

## John 17

**17** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, **2** since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

**6** "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7** Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. **8** For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **9** I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. **10** All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. **11** And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **14** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not

of the world. **15** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.<sup>[a]</sup> **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them<sup>[b]</sup> in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate myself,<sup>[c]</sup> that they also may be sanctified<sup>[d]</sup> in truth.

**20** "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23** I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. **24** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.**25** O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. **26** I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

## Footnotes

- a. [John 17:15](#) Or *from evil*
- b. [John 17:17](#) Greek *Set them apart* (for holy service to God)
- c. [John 17:19](#) Or *I sanctify myself*; or *I set myself apart* (for holy service to God)
- d. [John 17:19](#) Greek *may be set apart* (for holy service to God)

John 17 is known as the high priestly prayer. It's called that b/c Jesus is praying as a high priest, praying for himself in the five verses, and then interceding for others, mediating between his disciples and God in prayer. From verses 6 to 19, he is praying for his disciples who are with him, and in the last part, from verse 20 onwards, he prays for those who will believe in him

through the disciples' words. It is a beautiful prayer, and we can sense Jesus' love for both his Father and his people as he says these words just hours away from the cross. It's so humbling to see Jesus' heart in this high priestly prayer.

As this prayer flows from Jesus and the Father, then to Jesus and his present disciples, and then to Jesus and his future disciples, let's look at a couple themes that appear throughout the whole prayer. First is the theme of knowing the Father. Knowing the Father all starts from Jesus' perfect relationship w/ the Father. Even from verse 1, John writes that Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, which captures how Jesus always was connected to the Father while physically being on the earth. And moments from the cross, Jesus continues to depend on God. He asks the Father to glorify him b/c his hour has come. He says, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." Jesus was with the Father before the world existed, and now he has accomplished the work of showing the Father's glory on earth. As noted all throughout the gospel of John, knowing the Father is possible only by knowing Jesus.

When Jesus intercedes for his disciples, he asks his Father to keep them in the truth, basically that they would keep knowing the Father while in the world. In verse 11, Jesus prays, "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." And in verse 15, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one." He prays that his disciples would stay in a close relationship to the Father in a world that is hostile to the Father. The word "world" actually appears 13 times in the middle section. It's nothing new when Jesus talks about being physically "in the world" but spiritually "out of the world" - that's what happens when his people are connected to him and his father. And we also see the importance of God's words as part of this in staying connected to the Father. From verse 16 and 17: "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." God's word, for us the Bible, is essential for staying in the truth.

The other theme I'd like to cover, which goes hand in hand w/ knowing the Father, is unity among the disciples. Going back to the second part of verse 11, we see Jesus praying, "that they may be one, even as we are one." Jesus was perfectly one w/ the Father before the world existed, and he prays for that one-ness, that unity, for his disciples. In the last section of Jesus praying for his future disciples, the prayer for unity seems to intensify: he prays in verse 23, "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." It really struck me reading John 17 this time just how much Jesus cares about his disciples loving one another. It's not two separate things, loving God and loving our brothers and sisters. It cannot be, b/c if we love God we will love our brothers and sisters. That's how the world will come to know God, when they see the love his people have for one another. This unity of Jesus being one w/ the Father translates into unity among his believers, which will bring more people to know him.

Let's respond to this high priestly prayer by living out Jesus' words and also praying the same things. Let's examine how we are doing in this area of being one w/ other disciples. What does unity w/ your brothers and sisters look like in your life, and how can you cultivate that? A very basic part of that is of course continuing to meet w/ one another and seeking to encourage one another. In your micro-church or family group, loving our brothers and sisters probably involves serving the group in some way; even if some of us are officially leaders or servants, we can set

up others to learn how to serve the group. However God is leading us, let's seek to love our fellow brothers and sisters and continue to grow in knowing our Father.