

# Altared

## *Scripture and Background Information for October 8-14.*

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Abraham is known as one of the fathers of our faith, but his faith was not perfect. At moments, he believed in God wholeheartedly and was willing to be incredibly obedient to God while, in others, he let fear and selfishness drive his actions. In this series, we will study the life of Abraham, all the successes and failures, to see how we may relate to his relationship with God. Ultimately, we hope to learn how each of us can direct the devotion of our lives to God, so that we allow Him to determine the destination of our journeys.

### **Background for Genesis 18:16-33:**

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were enemies to almost everyone possible. They were enemies of God because of their wicked ways and idol worship. They were enemies to each other because they often treated neighbors in horrifically sinful ways (Genesis 19). And, in many ways, they were enemies to Abraham. People living right next to him in the land that he was promised in ways that could threaten his continued prosperity and nearness to God. Abraham's life would have been easier if they just weren't there anymore. Yet, when the opportunity arises for his enemies to be destroyed, Abraham responds in an unusual way.

Instead of seeking their destruction, Abraham intercedes for the people of Sodom, and he speaks to God on their behalf. Therefore, Abraham asks the Lord about God's justice and what it would take for Him to spare the city and its inhabitants. We see from this story that God is a gracious God who would extend salvation to the entire city if there were righteous people residing in it. While this ends up not being the case and the city is ultimately destroyed, we see that Abraham exhibits great humility in this passage. He humbly approaches God and submits to whatever God's will is in this situation while also humbly caring for the people of Sodom even if it is not in his best interest.

### Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. What does God's interaction with Abraham show us about His character? What is significant about God's willingness to spare Sodom if there were righteous people living in the city?
2. Do you think you could intercede on behalf of people you see as enemies like Abraham does in this passage? Why or why not?
3. What practical things can we do to intercede on behalf of others who may be far from God in our lives? How would your life change if you did this consistently?

\*Check back in with your groups about the rhythm of silence and solitude. Ask how their times in silence and solitude have been and what God has been showing them in those moments.