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**2025 ANNUAL THEME: “HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY”**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**April Theme: The Gospel Truth**

**“The High Priestly Prayer” (John 17:1-26)**

**Topics**

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background and Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding
- Life Application

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

A. Briefly describe the type of relationship you have (or had) with your parents.

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B. What does a person’s lifestyle indicate about their relationship to the world?

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C. As a Christian, how would you describe "eternal life" to a non-Christian?

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## IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

“Some brethren pray by the yard; but true prayer is measured by weight, and not by length.”  
~ British Baptist Preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon

According to Dr. Herbert Lockyer, Sr., there are 650 definite prayers recorded in the Bible; but not one of them can match our Lord’s “High Priestly Prayer” in John 17--nor can any prayer recorded *outside* the Bible.

Warren W. Wiersbe asks the question, “What is it about this prayer that makes it so great?” He suggests four reasons:

1. *It is great because of the Person who prayed the prayer.*
2. *It is great because of the occasion that demanded the prayer.*
3. *It is great because of the petitions in the prayer.*
4. *It is great because of the victory it can give us today.*

## Overcoming the World

This prayer gives us what we need to overcome the world and its systems so we can live a godly life while we are here:

- **Courage to Conquer:** The prayer provides the courage to overcome the world, filling our lives with victorious joy.
- **Worldly Ways:** The word "world" is used in various ways, from the created universe to society (people, culture, and structures) organized without God.
- **Spiritual Separation:** As believers, we are in the world physically but do not belong to its spiritual system (**John 12:31; 14:30; 17:14-16**).

## “Your Name” and “Your Truth”

In John chapter 17, Jesus' reference to "Your Name" and "Your Truth" holds significant theological and spiritual meaning.

**"Your Name"** represents God's character, authority, and presence. By manifesting God's name to His disciples, Jesus reveals the nature and essence of God, emphasizing the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. This revelation is crucial for the disciples to understand and experience God's love and purpose. (John 17:6, 11, 12, 26)

**"Your Truth"** refers to the divine truth found in God's word. Jesus prays for His disciples to be sanctified by this truth, highlighting its role in *purifying* and *setting them apart* for God's mission. The truth is not just a set of doctrines but a transformative power that aligns believers with God's will, enabling them to live holy lives and fulfill their calling in the world. (John 17:17)

## Glory

God's purpose in wooing sinful people back to fellowship with Himself is to **bring glory to His name**. God is holy, and all that will enter into fellowship with Him must be holy. The day when God is worshiped in His holiness by a regenerated people in a restored world will be the millennial kingdom.

Together, these references underscore the importance of knowing God personally and living according to His truth, which provides spiritual strength, unity, and purpose for believers.

## KEY TERMS

Authority  
Believed  
Crucifixion  
Discourse  
Earth  
Eternal Life  
Evil One  
Exalted  
Father  
Finished  
Flesh  
Foundation of the world  
Fulfilled  
God

Glorify  
Hated  
Heaven  
High Priest  
Intercessor  
Jesus Christ  
Joy  
Kept  
Love, Loved  
Manifested  
One  
Perfect  
Prayer  
Righteous

Sanctify  
Son  
Son of Perdition  
Sovereignty  
True God  
Truth  
Unity  
Words  
Work  
World  
Your Name  
Your Truth  
Your Word

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

### John 17:1-26 NASB

<sup>17</sup> Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

<sup>4</sup> I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

<sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

<sup>6</sup> "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. <sup>9</sup> "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the

world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*.<sup>12</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.<sup>13</sup> But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.<sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.<sup>20</sup> “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;<sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.<sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:<sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.<sup>24</sup> “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.<sup>25</sup> O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.<sup>26</sup> And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

## OUTLINE

- I. Jesus Prays for Himself – Mutual Glory (17:1-5)
  - A. Glory Granted and Given (John 17:1-2)
  - B. Eternal Existence (John 17:3)
  - C. Faithful Fulfillment (John 17:4-5)
- II. Jesus Prays for His Disciples – Guardianship Granted (17:6-17)
  - A. Manifestation of Message (John 17:6-8)
  - B. Dedication in Devotion (John 17:9-16)
  - C. Sanctification and Security (John 17:17)
- III. Jesus Prays for All Believers – Unity Urged (17:18-26)
  - A. Sending Sovereignty (John 17:18-20)
  - B. Unity Unveiled (John 17:21-23)
  - C. Love and Light (John 17:24-26)

## INTRODUCTION

John 17, known as the **High Priestly Prayer**, is a chapter in the Gospel according to John where Jesus prays before His crucifixion. The prayer is divided into three parts: for Himself (17:1-5), His disciples (17:6-17), and future believers (17:18-26). It emphasizes themes of glory, unity, and eternal life, highlighting Jesus' relationship with the Father and His love for humanity. Jesus seeks to glorify the Father, protect and sanctify His disciples, and unite all believers. This chapter concludes Jesus' discourse from John 13:31–16:33, expressing His desires for unity and the destiny of His followers.

## BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The context in chapter 17 suggests that Jesus prayed the High Priestly Prayer after the Last Supper and before His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. While the exact location is not explicitly stated, it is likely that this prayer was part of His final discourse with His disciples, possibly still in the Upper Room or as they were on their way to the Garden and ultimately to his passion.

### EXPLORING THE TEXT

#### I. Jesus Prays for Himself – Mutual Glory (17:1-5)

- A. Glory Granted and Given (John 17:1-2)
- B. Eternal Existence (John 17:3)
- C. Faithful Fulfillment (John 17:4-5)

*<sup>1</sup>Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup>as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup>I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

#### **Glory granted and given...**(John 17:1-2)

Jesus prayed for himself, asking the Father to **glorify** him so he could glorify the Father. Acknowledging that his time of suffering had come, Jesus sought glorification through the Crucifixion and Resurrection. This would enable him to give **eternal life** to believers, thus glorifying the Father. He requested the restoration of his full rights and power as the Son of God, knowing he had been given **authority** over all to grant eternal life to those given to him by the Father.

#### **Q. What does it mean to “give God the glory?”**

#### **Eternal Existence** (John 17:3)

Jesus defines eternal life as to know experientially [involving or based on experience and observation] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one he sent to earth. We find eternal life only by knowing the one true God. This knowledge is ongoing and personal (**Matthew 11:27**).

#### **Faithful Fulfillment** (John 17:4-5)

In this statement, Jesus affirmed that he had brought glory to the Father on earth by **fulfilling God's will**. The final phase of Jesus' mission was to be completed through his crucifixion. Jesus spoke of his work as if it were already accomplished, highlighting his unwavering commitment to the cross. He requested to be restored to the glory he shared with the Father before the world's creation, indicating his **preexistent relationship** with

God. Jesus sought to return to this glory, not merely as he was before, but as the crucified and risen Lord. His resurrection and ascension, along with Stephen's vision in Acts 7:56, confirm that Jesus' prayer was **fulfilled**, as he returned to his **exalted position** at God's right hand.

### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does Jesus' request for glorification in John 17:1-5 reflect His understanding of His mission and relationship with the Father?

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2. In what ways can we seek to glorify God in our own lives, following the example set by Jesus in these verses?

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### EXPLORING THE TEXT

#### II. Jesus Prays for His Disciples – Guardianship Granted (17:6-17)

- A. Manifestation of Message (John 17:6-8)
- B. Dedication in Devotion (John 17:9-16)
- C. Sanctification and Security (John 17:17)

This prayer is one of several mentioned in the Bible that focused on the disciples. Before choosing the Twelve, Jesus spent the night in prayer (**Luke 6:12**). During their ministry together (**John 6:15; Luke 10:18-22**), we assume Jesus' prayers included his disciples. We know that before the final days, Jesus had been praying specifically for Peter (**Luke 22:32**). The Scriptures also tell us that part of Jesus' present activity is to pray for us (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**). Jesus made it clear that although we have direct access to the Father (**16:26-27**), we are still the objects of his loving concern.

- A. **Manifestation of Message** (John 17:6-8)

*<sup>6</sup> "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.*

After praying for his own glorification, Jesus shifted his focus to his disciples, whom God had chosen to give to him. Jesus **revealed** the Father's nature to them, and they kept his word. Although their faith was imperfect and they would falter, their commitment was genuine, and they would return to their faith and obedience.

The disciples accepted Jesus' words as divine, believing he was sent by the Father. Before Jesus enacted God's salvation plan through his crucifixion, he prepared his disciples by **ensuring they believed his words**. This belief was crucial for them to understand and benefit from his sacrificial work.

Jesus demonstrated that his teachings were from God, and the disciples needed to accept that God sent him before they could grasp the purpose of his death. Once they understood Jesus was sent by God, they were ready to learn about his mission to die for salvation, despite the difficulty of this lesson.

#### B. **Dedication in Devotion** (John 17:9-16)

*<sup>9</sup> "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

Jesus focused on his disciples, praying for them rather than the hostile **world**. He emphasized their **unity** and **protection**, asking God to keep them safe as they spread the **message of salvation**.

