



LESSON 17 ~ JESUS PRAYS FOR YOU!

John 17

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What going-away gift have you ever received that still warms your heart or brings a smile?

INTRODUCTION

While on earth, Jesus often prayed for himself and others, but we are seldom told *what* he prayed. **John 17**, however, is the exception. This chapter contains Jesus' longest recorded prayer and it gives us an intimate look into the heart of Jesus and his special relationship to God the Father. We also see Jesus' tender concern for his disciples as he prays for them with a heart full of love and compassion. John 17 is sometimes called the *Holy of Holies* of the New Testament and it is also referred to as Jesus' *High Priestly Prayer*.

Jesus taught the disciples how to pray by giving them a model prayer, which we call the *Lord's Prayer*, but this prayer was not a prayer that he prayed for himself. The model prayer he gave his disciples should probably be called *The Disciple's Prayer*. The prayer in **John 17**, however, could truly be called the *Lord's Prayer* because it records how Jesus prayed to the Father about his own needs, concerns and desires. In this wonderful prayer, Jesus prays for himself, for his eleven disciples and for us – the 21st century followers of Christ!

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 17**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (**John 16:13**). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,

with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 17** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, *underline or highlight* any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a *question mark* beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version* (NIV), the *New Living Translation* (NLT), or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. As you read and study this chapter, look for any *principles of prayer* that Jesus modeled in his prayer that would help you to pray more powerfully and effectively.

QUESTIONS

1. Read **Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 28**. While on earth, why do you think Jesus spent time praying?

- ♥ What does the prayer life of Jesus teach you about the importance of prayer?
- ♥ When do you usually turn to God in prayer? About what things do you usually pray?

Read **John 17:1-8**.

2. **For whom** is Jesus praying in **17:1-8** and **what** are his specific requests?

Jesus addresses this prayer to *Father*, just as he did all his prayers. In the original language, the word *Father* is *Abba* which means *Daddy, Papa, or my own dear Father*. In Jesus' day, *Abba* was the word a small child would use to address the male parent. Because it was such a familiar and intimate expression, it was not considered an appropriate term of address for *Almighty God* by Jesus' contemporaries. Yet, this is how Jesus taught his disciples (and us) to pray and approach our Heavenly Father. Calling God the Father *Daddy* or *Papa* reflects the intimate relationship God desires to have with each of his children who have been reconciled to him through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

3. In **17:1**, Jesus says that the time for his death has finally come. How is the crucifixion going to *glorify* (*exalt, honor, extol, praise*) Jesus so that he can *glorify* the Father (**John 12:23-24**)?

- ♥ What are some specific ways you can *glorify* God? Is this important? What would be the result?
- ♥ Who have you glorified by the way you have lived this week? How so?

4. What gift does Jesus have the authority to give and how does John define this gift (**17:2-3**)?

- ♥ Read **John 17:3** in the *Amplified* version of the Bible. How is this definition of *eternal life* different from what most people probably think eternal life is? Can this life continue after physical death? How so?
 - ♥ In Scripture, the word **know** means to *progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with or to enjoy a deep and mutual friendship with*. Do these definitions describe your relationship with God the Father and Jesus, his Son? Why or why not? How can one get to know God this way?
 - ♥ If *eternal life* is **to know God in relationship**, how is it that Jesus gives us eternal life (**17:2**)?
5. What **work** was Jesus given to do and how did his **completed work** bring glory to God (**17:4, 6-8**)?

- ♥ Jesus lived a purposeful life because he knew the work God had given him to do and he completed it. What would make it possible for you to say to God at the end of your life, what Jesus says in **17:4**?

- ♥ Do the goals you have for your life match God's purposes for you? How so?
- ♥ If you don't know your God-given purpose or the work God has for you, how might you find out?

Read **John 17:9-19**.

6. **For whom** is Jesus praying in **17:9-19** and **what** are his specific requests?

