

Chapter 4

Abraham: Pioneer
Prayer Walker



Abraham: Pioneer Prayerwalker

He Established public worship amidst new neighbors. His friendship with those neighbors led to an even greater worship extravaganza involving several nearby nations. After this he prayed the first city-size prayer while viewing the city of Sodom. The long record of Abraham's on-site praying gives an ample mandate for prayerwalking.



Abraham's Vision Expedition

God told him to find his feet and thoroughly walk the land: "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth." Genesis 13:17

This particular excursion was not a routine nomadic move. It was a specific walk of vision.

And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you" Genesis 13:14-17





Prayerwalking Is a Matter of Vision

Abraham was directed to value the land because of the people who would live there.

God was stretching his mind and heart to focus on the vast people that would somehow come to regard Abraham as their father.

A close-up, slightly blurred image of a human hand reaching out from the left side of the frame. The palm is facing upwards, and the fingers are slightly spread. The hand is positioned behind the text, creating a sense of depth and connection to the theme of receiving.

Seeing is Receiving

This is the fundamental dynamic of prayerwalking: God is giving. And somehow in our seeing we can begin to receive what God is giving. Some may say seeing is believing. In this case seeing is receiving.

We don't really know what Abraham asked for, if anything. But prayer is as much listening to God as it is speaking with God.

The most notable of all Abraham's descendants tells us of the significance of being "seen" by Abraham long years beforehand. That preeminent one of all Abraham's children is Jesus, who said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" John 8:56



Implications for Today's Prayer Walkers

Prayerwalking is an affair of vision. Physical sight boosts spiritual vision to sense God's future for a city. We walk to see. We see in order to pray more powerfully. The vision God wants us to anticipate is the many millions of people in God's family. As we have an eye for God's yet-to-be-adopted children, we will see the preeminent one of Abraham's seed, Christ himself. Vision is an act of stretching our expectations of Christ to see Him exhibited in the family of Abraham's faith. If Abraham rejoiced to see what Jesus called "My day" (John 8:56), shouldn't we rejoice in anticipation of an even greater fullness of God's family yet to come?



Implications for Today's Prayerwalkers contd.

Prayerwalking is a matter of receiving from God. The primary person in prayerwalking is God. Lean more on his intent to give than on the worthiness of anyone to receive. Prayerwalkers should expect prayerwalking to be a relational affair with the God of Abraham. It is not blind, fervid requesting or pleading according to a set list of perceived problems.

Petitions catch up with promises – The prayer during the (Abraham's) walk was not petitionary. God was doing the talking, giving answers far more than God had made to him earlier (Genesis 12:1-3;7), but Abraham's walk solidly anchored his soul to the soil (Genesis 24:7) and tethered his hopes to God's huge promise.

He learned what prayerwalkers are still learning by prayerfully walking the places God is giving them; Standing in the location of God's promise helps strengthen faith to wait for the fulfilling of God's promise.

Prayerwalking is one way to get a glimpse of God's promises and learn to pray and praise "with respect to the promise of God."



