

The Prayer of Abraham

Text: Genesis 18:16-33

INTRODUCTION:

1. Prayer is often viewed as being very formal and even formulaic.
 - a. It is true, there is a pattern to prayer.
 - b. Also, one must always be reverent and respectful in prayer.
2. However, prayer is also a conversation between a son or daughter and his or her Father.
3. This “conversational” nature of prayer is vital to understand and crucial to implement in one’s prayer life.
4. The example of Abraham in prayer serves as a needed lesson...

I. ABRAHAM PRAYED WITH CHARACTER

- A. When it comes to prayer, character matters.
- B. Abraham demonstrated his character by his actions:
 1. In his hospitality (18:1-5).
 2. In his service (18:6-8).
 3. In his faith (18:9-15).
- C. God declared Abraham’s character (18:16-19).
- D. Abraham understood and respected the character of God.
 1. He is just (18:20-21).
 2. He is compassionate (18:22-24).
 3. He is righteous (18:25).
- E. “[T]he character (of the one who prays) sets limits as to how God can answer one’s requests” (Lindsey Warren).

II. ABRAHAM PRAYED WITH CONFIDENCE

- A. Because he knew the character of God, Abraham spoke to Him with boldness.
- B. He stood before the Lord and drew near to speak to Him (18:22-23).
- C. He sought to change the Lord’s mind toward the destruction of the cities.
- D. He strove to “negotiate” the number required for God’s mercy to be shown (from 50 down to 10).
- E. When one understands the character of God, he will pray with confidence (cf. Ephesians 3:20).

III. ABRAHAM PRAYED WITH COURTESY

- A. Though he was bold in his prayer, Abraham was never disrespectful toward God.
- B. He asked rather than demanded.
- C. He acknowledged the character of God (18:25).
- D. He admitted his inferiority (18:27, 30, 31, 32).
- E. In the end, Abraham understood his place (18:33).

IV. ABRAHAM PRAYED WITH COMMUNION

- A. Abraham understood that he was in fellowship with the Lord.
- B. He “stood yet before the Lord” to enter into conversation with Him (18:22).
- C. He “drew near” or approached the Lord to converse about this matter (18:23).
- D. The Lord communed with Abraham – speaking together in a conversation (18:33).
- E. Prayer is a privilege of fellowship (1 Peter 3:10-12).

Exercises

Review

1. Recognizing that prayer is a conversation, how does God speak to the one who prays? (Read Acts 10:1-6 and review the lesson: Prayer Is Partial.)
2. How should one's prayers be affected or altered by understanding more fully the character of God?
3. How does viewing prayer as a conversation change the way one prays?
4. Prayer is to be offered with both boldness and humility. Which of these is most difficult for me?
5. What aspect of my character do I need to improve so my prayers will be powerful before the Lord?
6. Do I genuinely appreciate the privilege of being able to draw near to the Lord and to converse with Him in prayer? What can I do to increase my appreciation for this blessing?
7. What other lessons can I learn from the prayer of Abraham?