- ♥ Jesus prayed for those he loved. What are some things you ask God to do for your loved ones? Do your prayers usually reflect short-term, pressing needs or long-term, vital needs that people have?
 - ♥ How are the things Jesus prayed for his disciples being answered in your life?
 - ♥ Jesus called the disciples "his glory" because glory and honor had come *to* him *through* them (**17:10**). When Jesus' life is on display *in us*, we honor Christ and become "his glory." How does knowing that you can be Jesus' glory encourage and/or challenge you?
7. Jesus prayed that his disciples would be protected from the *world* (**17:11, 14**) and from the *evil one* (**17:15**). Read the following Scriptures and make a note of what can be dangerous about these enemies.

Scripture	The Enemy?	What is the danger?
1 John 2:15-17		
1 Peter 5:8		
Romans 12:2		
Ephesians 6:16		
James 1:27		
1 John 5:19		

- ♥ When have you personally been aware of God's protection from the world or the evil one?
- ♥ **How** and **how often** do you pray protection for your loved ones from world and the evil one?
- ♥ How can you be *in the world* but not *of the world*? What do you think your life-style indicates about your relationship to the world?

8. Why doesn't Jesus want his disciples to be taken out of the world (**17:15, 18**)?

What is the purpose of Jesus sending his disciples into the world (**Matthew 28:18-20**)?

- ♥ What do you see as your part in the above command that Jesus gave all his disciples?
 - ♥ How should we pray regarding the people of the world?
9. Read **17:17** in the *Amplified* version. Besides protecting them, what else did Jesus ask the Father to do for his disciples that would make their mission in the world successful after Jesus left?

- ♥ How is it that we are *sanctified, made pure and holy, set apart* for God to be used by him (17:17)? How does God's Word make us pure and holy?
- ♥ Read **John 1:14**. How do these verses expand the meaning of 17:17?
- ♥ In what ways do you feel you have been "set apart" for God and for his purposes?

Read **John 17:20-26**.

10. **For whom** is Jesus praying in 17:20-26 and **what** are his specific requests?

- ♥ What does it mean to you that Jesus thought of you and prayed for you before his death (17:20)?
 - ♥ Read **Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:34** and **1 John 2:1**. What activity is Jesus still engaged in on your behalf? What effect do you think this has on your life?
 - ♥ What does it mean to you that Jesus "can't wait" for you to be with him where he is (17:24)?
11. Several times and in several different ways, Jesus prays that all who love him would **be one just as he and the Father are one**. What is the ultimate purpose behind unity for which Jesus prayed (17:21, 23)?

- ♥ How does unity prove the truth of Jesus' claims and help the world believe?
 - ♥ What happens when there is division instead of unity? What message does this send to the world?
12. Listed below are four different types of "oneness." Which one do you think best fits what Jesus meant when he prayed that all his followers would be "one" (17:21-23)? Why?
- Unanimity* - a shared view by all the people concerned, with nobody disagreeing
Uniformity - conforming to one standard or rule
Union - joining together of people and organizations to make one whole
Unity - oneness of mind, heart and purpose toward a shared interest or goal
- ♥ Does unity mean the merging of denominations, traditions and liturgies? Why or why not?
 - ♥ What is the relationship between love and unity? Can one exist without the other? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Do your words and actions tend to lead more toward unity or division?
 - ♥ In what practical ways can we demonstrate our oneness with other believers?

Response

- Why do you think Jesus purposely prayed this prayer out loud in the presence of his disciples?
- In what ways does Jesus' prayer encourage and/or challenge you?
- What **principles of prayer** can you discover in this prayer that will help you pray more effectively?
- Using Jesus' prayer in **John 17** as a model, write out your own prayer in which you ask *specific requests* for **yourself**, for **those with whom you are very close**, as well as for **those with whom you have a more distant relationship**. Use this prayer for a length of time and keep a written record of how God responds to your requests.

Encounter with Jesus

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. See Jesus with you and with the eyes of your heart, meet his gaze. Ask Jesus about his desires for your life. For what purposes did he create you? What is it you are to be doing or what should you be preparing for? Ask the Holy Spirit (who lives in you and teaches you all things) to bring thoughts to your mind from the mind of Christ. Write down what you hear or see. Ask Jesus any other questions you might have about his plans for you. Listen and write down what you hear. Be sure to thank Jesus that he lives in you and continues to show himself to you.