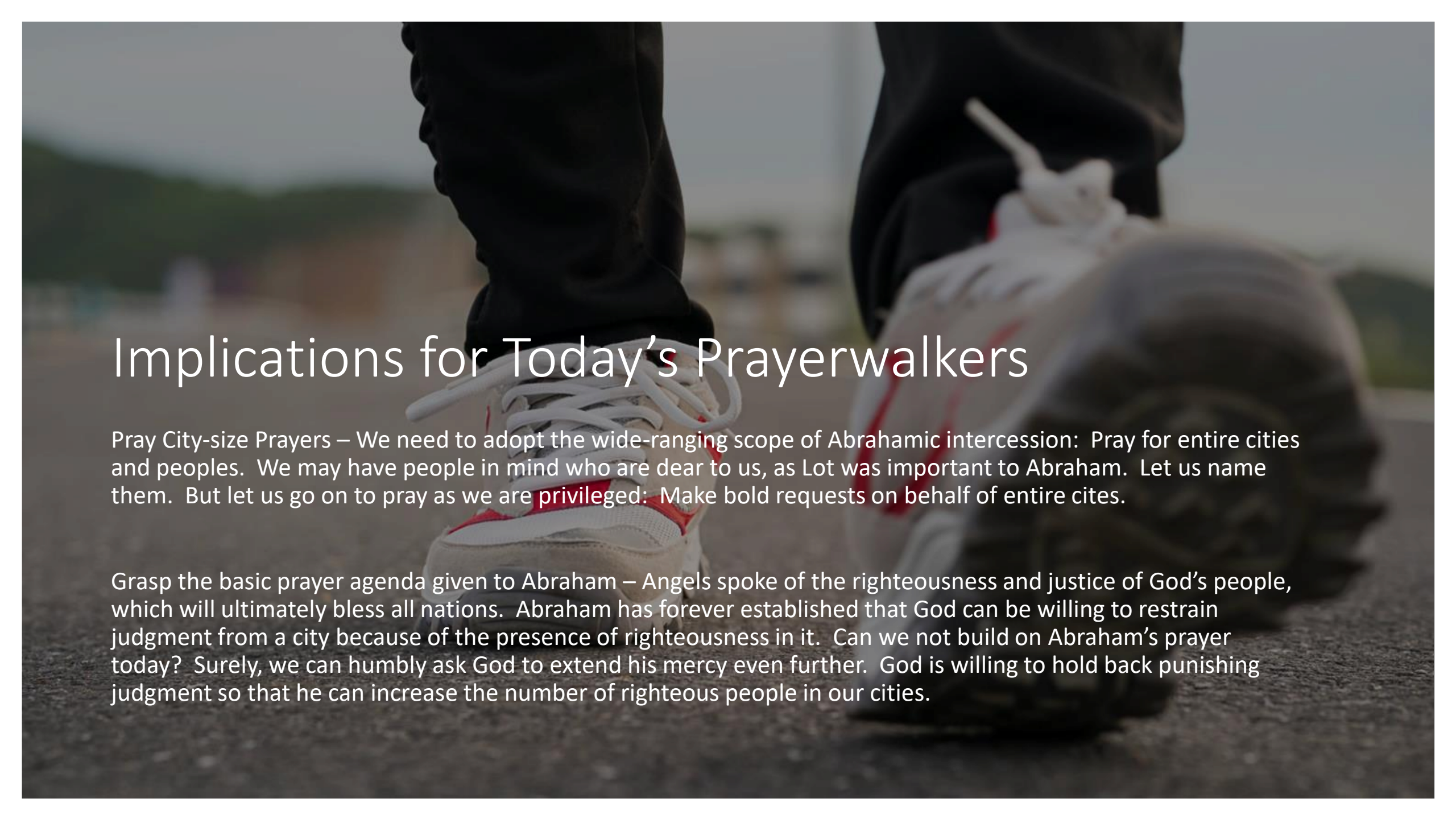
Establishing Worship and Forming Friendships

Abraham's ongoing story suggests some of the results of Prayerwalking. Just after his prayerwalk Abraham "moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre" Genesis 13:18. This is a major change of location for nomadic Abraham. The implication is strong that he had discovered God's choice of a dwelling place as a result of his prayerwalk.

Prayerwalking led to disciplined worship, which, in turn, led to redemptive friendships, which opened opportunity for yet another event of worship on an even larger scale.

People of several nations were gathered, worshipping the God of Abraham. But he deferred all the glory to God.

Take note of who Abraham was helping, Sodom, the city of legendary evil. Was the redemptive war and the following event of worship a last-chance opportunity for Sodom to repent? We can't really say. But, as we will see, Abraham found himself positioned to serve his degenerate neighbors even more.



Implications for Today's Prayerwalkers

Open key friendships – Prayerwalking leads to redemptive relationships with the community.

Find your way home – Prayerwalking can be an important part of the process of choosing where to live. Abraham wasn't hunting for the most pleasing parcel of land to own. He was receiving the entire land. But in the process of walking the whole area, it became clear where he was to set up his family's dwelling.

Established Open Altars – As Abraham found, prayerwalking can lead to establishing public praise. God may impress you to stop walking and to worship him right out in the open, or he may lead you to plan a more elaborate celebration.

Stand ready to serve – Your open worship will be heard louder when you corroborate your song with service, as Abraham did in helping rescue his friends in trouble. Such acts of kindness and healing are received by God as gifts of worship (Acts 10:4; Hebrews 13:16). Jesus taught us to do good deeds in such a way that people see and expressly glorify the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Look for God to open ways for entire communities to observe your worship and be served by Christ's kindness.

