

²⁹Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." ³⁰Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." ³²Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." ³³When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

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Outline

Genesis 18.16-33 shows us that:

1. Abraham's prayer was a response to God
2. Abraham's prayer was an extreme response to God
3. Abraham's prayer asked for an extreme response from God

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