



LESSON 4

Serving God

OPEN IT

1. What city do you live in? What things do you like and dislike about where you live?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Genesis 18:16-33

2. Why was God bringing judgment on Sodom?
3. What is Abraham's response to God's plan for the city of Sodom?
4. What does Abraham's attitude reveal about how he views his relationship to God?
5. What is the deal Abraham is working out with God?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: CONCERNED FOR OTHERS

Read Genesis 18:20-23

God has heard the cries against the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The people there are evil. But God is concerned for His people who have cried out and is going down to look into the matter himself. It's believed that one of the three men who were with Abraham was Jesus preincarnate, demonstrating that it was God Abraham was talking with on his way down toward Sodom. Abraham knew the wickedness of the cities but his heart also broke for Lot and his family who were living in those cities at the time. So Abraham cries out to God at this time out of his concern for Lot.

Abraham's prayer is concerned for the salvation of the righteous and calls upon the character of God. It is an opportunity for Abraham to adopt the heart of God, a heart of justice, salvation and mercy. To serve God and His kingdom means that we also must share in God's heart—that our hearts would break for the salvation of others, that our hearts would reflect the heart of God, that our hearts would be spurred to action on behalf of other people.

6. **What makes it difficult at times to look out for the good of other people?**

7. **Read Philippians 2:1-8. What does this passage tell us about how we should treat others? Where does the desire to treat others in this way come from?**

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, there are many times I have a hard time treating others like they're more important than myself. I can get caught up in my own desires and my own feelings and just forget about other people sometimes. Jesus, give me Your heart to serve other people. Amen.

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: STANDING IN THE GAP

Read Genesis 18:22-33

In our series on Abraham I have from time to time pointed out some of the “firsts” we encounter in this section of Genesis. Here we come to yet another “first.” When Abraham prays for Sodom, it is the first intercessory prayer in all the Bible. To “intercede” is to plead the case of another person. When a friend speaks up on behalf of a student about to be punished, that friend is interceding. Likewise, when Abraham asked God to spare Sodom, he was interceding in the highest court of the universe.

But that raises an interesting question. Why did God allow Abraham to intercede for Sodom? After all, God already knew the facts and He already knew what He was going to do. Doesn't that render Abraham's request useless? To say it that way is to come up against the greatest mystery of prayer. If God already knows what He is going to do, why pray? ¹

8. If God already knows what He is going to do, why should we pray?

9. Read Romans 8:31-35. What does it mean that Jesus is interceding for us?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, I want to talk to you about my friend, _____. Right now they don't have a relationship with You and I really want them to come to know You. Please be patient with them and do a mighty work in their heart to reveal to them who You are. Give me an opportunity to share with them how great You are. Thank you, Jesus, for how much You love us. Amen.

¹ Sermon excerpt by Ray Pritchard entitled “Christian Boldness In An Age Of Tolerance” found @ <https://www.keepbelieving.com/articles/1998-02-13-Christian-Boldness-in-an-Age-of-Tolerance/>

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: POWERFUL PRAYER

Read James 5:16–18

Prayer is quite powerful. We are given the privilege to go with confidence before the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He alone holds supreme power and authority over all things, and He has given us freedom to come to Him whenever we want. The crazy thing is that we never really treat prayer like it's truly powerful. We kind of treat it more like punctuation marks. Maybe we use prayer to start a gathering or end it, but we don't normally make it a central focus of our time.

"Charles Spurgeon said, 'If sinners will not hear you speak, they cannot prevent your praying.' He's right. You can reach people through prayer who won't listen to your words or even look you in the eye. They can stop you from speaking, but they can't stop you from praying. Sinners have no defense against the mighty weapon of prayer."²

10. **Read Matthew 6:9–15. Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray here. Many people today would say that they just don't know how to pray. What does Jesus' prayer teach us about how we should pray?**

11. **In what ways do you think we over-complicate praying? In what ways do you think we minimize praying?**

12. **Do you believe that prayer is powerful and effective? Does your prayer life reflect your belief about prayer?**

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Take time to pray to God. Sometimes it's easy to follow this simple model for prayer:

A — Adoration. Take time to adore and praise God for who He is!

C — Confession. Take time to confess your own sins to God and ask Him for forgiveness.

T — Thanksgiving. Take time to thank God for anything and everything in your life!

S — Supplication. Take time to present your requests to God. Pray about things in your life.

² Sermon excerpt by Ray Pritchard entitled "Christian Boldness In An Age Of Tolerance" found @ <https://www.keepbelieving.com/articles/1998-02-13-Christian-Boldness-in-an-Age-of-Tolerance/>

Note: This study guide was written by Pastors Tim Badal, Mario Arindaeng, and Jeremy Anderson, Village Bible Church. www.villagebible.church