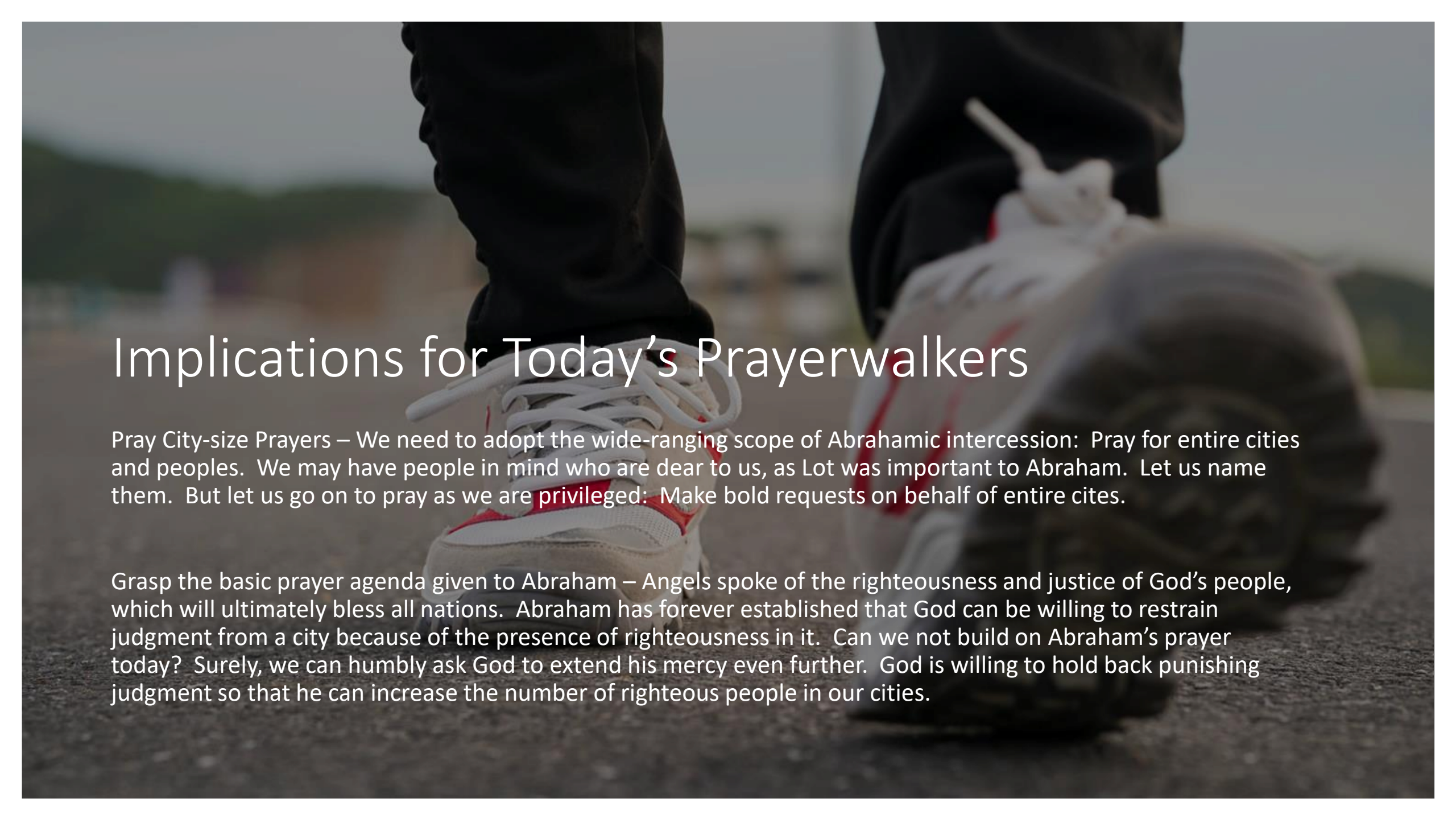
A person wearing jeans and brown shoes is walking down a set of wide, light-colored stone steps. They are carrying a brown leather bag. In the background, a modern building with a glass facade and a white structural frame is visible under a clear sky.

Intercede for Whole Cities

Consider the place from which Abraham prayed. It was a place away from his home (Genesis 18:33) Abraham apparently didn't use the newly built public altar to pray for Sodom and Gomorrah. The record says that he was "before the Lord," but he physically stood at a place of some height from which he could clearly see the entire valley of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:27-28)

Abraham's experience should tell us that we walk with a generous God, who holds all cities in his hands. He is a God who himself hears the cumulative cry of nations and walks among them looking for righteousness. As we walk through the cities of earth, it may well be that angels walk with us, assessing what they find. God's judgments are moving toward culmination.

It would appear that in some way God's coming judgments remain contingent. Our prayers for cities are heard with great seriousness by a listening "Judge of all the earth" (Genesis 18:25). Let us not fail to pray with sober urgency.

A person is walking on a paved path, captured from a low angle focusing on their legs and feet. They are wearing dark-colored pants and white sneakers with red accents. A large, grey, bulky bag is slung over their shoulder, partially obscuring the right leg. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a clear sky.

Implications for Today's Prayerwalkers

Pray City-size Prayers – We need to adopt the wide-ranging scope of Abrahamic intercession: Pray for entire cities and peoples. We may have people in mind who are dear to us, as Lot was important to Abraham. Let us name them. But let us go on to pray as we are **privileged**: Make bold requests on behalf of entire cities.

Grasp the basic prayer agenda given to Abraham – Angels spoke of the righteousness and justice of God's people, which will ultimately bless all nations. Abraham has forever established that God can be willing to restrain judgment from a city because of the presence of righteousness in it. Can we not build on Abraham's prayer today? Surely, we can humbly ask God to extend his mercy even further. God is willing to hold back punishing judgment so that he can increase the number of righteous people in our cities.