

## Prayer Priorities John 17

Prayer allows us to ask God for anything. So what should we ask for? What should our priorities be in prayer for ourselves, our kids, our church, and our community. Discover Jesus' own six highest priorities in prayer from John 17.

### Turn to John 17

#### The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to talk about prayer

- because if the Bible is true in what it says about life...
- then few things will be as crucial to your success in 2019 as your time spent in prayer!

#### Now when you pray, you can ask God for anything...

##### So... what would you ask for?

What would you put at the top of your wish list for 2019 when you pray?

#### Galveston 8 yrs ago – Murdoch's Bathhouse Souvenir Shop – twins were 2

- "You can pick out any toy and I'll buy it for you" – Xmas in July!
- What do they do?
  - o Walk to first rack, grab first toy – little rubber ball – "This one, daddy!"
- Me: "Wait, you already have lots - not nearly as cool as toys in the middle of the store"
- Kids: See postcard... "This one, daddy, this one!"
- Me: a postcard! Kids, keep looking – there's toys and kites you'll really love!

#### They could have had anything, but at 2, they lacked the wisdom to choose what's best

- chose small things that would have bored them quickly

#### We're older & wiser, yet we often do exactly what our children do

##### God invites us to pray & ask Him for literally anything, yet so often we ask for small things

- relatively insignificant things
- rather than asking Him for the greatest things – that would truly satisfy us

#### We need to learn how to pray for better things – higher things

##### So, this morning, we're going to study Jesus' prayer in John 17

- Often called High Priestly Prayer because Jesus speaks as our high priest – prays for us
- Lots of challenging theology in this prayer about the nature of the Trinity
- Don't have time to study all of that theology this morning

I want to focus on one question...

##### Based on John 17, what should we pray for?

- We can ask God for anything, so what are the best things to ask for?

#### Jesus gives us just 6 things – 6 priorities that trump everything else

- If we want to pray for what's best, we should follow Jesus' 6 priorities when we pray

#### The first priority in pray is found in verses 1-5...Read v1-5

- Jesus begins by praying for Himself – notice what He asks for and what He doesn't ask for

- in this moment of greatest need – right before His arrest, betrayal, torture, death
- what did Jesus want above all else?
- not relief from pain; not a longer life
- Above all, He wants...

## 1) To glorify God (v1-5)

- **He wanted to be used to glorify the Father**
- **What does it mean to “glorify” someone?**
  - = to publicly praise a person so that everyone sees how great they are
  - Or in simpler terms, it means: “to make someone famous”
    - you publicly lift them up and direct all eyes at them – you praise their abilities – tell everyone how great they are
  - **e.g.: If you were here when Johnny Manziel won the Heisman...**
    - **What did A&M do?**
    - Put his image on a billboard in Times Square!
    - Literally lifted him up – publically praised him – make him look large and exceptional in people’s eyes
    - = they glorified him!
- **That’s what Jesus wants for the Father – wants to make Him famous**
- **For Jesus: the way to make the Father famous was to become famous Himself**
  - He needed to die and rise from the dead so we could be reconciled to the Father
  - People become worshippers of God by believing in Jesus
  - So the more famous Jesus is, the more famous the Father will be
- **We’re not called to become Saviors of the world – Jesus took care of that**
- **But like Jesus, we are called to glorify God**
  - That’s why we’re here – to glorify God by telling people about Him
  - read v18
  - As Jesus was sent into the world to make God famous, so He sends us into the world to make God famous
- **Now let’s think for a moment: is it egotistical of God to want to be famous?**
  - Is that prideful that He placed us on earth to tell people how great He is?
  - No for 2 reasons:
  - **1<sup>st</sup>: because God is Trinity**
    - It’s never Jesus glorifying Himself; Father glorifying Himself
    - It is always the Father glorifying the Son; Son the Father; Spirit both
    - The glory of God is always SELFLESS – one member of the Trinity praising another
  - **2<sup>nd</sup>: because it’s what’s best for humanity**
    - Think about a friend who doesn’t know Jesus – doesn’t believe in God...
    - What’s best for them out of all the options in the universe?
    - You know answer: that they would come to know and worship Jesus!
    - That’s where they will find forgiveness, peace, joy, purpose, true love
    - When Jesus tells us to glorify the Father it is because that is the only way we will find the hope and peace we crave in life!
- **So our first priority in prayer = ask that God would be glorified through us**
  - Pray daily for yourself, for your family, for all of us to glorify God in word & deed
  - At home, work, school, in the community – that our words and our deeds would make God famous

