

Abraham Bargains With God

Genesis 18:16-33

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 11:19

As righteousness leads to life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A small pillow.

As many 4.5"x11" pieces of paper and ribbons as the number of children in your class and crayons, pens, pencils, or markers.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Persistent Pillow Perch

Bring a small pillow to class. Show it to the kids and ask them if they think it is too heavy to hold up. Select an eager volunteer to come to the front of the class to demonstrate. Have the volunteer hold his arms straight out in front of his body. Place the pillow gently on his arms. With a stopwatch or the second hand of a watch, time the pillow holder.

While he is holding the pillow, tell the class about persistence in prayer. The dictionary defines perseverance as persisting in what is undertaken, and maintaining a course in spite of difficulty or obstacles, to continue steadfastly. It is not easy to persist in prayer...the TV is on, there are chores to do, we forget. But, the God of all creation is ready to listen when we pray. He will grant the requests that are according to His will.

Let the pillow holder hold it up as long as he can. Ask him if it got heavier the longer he held it up. Have him sit down and give someone else a turn. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about persistence in prayer and how God answers our prayers. **God hears us when we pray!**

LESSON TIME!

One day the Lord visited Abraham. Although, it seemed an impossible promise since Abraham and Sarah were very old, God promised they would have a son. Then, the Lord shared with Abraham His plans for the wicked city of Sodom. He was about to bring judgment upon them. But there was a problem; Abraham's nephew Lot lived in the city of Sodom. Let's see what happens.

GENESIS 18:16-19

Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.

And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,

"since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

God had great plans for Abraham. He was going to make him the father of a great nation. Jesus, God's own Son, would be a descendant of Abraham. God chose Abraham to be a righteous example to others. Since Abraham was chosen for such great things, God told him of His plans for the city of Sodom, the place where Abraham's nephew Lot lived.

Do you think that God wants to speak to His people? He spoke to His people then and He is still speaking to us today. We may not hear an audible voice, but He desires to speak to His people. Sometimes, He wants us to know His plans; and other times, He reserves that information for Himself. We communicate with God as we read His Word and allow His Spirit to speak to our hearts. We also communicate with God through prayer as we tell Him our needs and praise Him for His goodness. **God hears us when we pray!**

GENESIS 18:20-21

And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

"I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

Sodom and Gomorrah had grown very wicked. The people there were sinful and rebellious against God. God could not let them continue in their wicked ways, so He was prepared to judge them. People may think that they can get away with sin forever, but there will come a day of judgment. No one can choose to live a life of sin and not suffer the consequences.

GENESIS 18:22-25

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

"Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?

"Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Abraham stood before the Lord and pleaded for any righteous people in the city. Abraham's nephew Lot was in the city and surely Abraham did not want him destroyed with the wicked. Abraham is praying (interceding) for others. This is called intercessory prayer. We, too, can pray for God's protection and blessings on others. **God hears us when we pray!**

Notice that Abraham was comfortable going to the Lord to ask Him a question. Do you ever have questions that you would like to ask God? He wants to talk to us, to spend time with us, and to answer our questions. He has all of the answers. Even if we feel something is unfair, like Abraham did, we can go to the Lord and will help resolve our questions.

GENESIS 18:26-31

And the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:

"Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" And He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."

Then he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" And He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

And he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

Then he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

The "Neat-o" Veto

In Roman times, to intercede meant to "veto." Let the children in your class have a taste of the power of the veto by playing this game.

Choose students to be the Speaker of the House, President, and Representatives. Ask the representative to ask the speaker to let them speak before standing up and reading their proposals by saying, "Mr. or Miss Speaker, may I be recognized?" (Use the proposals found in the support curriculum.) The speaker will respond, "You may speak." Pass out proposals for the representatives to read, and let the representatives vote (by raising hands) whether or not to make the proposals into law. If a proposal is voted into law, the representative passes the piece of

paper to the speaker, who passes it to the president. The president has the power to veto the law. If it is vetoed, it goes back to its former position as a proposal. The proposals will read as follows:

1. No person, young or old, may ever chew gum on the third Tuesday of the month when it happens to fall on the same day as the birthday of a famous movie star.
2. All people shall be entitled to going barefoot on escalators in large malls during the Christmas Holidays.
3. Chocolate candy should be issued free of charge to a person when said person shows due and evident evidence that it is in fact his or her birthday.
4. Children shall indeed be allowed to ride on carnival rides for which they are entirely too short.
5. The amount of holidays in a year shall be increased to equal, but not exceed, the amount of workdays.

Explain to your class that intercession is our way of intruding into a situation, and our first priority in intercession should always be “according to God’s will.” If we pray according to God’s will, He will grant our request. But, how do we know what God’s will is? Many times we do not, and we must persevere in prayer until we do.

Abraham also models for us persistence in prayer. He was humble, realizing he was but “dust and ashes;” yet he continually sought the Lord's mercy. Each request Abraham brought, the Lord granted. **God hears us when we pray!** Persistency in prayer is important.

Abraham was called the “friend of God” (James 2:23). What a blessing to have that kind of relationship with the Lord. God wants to have that kind of close relationship with each one of us. We can be God’s friends when we come to Him through Christ.

GENESIS 18:32-33

And he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Lastly, Abraham asked, “Would God save Sodom if ten righteous people remained in the city?” Abraham wanted Lot and his family to be safe from God’s judgment. Surely, Abraham thought, Lot's family would be the righteous that saved the city. Then, the Lord departed.

We can learn many things from Abraham. God chose him for great blessings; yet, he was humble. Abraham was a man of faith and a man persistent in prayer. He interceded for others. May we follow his example. **God hears us when we pray!**

Remember, as Christian, our desire should be to see God’s will done, not our own will. God does not always answer our prayers the way we think He should, but He will always do what is best for us.

God Hears

Let the children think of things that are not right in the world; for example, some people need to know Jesus, some people are hungry, some need homes, some need jobs, some people are mean, and some are sick. Ask your students to choose one or two things and commit to intercede for those people or situations. Have them write it on a 4.5" x 11" sheet of paper. Roll these into scrolls and tie them with ribbon. Ask your students to tell you what God does as a result of their prayers.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to intercede in persistent prayer. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity to do so.