

JESUS PRAYS FOR US

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 17:1-26: THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

I. The setting

- A. Notice the context within the book of John:
1. John 13 – Christ is the servant as He washes their feet at the supper.
 2. John 14 – Christ is the comforter, sending another comforter.
 3. John 15 – Christ is the teacher as He uses the vine as an object lesson as He walks toward the garden.
 4. John 16 – Christ is the great intercessor as He prays for His disciples and the church as a whole.
 5. John 17 – Christ as the High Priest
- B. “As the last supper draws to a close Jesus prays to God the Father for Himself and as the intercessor on behalf of His disciples. In the Old Covenant, it was the High Priest who offered the bloody sacrifice to Yahweh on His sacred altar and whose responsibility it was to serve the covenant people as God’s representative and the people’s intercessor. Now, in the New Covenant order, it is Jesus Himself who is offering both the sacrifice of His passion and death and His intercession on behalf of His disciples to God the Father (see Hebrews 5:7-10 and Romans 8:34). Therefore, this prayer has come to be known as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer.”
(www.agapebiblestudy.org)

II. The structure

It is a prayer of about 650 words – the longest in the gospels. It might take 3 minutes or so to read aloud – but it will take all of eternity for us to understand it all.

- A. Notice the breakdown of Jesus' petitions (from www.desiringgod.org)

The Father Gave the Son...		John 17
Authority to give eternal life	v 2	
People out of this world	v 2, 6, 9, 24	
Work to accomplish	v 4	
Words	v 8	
His name	v 11, 12	
glory	v 22, 24	
The Son Gives Believers...		John 17
Eternal life	v 2	
Father's word	v 8, 14	
Manifestation of Father's name	v 6, 22	
glory	v 22	
The Son Asks the Father to...		John 17
Glorify him	v 1,5	
Keep believers in the Father's name	v 11	
Keep believers from the evil one	v 15	
Sanctify believers in the truth	v 17	
Make believers one	v 21	
Jesus' Followers and the Word		John 17
They are sent into the world	v 18	
They are in the world	v 11	
They are not of the world	v 16	
The world has hated them	v 14	
Their unity with each other and union with God may cause the world to believe that the Father sent the Son	v 21	

- B. It can be divided into three sections

1. Vs 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself "Father, glorify your Son."

Vs 1-2 He affirms the glory of the cross

Vs 3-4 He expresses the essence of eternal life

Vs 5 He rejoices in the shared glory of the Father

2. Vs 6-19 Jesus prays for His eleven disciples

He prays for their perseverance, joy, protection from evil, sanctification and their oneness in the Father and the Son.

3. Vs 20-26 Jesus prays for all the believers

a. Jesus prays for the Church

b. He prays for their perfect unity together

- c. He prays for their future presence with Him
 - d. He prays for their mutual love
- C. Notice, too, the way the “indwelling” theme emphasizes the need for unity.
1. Vs 21, 23 The Father is in the Son
 2. Vs 21 The Son is in the Father
 3. Vs 21 Believers are in the Father and the Son
 4. Vs 23, 26 The Son is in the believer

III. The seven specific petitions:

- A. Vs 11 “Keep them through your name, those whom you have given me.” – Protect them!
- B. Vs 17 “Sanctify them” – Set them apart for my purposes! (2 Tim. 2:21)
- C. Vs 21 “Unify them” – Keep them together! (John 14:3)
- D. Vs 24 “Let them be with me” – Keep them close! (John 14:3)
- E. Vs 24 “Let them behold my glory” – Let them get “it”! (Rev. 5:12)
- F. Vs 26 “Let the love with which you have loved me, be in them.” - Love them! (Eph. 5:2)
- G. Vs 26 Let “me be in them” – unite us! (Gal. 2:20)

IV. There is a pattern to follow as we pray for those we care about

- A. Protect them
 - Ps. 5:11 “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.”
- B. Set them apart
 - 1 Sam 1:27-28 “I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.”
- C. Unify them with others (help them to get along)
 - Eph. 4:3 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”
- D. Keep them close
 - Ps. 119:9-11 “How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”
- E. Help them “get it” (understand truth)
 - Prov. 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”
- F. Love them

Luke 15:20 ““So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

G. Unite our hearts

1 Pet. 4:8 “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

Ps. 63:6 “On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.”

Discussion Questions:

1. How does it make you feel to think that God is rejoicing over you? Singing over you? Praying for you? (Consider Zeph. 3:17)
2. If Christ asked you for a “prayer request,” what would you ask Him to pray over you?
3. How do you normally pray for your children? Is the pattern we discussed helpful for you?