

LISTENER FAVORITES, VOLUME 3:

Walk Humbly with Your God

What Happens When We Pray?

Genesis 18:22–33



LET'S BEGIN HERE

We've all heard it said that we never stand taller than when we kneel before God. But what actually happens when we offer our prayers and petitions to God? Does He change His mind? Can we alter His plan or reverse His course? If not, then why pray? In this message, we zoom in on Abraham's passionate intercession on behalf of Lot and his family in the face of the imminent destruction of Sodom. By analyzing Abraham's prayer, we can understand the struggle that occurs between petition (*what we ask for*) and desire (*why we ask*) and gain insight into the important role prayer plays in our lives. As we do, we'll learn to pray with confidence before the throne of grace.



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1. Two Major Ingredients in Most Prayers

According to James 4:2–3, there are two ingredients in prayer: the *petition* (the request itself) and the *desire* (the reason for asking). The petition is *what we ask for*; the desire is *why we ask for it*.

2. Four Ways God Responds to Our Prayers

When he approached God with his request in Genesis 18:22–26, Abraham had no idea how the Lord would answer in this particular situation. Likewise, we cannot know exactly how God will respond when we pray. However, as we reflect on various prayers throughout Scripture, we see four ways the Lord responds to humans' petitions and desires.

- Petition: "Yes" . . . Desire: "No."
- Petition: "No" . . . Desire: "Yes"



Quotable

*You're seldom
more Christlike
than when
you have strength
under control.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Recall a time when God said yes! to your prayer in just the way you petitioned. Describe this experience in the space below as a constant reminder that God often does answer when you call on Him.



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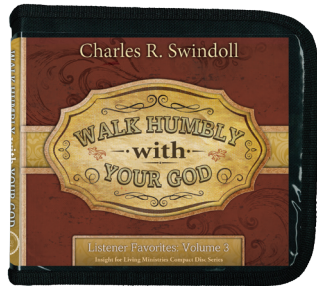
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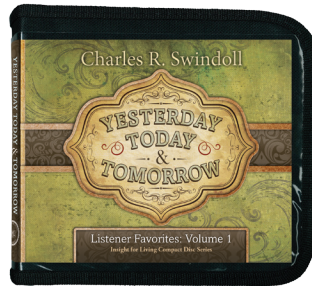
Genesis 18:22–33



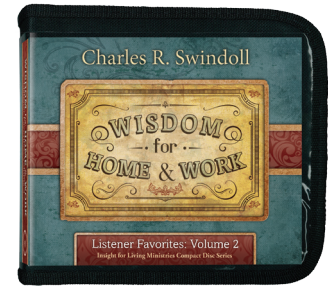
Tools for Digging Deeper



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by Charles R. Swindoll
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