

PRAY LIKE THIS

Part 3 of Foundation 260 - OT. Genesis 18:16-33.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. January 25, 2026.

A RARE AND PRECIOUS INSIGHT

Last week's Foundations 260 readings in Genesis 18 provided a rare and precious insight into how God hears and answers prayers.

- Verses 16-33 contain three principles for prayer.
- Following these principles can refuel our passion for praying and connecting more deeply with the Lord.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Genesis 18 is part of the Abraham story.

- Abraham's nephew, Lot, settled in Sodom.
- A city in the fertile valley near the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.
- The inhabitants were Canaanites and wicked:

Genesis 13:13 (CSB) Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely against the LORD.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 (CSB) Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, plenty of food, and comfortable security, but didn't support the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable acts before me ...

Jude 1:7 (CSB) Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions ...

Then, the story turns to Abraham's encounter with three strangers (18:1-5) and three principles of prayer.

PRAYER PRINCIPLE ONE: CULTIVATE CONVERSATION BEFORE INTERCESSION - verses 16-21.

Genesis 18:16-21 (CSB) The men (God and angels) got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them off. 17 Then the LORD said, “Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham? 18 Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. 19 For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what he promised him.” 20 Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious. 21 I will go down to see if what they have done justifies the cry that has come up to me. If not, I will find out.”

God discussed with Abraham a concern over Sodom’s wickedness.

- God let Abraham into his thoughts and concerns.
- This relationship was the foundation for Abraham’s prayer. Abraham became a bridge between God and people.

That reminds us that prayer should not begin with requests.

- God is not an ATM or genie. He is “our Father.”
- Slow down, take a breath, listen, and be present before asking for anything.

PRAYER PRINCIPLE TWO: BASE INTERCESSION ON GOD’S CHARACTER AND PROMISES - verses 16-21.

Genesis 18:22-25 (CSB) The men turned from there and went toward Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. 23 Abraham stepped forward and said, “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away instead of sparing the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people who are in it? 25 You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the

righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won't the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?"

Abraham stood in the gap to plead for mercy on Sodom's people.

- His prayer was based on God's character of justice and mercy: *"Will not the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?" (Exodus 34:6-7)*
- The prayers God answers in the affirmative are based on his character and promises. Don't remake God to get what you want; remake your prayers in line with what God wants.

PRAYER PRINCIPLE THREE: INTERCEDE BOLDLY & HUMBLY - vv. 26-33.

Genesis 18:26-33 (CSB) The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27 Then Abraham answered, "Since I have ventured to speak to my lord — even though I am dust and ashes — 28 suppose the fifty righteous lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" He replied, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

Abraham was humbled by his encounter with God, yet he prayed boldly.

- He "ventured" to pray, indicating he felt it was a privilege. He identified as "dust and ashes," an ancient form of humility or grief.
- His bold prayers included one big ask after another.

Why does God take our prayers into account since he is sovereign?

- The Lord has tied his plans to our prayers.

LET US PRAY!

Will you stand in the gap, or will you stand on the sidelines?

- Prayer costs nothing but time. It's access through the blood of Jesus.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's January 25th teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. What are some practical ways you can "slow down, stay a while" with God this week instead of rushing straight to your requests
2. When have you felt most aware that God was genuinely listening to you?
3. Think of a situation you are praying about. How could you reshape that request so it is more clearly anchored in God's character and in the Bible's promises? What are some ways that you have used to learn more about God's character and plans so you can pray according to his will?
4. What bold, specific, "impossible" prayers are you praying? Why do you feel right about doing so? What would you say to someone struggling to be bold in prayer?

Prayer Focus

- Pray the 247 Prayer: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Ask God to pour out a "spirit of intercession" on the Cornerstone family that results in a church-wide prayer movement.