Jesus highlighted the **balance between God's sovereignty and human freedom**, using Judas' betrayal as an example. Despite the world's hatred, Christians must remain in the world to witness for Christ, **trusting in God's protection**. Jesus' teachings prepared the disciples for joy after his resurrection, understanding his victory over death and Satan.

Christians can balance between God's sovereignty and human freedom by recognizing that both concepts coexist in a complementary [harmonizing] manner.

They can trust in God's ultimate control and plan while also acknowledging the responsibility to make choices that align with His will (**Proverbs 16:3**).

Engaging in prayer, studying scripture, and seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit can help believers navigate this balance, understanding that **human freedom is exercised within the framework of God's sovereign purposes**.

### C. Sanctification and Security (John 17:17)

*<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.*

Three distinct views have emerged to explain what Jesus meant by “**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.**” (1) The truth found in God’s word will make us pure and holy. (2) The central truth of God’s saving love sets into motion God’s work in us. (3) The process of passing on (preaching, teaching) God’s truth would have a purifying effect in the disciples’ lives.

These views are actually complementary, describing different aspects of becoming pure and holy (called **sanctification**): the second view highlights the initial pouring of God’s grace into our lives through the truth of the gospel; the first view summarizes the **ongoing effects** of the applied truths from God’s word; and the third view emphasizes that progress in sanctification will be seen in our desire and practice of communicating the gospel. **God’s word, then, works as a divine cleansing agent** that God uses to bring about our sanctification.

<b>CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING</b>
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3. How does Jesus' prayer for His disciples in John 17:6-17 emphasize the importance of unity and protection among believers?

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4. In what ways can believers today apply the concept of being "in the world but not of the world" as described in John 17:14-16?

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## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### III. Jesus Prays for All Believers – Unity Urged (17:18-26)

A. Sending Sovereignty (John 17:18-20)

B. Unity Unveiled (John 17:21-23)

C. Love and Light (John 17:24-26)

#### A. Sending Sovereignty (John 17:18-20)

*18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*

Jesus came into the world on a mission from the Father, and he sent his disciples on a mission to **make God known**. This theme is central in the Gospel according to John. The Father sent the Son, the Father and Son sent the Spirit, and the disciples are sent into the world. We are tasked with continuing Jesus' mission by **making God known**. We should engage with the world and non-Christians, being **salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16)**, and doing God's work. Jesus dedicated himself to the Father's will, culminating in his sacrifice on the cross (**Hebrews 10:10**), so that believers might belong entirely to God.

#### B. Unity Unveiled (John 17:21-23)

*21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

In John 17:21-23, Jesus makes three interconnected requests. **First**, he prays for unity among believers, emphasizing love, obedience, and commitment to God's will rather than a single church structure. **Second**, he desires unity among believers based on the unity between Jesus and the Father, akin to branches connected to a vine or parts of a body working together. **Third**, this unity should lead people worldwide to believe in Jesus as the Savior sent by God. Jesus explains this unity through mutual indwelling, promising believers the glory given to him by God. This glory, revealed through Jesus' mission, helps believers understand and share God's character, fostering unity and convincing the world of God's love and Jesus' divine mission.

#### C. Love and Light (John 17:24-26)

*24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your*

*name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Jesus desires all believers to be with him and see his glory, offering assurance of unity with Christ now and **eternal glory** in the future (**John 14:3; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 22:4**). Jesus, as the connection between the world and God, revealed the Father to his disciples and asked for them to be loved as he is loved by the Father. He prayed for God's love to be in believers and for himself to dwell in them, fulfilling the Father's desire (**John 13:34-35**).

**"Eternal glory"** refers to the divine splendor and honor that Jesus shares with the Father. It signifies the preexistent glory Jesus had with God before the world's creation and the glory He seeks to return to after His crucifixion and resurrection. This glory is not only about Jesus' exalted status but also involves believers, as Jesus prays for them to be united with Him and to witness His glory. It represents the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan, where believers are brought into a relationship with God, experiencing His presence and love eternally [forever].

<b>CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING</b>
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5. How does Jesus' prayer for unity among believers in John 17:21-23 challenge us to foster deeper connections within our faith communities today?

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6. In what ways can we actively participate in Jesus' mission to reveal God's love and truth to the world, as described in John 17:24-26?

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## LIFE APPLICATION

### Think about it—

- What can you do to actively foster unity within your ministry and/or church at large?
- What will you do in the next week to show love and help a new member feel welcome as part of the church?

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## RESOURCES

Adult Questions for LESSONMaker, LOGOS Bible Software

Baker's Bible Dictionary

Life Application New Testament Commentary

The Moody Handbook of Theology (p. 50). Enns, Paul P. Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Wiersbe, Warren W. 1988. *Prayer: Basic Training*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale