



The High Priestly Prayer

STUDY GUIDE

**TRUTH
FORLIFE**

THIS STUDY GUIDE

contains sixteen sessions that will guide you in considering our Savior's heart as He prays for His disciples in John 17. You will get the most out of this study by intently reading or listening to the sermons from Alistair Begg's series *The High Priestly Prayer: A Study in John 17* as you progress. The Son's prayer to the Father on the eve of His crucifixion reveals His love for God and men and His hopes for the church in the coming months and the coming ages.



FIND ALL 16 MESSAGES AT
[TFL.ORG/JOHN17](https://www.truthforlife.org/john17)

The High Priestly Prayer: Study Guide
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The following description of the *High Priestly Prayer* sermon series provides a good summary of this study's aim:

After teaching His disciples and preparing them for His departure, and with the prospect of His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion before Him, Jesus concluded His final Passover meal with a prayer. This prayer, recorded in John 17 and known as the High Priestly Prayer, is the longest recorded prayer of Christ. In it, He prays for Himself, His disciples, and all believers throughout time, right down to today—and what He prays promises to be life-changing for all who listen in.

In this series, Alistair Begg invites us onto the “holy ground” of John 17, where we are given an unparalleled, intimate look into the heart of our Savior. As the Son prayed to the Father, He left us both a stirring example of prayer itself and a profound testimony to His zeal for God’s glory and His love for His people. Dive into its depths, and discover the riches of what Jesus Himself has prayed on your behalf.

Each session includes four parts:

- 1) Getting Started:** a brief summary statement or commentary on the sermon, followed by an introductory question
- 2) Key Scriptures:** important Bible verses that were referenced in the sermon and are flagged for further meditation and memorization
- 3) Going Deeper:** questions to help you process the main ideas of the sermon
- 4) Giving Praise:** a hymn that can be committed to memory, incorporated in worship, and used as the basis for prayer about what you have learned and considered



SESSION ONE

“The Prayer of Jesus” | John 17:1-26

Getting Started

Most people are familiar with the Lord’s Prayer, or they would recognize it if they heard it. That prayer was Jesus’ response to the disciples’ request “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1), and it provided them, and us, with a model to pray as Jesus did. Jesus’ prayer in John 17, known as the High Priestly Prayer, might equally be described as “the Lord’s prayer”—though for different reasons altogether.

What are your first impressions about the differences of *context* and *content* between the Lord’s Prayer and the High Priestly Prayer? What does the prayer in John 17 reveal about the Lord Jesus?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

(ACTS 6:4)

“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.”

(PSALM 121:1-2)

Going Deeper

1. There is a *mystery* in the communion of the Godhead in this prayer. Which verses describe the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit? What do they tell us about God? What do they leave us wondering about?

2. This prayer communicates the *security* that God's children have in Him. Which verses describe that security? What kind of security is it? Whom does it protect, and from what?

3. In this prayer, Jesus seeks *sanctity*, or holiness, for His disciples. Which verses describe this sanctity? What reason does Jesus offer for the disciples' sanctity?

4. Jesus prays for the *unity* of His disciples. Which verses describe the unity of the disciples? What unites the disciples?

5. Jesus prays in light of the *glory* He shares with the Father and gives to the disciples. Which verses describe this glory? What glory have the disciples received now? What glory does Jesus pray they'll see in the future?

GIVING PRAISE

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
That where Thou art in glory,
There shall Thy servant be.
And Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my Friend.

“O JESUS, I HAVE PROMISED”

BY JOHN E. BODE

SESSION TWO

“The Hour Has Come” | John 17:1-3

Getting Started

“These words” (v. 1) are particularly the words of the Upper Room Discourse in John 14–16. Prior to praying, Jesus had been preparing His disciples for the fact that He was going away, promising them that the Holy Spirit would come minister to them, among them, and through them. The High Priestly Prayer thus comes between the final teachings of Jesus to His disciples and His imminent betrayal and arrest in chapter 18, which He knew beforehand was coming (John 14:19; 16:16–20, 32).

Imagine the emotions of these moments. What do you suppose Jesus must have been feeling? What might the disciples have been feeling? What weight does this context bring to the High Priestly Prayer?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.’”

(JOHN 17:1-3)

“You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”

(EPHESIANS 2:1-2, 4-5)

Going Deeper

1. The “hour,” which has been a theme throughout John (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1), is about to be consummated beginning in chapter 18. What does this “hour” refer to? What does that suggest Jesus understands about His mission?

2. Read Ephesians 2:1–3. Alistair says, “By our very nature, we have a skewed understanding of ourselves, and we need our Bibles to show us who and what we really are.” What does the Bible say about who we are outside of Christ?

3. Jesus prays that He may be glorified for the purpose of glorifying the Father. Read John 5:41–44. What is different about the way Jesus seeks glory and the way people who are dead in their sin seek glory?

4. Jesus is to be “glorified” in the hour of His suffering and is to glorify God. Explain why this glory is unintuitive. What are the three ways Alistair says God is glorified in the cross?

5. The Father has given Jesus “authority over all flesh” (cf. Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:17). According to the text, what is the purpose of this authority? How does Jesus say people may obtain eternal life?

6. Off the top of your head, how would you define “eternal life”? Verse 3 describes the nature of eternal life (cf. 1:4; 10:10; see also 3:16, 36; 4:14; 5:25–29; 6:33, 40; 8:12; 14:6; 20:30–31). How does that description compare to your initial idea of it? How does it challenge your initial idea?

7. Alistair observes, “When we talk about our Christian life, we tend to talk about ourselves.” What is the problem with that tendency? How might you reframe your own Christian testimony to offer God appropriate glory?

GIVING PRAISE

To God be the glory; great things He has done!
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

“TO GOD BE THE GLORY”

BY FANNY JANE CROSBY

SESSION THREE

“Before the World Existed” | John 17:4-5

Getting Started

This pair of verses presents us with a contrast between, on the one hand, “the work” Jesus has done in “the hour” (v. 1) that God has appointed and, on the other hand, the glory Jesus had “before the world existed” and will soon have again.

What does it tell us about Jesus that He exists in both the time of the world and eternity before creation? What Bible passages can you think of that tell us about how the eternal Son came to work in a time and a place?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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.”

(JOHN 17:4-5)

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.”

(ISAIAH 40:28)

Going Deeper

1. These verses contain the story of the Gospel. What is that story, and how is it implied by what Jesus says here?

2. Alistair says, “The created world was brought into existence by God. There is God, who is the ultimate reality, and then there is everyone and everything else.” What is it about God that makes Him different from everyone and everything else? How does Jesus share in this distinction?

3. Some have observed that the chief spirituality of our age is pantheism, in which we seek answers in nature and within, because God is everything and everything is God. How does that differ from the testimony of Scripture here?

4. Read John 19:30. What is the work that Jesus has “accomplished”? Then read John 3:16 and 1 John 4:10. Why did God set out to accomplish what Jesus has accomplished?

5. Alistair says, “When you remove yourself in your mind from the realm of God’s jurisdiction, you end up with the chaos that is represented in our world.” What does this mean? Why is that the case? (See John 1:9-13.)

6. Read John 14:8-11, and compare it to 17:4. How does Jesus glorify God? How can we see that glory? What does it show us about God?

GIVING PRAISE

Oh, let us hark to the voice of Jesus;
Then we shall never roam,
And we shall rest on His loving breast
In the dear heavenly home.

Jesus’ love! Precious love,
Boundless and pure and free!
Oh, turn to that love, weary, wand’ring soul!
Jesus pleadeth for thee.

**“THERE IS NO LOVE LIKE THE LOVE OF JESUS”
BY WILLIAM E. LITTLEWOOD**

SESSION FOUR

“They Have Kept Your Word” | John 17:6-8

Getting Started

When people pray earnestly, they reveal the essential longings of the heart. That is one of the reasons many find it so difficult to pray publicly: It is a kind of exposure.

If that is true, what does the subject of Jesus' prayer in these verses reveal about His heart?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 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.”

(JOHN 17:6-8)

“I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

(JOHN 12:49-50)

Going Deeper

1. Read John 6:44 (and also see vv. 63–65). What is this verse literally saying? How does this agree with John 17:6?

2. Avoid a prolonged debate about the doctrine of predestination and simply ask: What is the reaction of your heart to these claims by Jesus? Why do you think that is?

3. Alistair says, “The sovereign purpose of God does not run counter to the response of the individual.” Take a moment to consider the story of your conversion. Which parts of that story were in your control? Which parts were definitely not in your control?

4. In biblical parlance, the “name” expresses the totality of the person. What does Jesus mean when He says to the Father, “I have manifested your name” (v. 6; cf. 1:17–18; 14:9; 21:1).

5. According to Jesus, where do His words come from? (Cf. John 7:16–18.) What does that mean about the attention we should give to what He says? Where can we hear the words of Jesus?

6. The disciples have “received” the words of Christ, not simply heard them (v. 8; cf. 5:39–40). What is involved in *receiving* Christ’s testimony about God?

7. Alistair says about the disciples, “[Jesus] doesn’t mention their fits and their starts, their stumbles and their falls. And He doesn’t mention ours either. Because their acceptance with the Father is on the strength of what Christ is about to accomplish as He steps out of that garden and into that scene on Calvary.” How can this fact encourage us as we wrestle with sin day by day?

GIVING PRAISE

I heard the voice of Jesus say, “I am this dark world’s light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise and all thy day be bright.”

I looked to Jesus, and I found in Him my star, my sun,
And in that light of life I’ll walk till traveling days are done.

“I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY”

BY HORATIUS BONAR

SESSION FIVE

“I Am Praying for Them” | John 17:9-11

Getting Started

News articles frequently highlight the claim that people in our time are departing evangelical churches, with some of them joining alternative religious communities and others abandoning any notion of spirituality altogether.

As you think about people you know who have left the faith, what sorts of things have drawn them away?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 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.”

(JOHN 17:9-11)

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.”

(PROVERBS 18:10)

Going Deeper

1. To whom do disciples of Jesus belong, according to these verses? What does that mean for them practically?

2. Why does Jesus not pray for the world according to these verses? Is Jesus concerned for the world? (See vv. 21, 23.)

3. Alistair says, “The notion of God as a kind of vague, benign deity who wants everything to go really well for everybody in the world is ... to be found nowhere in the Bible.” What does God’s love for the world actually look like in Scripture? (See 3:16–18; 12:44–50.)

4. In verse 10, Jesus makes a strong claim about His identity. What can we understand about His identity from what He says there?

5. Jesus says that He is already glorified in the disciples. How have the disciples glorified Him? How may we glorify Him?

6. Jesus prays that the Father would “keep” the disciples—that is, keep them from falling away. Read Jude 21 and 24. What do these two verses suggest about the nature of keeping?

7. Jesus states a purpose for His request that the Father keep the disciples. What is the purpose? How may we contribute to that purpose?

GIVING PRAISE

I know not why God’s wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

But I know whom I have believed
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I’ve committed
Unto Him against that day.

“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED”

BY DANIEL WEBSTER WHITTLE

SESSION SIX

“The Keeping Power of God” | John 17:11-13

Getting Started

As Jesus prays this prayer, the end of His time with the disciples is fast approaching. He has taught them all He can, and now He is turning to the only other option He has: He is praying for them, giving them over into the Father’s hands.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you did all you could, and the only thing left to do was pray? In your experience, how did prayer help you?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

(JOHN 17:12-13)

“You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”

(ROMANS 8:15)

Going Deeper

1. What request does Jesus make in this passage? What reason does He offer for it?

2. Read John 16:23-33. What sort of circumstances does Jesus expect for His disciples? What hope does He offer them? How does that promise reinforce His prayer for the disciples in v. 11?

3. How does Jesus address God in His prayer? What does that tell us about God's character and His disposition toward us? What other passages of Scripture do His words bring to mind?

4. Identify some ways in which this passage highlights the unity between the Son and Father.

5. The disciples were not spiritual giants. What kind of men were they? How will they respond to the coming arrest of Jesus? (See Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50.) What comfort can we take from their example as we consider Jesus' prayer for them?

6. Who is "the Son of Destruction"? Alistair observes that what Jesus says about him "should make us tremble." Why?

7. What does Jesus say is His purpose in saying these things? (Cf. John 10:10; 15:11.) How can what Jesus prays in our hearing give us joy?

GIVING PRAISE

Why should I feel discouraged,
Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely
And long for heaven and home
When Jesus is my portion?
My constant friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

"HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW"
BY CIVILLA D. MARTIN

SESSION SEVEN

“If the World Hates You...” | John 17:14-16

Getting Started

The Gospel of John tells us repeatedly that throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus had been preparing to depart. (See 13:1; 14:2-3, 12, 28; 16:5-11.) Meanwhile, He was preparing the disciples to stay.

What is your gut reaction to idea that Jesus would go away and leave us here? How does that compare to Jesus' attitude about His departure?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

(JOHN 17:14-16)

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

(LUKE 6:22-23)

Going Deeper

1. Read John 15:18–25. What does Jesus say the attitude of the world toward the disciples will be? Apart from Jesus' word, what reasons do we have to suspect this will be the case?

2. Jesus is the one who gives the Father's word (Deut. 18:18; Matt. 17:5; John 7:16; 17:8). How should the origin of Jesus' words cause us to think about them?

3. Alistair says, "The real issue, you see, is: Is Jesus the person He claims to be?" Why do men and women divide on this question? Why is this question so important?

4. What kinds of beliefs or behaviors divide believers in Jesus from the world in our day?

5. Read Ephesians 2:1-3. What are the characteristics of someone who is part of the world? Read vv. 4-10. How does Jesus make it so that we are no longer of the world?

6. Are there any people in the Bible who sought to be removed from the world? What was God's answer to them? What purposes might God have in leaving us in the world?

7. Who is the Evil One? How is he a threat to believers? What can we do to resist him? (See Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Peter 5:8.)

GIVING PRAISE

This world is not my home; I'm just a passing through.
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

"THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME"

SESSION EIGHT

“The Evil One” | John 17:15

Getting Started

We know the Evil One by the names given to him in the Bible. The Hebrew *satan*, from which we get “Satan,” means an “adversary,” as in a court case. The Greek *diabolos*, from which we get “devil,” means “accuser” or “slanderer.”

What do these words suggest about who the Evil One is and what he sets out to do? (See Rev. 12:10.)

KEY SCRIPTURES

“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

(JOHN 8:44)

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”

(1 PETER 5:8-9)

Going Deeper

1. Jesus has already spoken about the devil in the Gospel of John (8:44; 12:31; 14:30). What has He said about him?

2. Read Genesis 3:1-7. Alistair describes the Evil One as “crafty” and “cruel.” What does he do to deserve these descriptions?

3. Read Matthew 4:1-11. What is the devil’s aim in tempting Jesus? What strategies does he employ?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 11:12-15. (See also John 8:44.) How are false teachers and the Evil One alike? What kinds of false teaching today aim to lead us from Christ?

5. Read John 12:31–33. What will lead to Satan’s defeat, according to these verses? What is surprising about that? Why does it work?

6. The New Testament Scriptures exhort us to “resist” the devil (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7). What does that mean for our responsibility in battling the Evil One? What kinds of activities are necessary to resist the devil? (See Eph. 6:10–18.)

7. Alistair notes three sources of temptation: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Name a temptation to sin that you often experience, and consider how each of these sources may contribute to that temptation.

GIVING PRAISE

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

“A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD”

BY MARTIN LUTHER

TRANSLATED BY FREDERIC H. HEDGE

SESSION NINE

“Sanctify Them” | John 17:17

Getting Started

The root word for “sanctify” in Greek is the same word that is often translated as “holy.” To sanctify something is to make it holy, so that Jesus is essentially praying, “Holy Father, make them holy in the truth.” (See Lev. 19:2; John 17:11; 1 Peter 1:15–16).

How do you hear the word “holy” being used in common language? What does the common use of this word suggest that people think it means?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

(JOHN 17:17)

“The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

(2 CORINTHIANS 3:17–18)

Going Deeper

1. Biblically speaking, something is holy when it is set apart *from* one use and set apart *to* another. (See, for example, Lev. 27:14, 28.) What could this mean when applied to people? (See Ex. 19:6; Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:15.)

2. Hebrews 12:14 speaks about “the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” How can this be squared with salvation by grace through faith? (See Eph. 3:8-10.)

3. Alistair describes the difference between the terms *justification* (Rom. 8:1) and *sanctification* (2 Peter 3:18). What is the difference? Which of these does a Christian need more?

4. Christians are to be sanctified *mentally* (Rom. 12:1). What are some challenges you face with respect to the holiness of your mind? How might you confront those challenges?

5. Christians are also to be sanctified *physically* (1 Cor. 6:19). In what respects does our culture encourage us to hold back our bodies from the will of God for them? Is there an aspect of your physical life for which you need to repent?

6. What is the primary tool that God uses as He sanctifies us? (See 2 Sam. 7:28; Ps. 119:37, 160; 2 Tim. 3:16.) How can you make better use of this tool?

7. Consider the opportunities you have to attend to the Word of God throughout the week. Do you make the most of the gift of God's Word? What's a step you can take this week to receive this gift more gratefully?

GIVING PRAISE

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

“TAKE MY LIFE, AND LET IT BE”
BY FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL

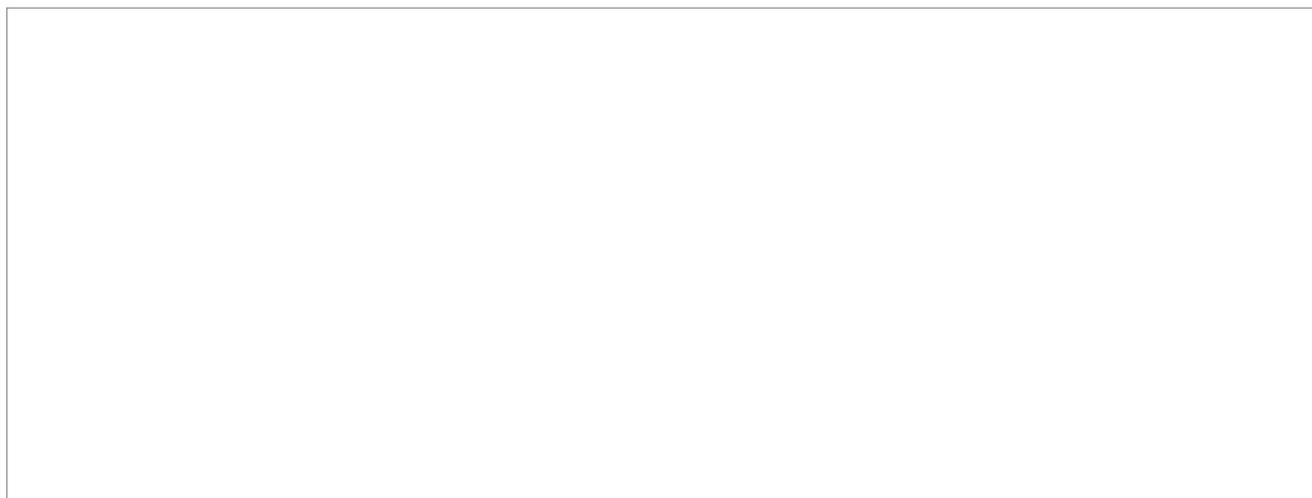
SESSION TEN

“Into the World” | John 17:18

Getting Started

In 1929, D. E. Hoste, director of the China Inland Mission, sought to raise up two hundred workers in two years who would share the Gospel in China. At the end of the two-year period, CIM missionary Frank Houghton wrote a hymn to help in this appeal, which is now known by the title “Facing a Task Unfinished.” It includes these words: “We bear the torch that flaming fell from the hands of those who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.”

Take a moment to consider these lyrics. Describe the picture they paint. What does this picture represent?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

(JOHN 17:18)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

(JOHN 3:16)

Going Deeper

1. Read Ephesians 1:9-10 and Galatians 4:4-5. When did God plan to send Jesus into the world? When did He do it?

2. Read Luke 2:22-35. How does this story demonstrate that God had a plan in sending Jesus?

3. John 17:11 and 16 have given rise to the expression “in the world but not of the world.” What does this idea suggest about the Lord’s purpose in sending His disciples into the world, then and now? (See v. 20.)

4. The construction of verse 18 sets up a comparison. Who is compared to whom? What does that tell us about our commission? (Cf. John 3:16; Matt. 28:19-20.)

5. Alistair says that if we are to go where Jesus sends us, we must come to Jesus, and we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Why are these prerequisites key to our mission?

6. In what place has God set you down? What opportunities for ministry has He given you there? What challenges do you face?

7. Imagine, for a moment, that you have gone home to be with the Lord, and you are looking back on today. What will you wish you had done differently? What will you wish you had done to fulfill the Great Commission?

GIVING PRAISE

We've a story to tell to the nations
That shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy,
A story of peace and light,
A story of peace and light.

For the darkness shall turn to dawning
And the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of love and light.

"WE'VE A STORY TO TELL THE NATIONS"

BY HENRY ERNEST NICHOL

SESSION ELEVEN

“And for Their Sake...” | John 17:19

Getting Started

John 17:19 begins with the words “And for their sake...” These words suggest action motivated by love.

Think of a time when you acted for someone else’s sake (or when someone else acted for your sake). What did that mean for the other person? What did it cost you?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

(JOHN 17:19)

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.”

(HEBREWS 5:7-9)

Going Deeper

1. Read some of the following passages, and for each, say a word about how it demonstrates the love of Jesus for His own: John 13:1; 14:1, 18, 29; 15:9; 16:1; 17:1.

2. Alistair says, “It’s remarkable that within hours of the conclusion of His prayer, [Jesus is] going to be deserted, confronted by opponents, set upon in the garden by people with lanterns and torches and a spirit of animosity.” Jesus knew this ahead of time (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27). What does that knowledge tell us about the quality of Jesus’ love for the disciples?

3. The word for “consecrate” in this verse is the same that is translated “sanctify” in the second half of the verse and elsewhere in the chapter. What do these English words mean? Why might the translators have chosen to use a different word in each case? If Jesus is the incarnate Son, in what sense can he be *made* holy? (See Heb. 2:10; 5:8.)

4. In verse 18, we saw that the Father sent Jesus. Now, in verse 19, we see that Jesus consecrates Himself. How do the Father and the Son work together in Jesus’ mission? (See John 3:16; 10:11, 17-18.)

5. Read Ephesians 5:25–26, Titus 2:14, and 1 Peter 2:24. How does the work of Jesus underlie our own sanctification?

6. How have you experienced sanctification in your Christian walk? What has your own sanctification revealed to you about the love of the Lord Jesus for you?

7. Read 1 John 3:1–3. How can the love of God give us a desire to be sanctified?

GIVING PRAISE

Jesus loves me; this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

“JESUS LOVES ME”

BY ANNA BARTLETT WARNER

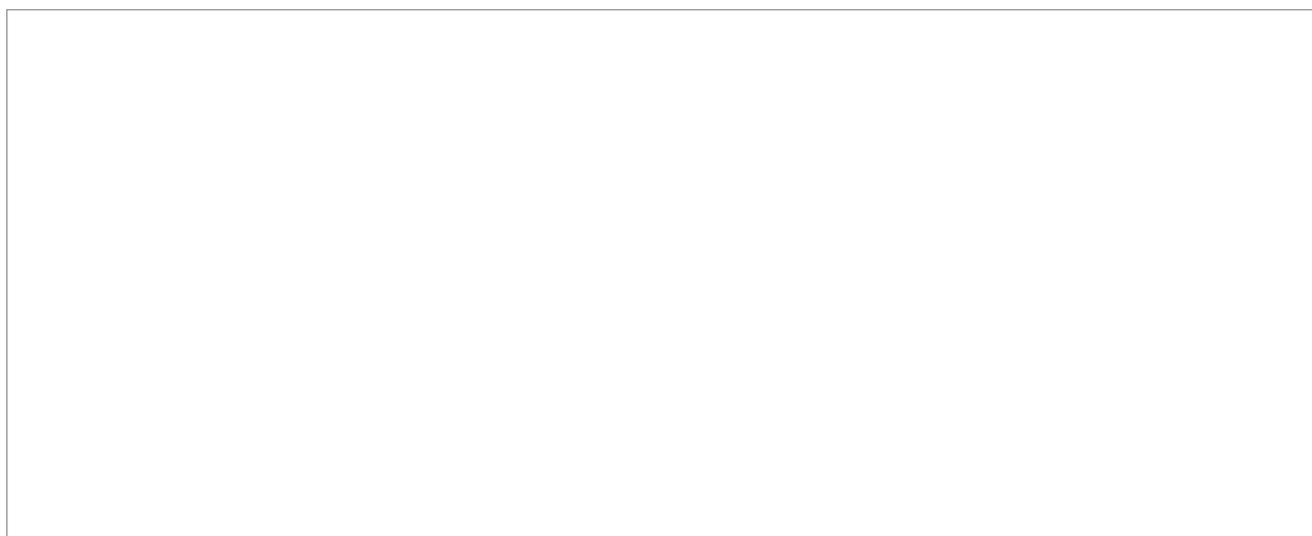
SESSION TWELVE

“All One in Jesus” | John 17:20–21

Getting Started

It’s commonly observed that you can choose your friends, but you can’t choose your family. That is an expression of the difficult commitment that family often represents. Yet, increasingly, our culture sees even family relationships as a matter of choice.

For you, what determines whom you associate with and how you feel about them? In the past, what sorts of pressures, tensions, or choices have created wedges in your relationships?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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.”

(JOHN 17:20–21)

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

(EPHESIANS 4:4–6)

Going Deeper

1. Whose unity does Jesus pray for in John 17:21? On what is that unity based?

2. Read Ephesians 4:4-6. What factors reinforce the idea of unity in Christ's body? How can this inform how we read John 17:21?

3. Consider the calls for unity you have heard, both in the church and outside of it. What do people appeal to when they call for unity? How do those appeals compare to the request Jesus makes here?

4. What does Jesus say is the aim or consequence of Christian unity? What does that tell us about how that unity works itself out practically?

5. Alistair comments on the oft-observed difference between essential and nonessential doctrines. What do these terms mean? Why is the distinction important?

6. Alistair says, “When we lose sight of what is central and start focusing on the peripheral, then ... what is peripheral becomes central, and what is central starts to become peripheral.” What are some examples of peripheral matters that tend to become central in church life? What are some central matters you have seen fall by the wayside?

7. Read Philippians 4:2. Is agreeing a matter of choice? What steps might we take to agree with our brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we have conflict?

GIVING PRAISE

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o’er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With every grace endued.

“THE CHURCH’S ONE FOUNDATION”

BY SAMUEL JOHN STONE

SESSION THIRTEEN

“Wonders of His Love” | John 17:22–23

Getting Started

While we don’t often speak of “getting glory” in our culture, people still seek it. Men and women chase fame and seek to win the approval of the masses—especially online through social media.

What does “glory” look like in our culture? What words do we use to describe that concept?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 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.”

(JOHN 17:22–23)

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

(1 PETER 4:14)

Going Deeper

1. Read vv. 1-5 again. Where do these verses mention “glory”? What do they say about Jesus’ glory?

2. What is “the work” that Jesus came to do? (See 1 Tim. 1:15; John 12:23.) How is He glorified in it?

3. Alistair says, “The glory that God has given to Jesus is a glory that is seen supremely in the path of obedience. It is seen supremely in the expression of lowly service. ... It is seen in the arrival of divinity in such an expression of apparent poverty, simplicity, and helplessness.” If Jesus receives glory this way, how should His followers expect to receive glory? In what sense are these things glorious for them?

4. According to John 17:22-23, what is the origin of the glory that Christians receive?

5. How is the glory of God expressed in God's people? What about this glory makes unity possible?

6. What is the outcome of this glory in God's people? What does it demonstrate to the world?

7. According to Jesus, to what degree has God loved His people? How do we see God's love at work in our life together?

GIVING PRAISE

Alas, and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine,
And bathed in its own blood,
While all exposed to wrath divine,
The glorious Sufferer stood!

“ALAS, AND DID MY SAVIOR BLEED?”

BY ISAAC WATTS

SESSION FOURTEEN

“Jesus’ Own Desire” | John 17:24

Getting Started

Occasionally, a passage of Scripture gives us a deep—yet easily passed over—insight into the person and character of the Lord Jesus. In the case of John 17:24, we learn about Jesus’ heart’s desire. In any given situation, we may not be able to answer certainly the question “What would Jesus do?” Yet with the help of this verse, we can be confident in answering the question “What would Jesus *want*?”

Name some things that you want in life. How do your desires shape your actions?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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.”

(JOHN 17:24)

“As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.”

(PSALM 17:15)

Going Deeper

1. Who is the subject of Jesus' desire? What does Jesus want for them? Why?

2. Read vv. 1-2 and 9 again. Who are the people the Father has “given”? What do these verses tell us about them?

3. Read the following passages: Matthew 18:19-20; Mark 3:13-14; Luke 15:30-32; 23:43. For each passage, briefly observe how it expresses Jesus' desire.

4. Jesus made a promise to the disciples in John 14:1-3. What is that promise? Knowing now what Jesus desires, how can you think differently about that promise?

5. Alistair says that the Bible speaks about being in Christ and then living our lives for Christ while we look forward to the day when we will be with Christ. What is the distinction between these stages? How do they relate to each other?

6. What is Jesus' glory? Why does Jesus want us to see it?

7. What is the origin of Jesus' glory, according to the text? What does this tell us about the glory of the Trinity?

GIVING PRAISE

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be!

Then I shall end my sad complaints
And weary, sinful days
And join with the triumphant saints
That sing my Savior's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all
And I shall be with Him.

"LORD, IT BELONGS NOT TO MY CARE"
BY RICHARD BAXTER

SESSION FIFTEEN

“Who Knows?” | John 17:25

Getting Started

God made us for relationship with Him, but in our fallenness, we chose to live without reference to Him. Seeking to be the captains of our own souls, we “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). In other words, we deprived ourselves of His perfect plan, and we sought to find our identity and our security in other things.

Before you came to know Jesus Christ, what did you build your life upon? Do any of those idols still draw you to them?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you,
I know you, and these know that you have sent me.”

(JOHN 17:24)

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man
boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he
understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices
steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in
these things I delight, declares the LORD.’”

(JEREMIAH 9:23–24)

Going Deeper

1. In the context of the biblical story, why does the world not know God? How do we see this reflected in John's Gospel? (See, for example, John 1:9-11.)

2. Alistair says, "As we seek to find and create our own meaning ... we should actually be embarrassed by our lack of originality: that we haven't really gone very far forward at all. As soon as men and women deny God, they tend to go to the exact same things." What are the typical "same things" people go to? (See, for example, Jer. 9:23-24.)

3. Who, according to the Scriptures, shows us what the Father is like? (See John 14:8-9; Heb. 1:1-3.) What can we therefore do if we want to know God?

4. Read 1 John 1:1-4. What did John and the apostles know about Jesus? Why did they choose to share it?

5. Alistair says, “It is impossible to know Jesus and not know the Father, and it is impossible to know the Father except through Christ, the Mediator.” What are some ways people attempt to know God apart from Christ?

6. Consider what you know of Jesus from the Bible. As you consider His works and His character, what do you learn about God the Father?

7. What makes Jesus a “stumbling block” (1 Cor. 1:23) to so many people?

GIVING PRAISE

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY”
BY REGINALD HEBER

SESSION SIXTEEN

“What’s in a Name?” | John 17:26

Getting Started

God’s name is more than what we call Him. It represents who He is, what He’s like, and what He stands for. By means of His name, God declares Himself to be on the one hand self-existing, self-determining, and sovereign (Ex. 3:14) and on the other hand both just and gracious (Ex. 34:5-7). God jealously guards His name, and He expects those who are His friends to do the same.

Can you think of a time when someone used your name in a way you felt was an insult?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“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.”

(JOHN 17:26)

“You have exalted above all things your name and your word.”

(PSALM 138:2)

Going Deeper

1. Read the following verses: Psalms 8:9; 5:11; 74:18; 138:2. What do these passages tell us about God's name?

2. Read Philippians 2:9-11. What do these verses tell us about God's name in relation to Jesus?

3. In what respect has Jesus made the Father's name known? Why should Jesus choose to sum up His ministry this way? Why is it necessary for Jesus' to make God's name known in the world? (See 1 Cor. 1:21.)

4. Identify some ways in which Jesus has continued to make God's name known after He finished this prayer.

5. How are Jesus and the love of the Father manifested “in” us? What promise makes this possible? (See Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.)

6. Alistair says of God’s love, “It has a historical origin, it has an eschatological anticipation, but it is to be an existential reality.” What does he mean by these three terms?

7. Coming at the end of His own earnest prayer for the Father, what does this request show that Jesus wants for us?

GIVING PRAISE

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul
And to the weary rest.

“HOW SWEET THE NAME OF JESUS SOUNDS”

BY JOHN NEWTON

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