From v6 on, Jesus begins to pray for His followers – His disciples & all of us  
**read v6-12**

## The second priority to pray for is found in v11 - "keep them in your name"

- to "keep" = "to hold, to preserve" someone
- in the ancient world, your "name" represented you as a whole person
  - o not just a way to get your attention
  - o a summary of all you were and all you'd done
- so "keep them in your name" means "keep them close to You"
  - o Don't let them wander off after lesser things
  - o Keep them loyal to you & in love with you
- **III: This prayer makes me think of my son**
  - o Julie and I have raised our children maroon – they've known "gig 'em" forever
  - o But many of my relatives went to UT... and they want my kids to have a balanced view of higher education in the state of Texas
  - o So when they were very young, my dad taught my son "hook 'em horns"
  - o Not a big deal for me – I've no ill will towards UT
  - o But I was worried about school!
    - What if he flashed "hook 'em horns" in the cafeteria?!
    - Around here... that's a quick way to lose friends!
  - o My hope: that Luke would remember his maroon roots; stay loyal!
    - Don't be led astray, Luke! I know they beat Georgia, but it was a fluke!
- **That's what Jesus wants for us – loyalty & love**
  - o **but in an infinitely more important relationship – our relationship with God**
  - o **that's what matters in life: that you stay loyal to God!**
    - remain in love with Him – not led astray to love lesser things
- That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority Jesus teaches us to pray for...

## 2) To remain loyal and in love with God (v11-12)

- **Clarify: God will always be loyal to us and will always love us – no matter what**
  - o If you've trusted in Jesus – nothing you could ever do to lose God's love
  - o You will be with Him forever because He will always be loyal to you
- **BUT our loyalty and love for Him is not guaranteed**
  - o Like all sinful human beings, our loyalty and love can be fickle
  - o We love God... but we also love the world – have divided hearts
  - o We vacillate between loving God and loving the things of this world
- **And so Jesus challenges us to PLEAD with God...**
  - o ...to keep us loyal to Him
  - o ...to grow our love for Him – to desire Him above all else
  - o Pray that for yourself, friends, family, me, all of Grace Bible Church

## Third priority Jesus prays for... read v13-16

- In John "the world" is usually a negative term
  - o not planet earth or human beings in general
  - o = humanity in rebellion against God = the world of unbelievers
- **Here's what's interesting: Jesus does NOT pray for us to be removed from the world**
  - o Jesus doesn't want us to live in a Christian bubble – build a Christian nation
  - o Why not? Back to His first request:
  - o You can't glorify God if you separate yourself from the world
  - o Because you can't tell the world about Jesus
- **Jesus wants us to stay right here in the world glorifying God by sharing Jesus**
- **But He knows this will make us targets of the enemy's attack**
  - o "the evil one" = Satan
  - o Hates all human beings, but his greatest hatred is reserved for us

- 1 Pet 5:8
  - this is to believers – he wants to devour you!
  - He can't keep you from heaven – that's a done deal
  - But he can ruin you in this life – deceive you, lead you into sin
- **He is very real, very powerful, and very dangerous**
- And so, the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority we are to pray for ourselves and for one another...

### 3) To be protected from Satan

- On a daily basis, we tend to think very little of Satan
- Jesus did not make that mistake – He took Satan far more seriously than we do
- Let us follow His example and pray regularly for protection – for us, our families, church

### Fourth priority Jesus prays for... read v17-19

- Jesus prays that we would be **“sanctified in truth”**
  - “sanctify” – means to “set-apart / make holy”
  - we are made holy “in truth” – Jesus mentions “truth” 3x in these 3 verses
  - And in v17... He tells us what the truth is = God's Word
- **So Jesus is praying that we would become holy by being conformed to the truth of God's Word**
  - We become holy by aligning our lives more and more with the truths of this book
- **So how can we become conformed to God's Word**
- **3 very logical STEPS:**
  - **1) Must know God's Word**
    - you can't be conformed to truth if you don't know what the truth is!
    - Jesus wants each of us to know God's Word from Genesis to Revelation
    - in 2 weeks I'll start a 3-sermon series walking you through whole Bible
  - **2) Must believe God's Word**
    - That we would consider this book to be truth
      - clarify: our interpretations may be wrong, but not the Bible itself
    - Jesus wants us to believe this book even when culture tells us it's wrong
    - The Bible says a lot of unpopular things:
      - forbids premarital sex and homosexual behavior
      - says humans were specially created – not just cousins of monkeys
      - declares that our God is the only God
    - You will be ridiculed for those beliefs!
      - Called foolish, anti-intellectual, a bigot
    - Are you willing to still hold to the Bible as God's complete truth?
    - That's what Jesus is praying
  - **3) Must obey God's Word**
    - Sanctification is ultimately about behavior – to be made holy
    - Knowledge and belief are not complete without obedience
    - You must put what you're learning from the Bible into practice if you want to become holy
- So, the fourth priority that Jesus prays for:

### 4) To know, believe, and obey God's Word

- **That's what it takes to become sanctified**
  - set apart from the false beliefs and sinful practices of the world

### Fifth priority Jesus prays for... read 20-23

- Now Jesus is speaking directly of us – we believe in Him through the Apostles word!
- He prays that all of us would be “one” just as the Father and the Son are one

- He prays that we would be so unified it would prove to the world He is truly God's Son
- So Jesus' fifth priority in prayer: Pray that God will help us...

### 5) To be unified

- **Now we do need to clarify – this is not a call to end all denominations**
  - o We don't need to get down to just 1 church in Bryan/College Station
  - o First off, no building big enough other than Kyle Field – and too cold for that!
  - o And far too big for any single board of elders to lead
- It's better for us to have many smaller churches where people know each other
  - o This is a healthy size for a church
- As a result: if you have lots of small churches, you're probably going to have lots of different opinions on secondary theological issues and practices and styles of worship
  - o That's OK!
  - o The variety of denominations in this town is actually a good thing
  - o Makes each church a manageable size and allows diversity and creativity
- The key: all of us smaller churches should love and support one another
  - o Brian, Matt, and I regularly gather with pastors from churches throughout this town – our college pastors do the same
  - o Pray for one another, share stories, share ideas and best practices
  - o Even work together on key projects like the furniture giveaway last August
- We will unify with any church that preaches the gospel and loves Jesus even if we disagree on lesser issues
- Because Jesus wants His people to be unified
  - o regardless of denomination or race or economic status
  - o He wants us to link arms to glorify Him in this dark world
- So we pray that God would unify us into one, strong family
- And unify this family with other families of faith in this town

### Sixth priority Jesus prays for – read v24

- Jesus prays that we would...
  - o **1) be with Him** – physically where He is
  - o **2) that we would see Him in all His glory** – our faith replaced with sight
- **Lesson: we should be praying...**

### 6) To see Jesus come back soon

- Makes sense because we believe that's the only thing that will make this world right
- Gov't, education, science, peace treaties – good but will never fix what truly ails the world
- Root of our problem: sin & Satan – only Jesus can fix those
  - o when He returns, He will defeat Satan and bring an end to sin
- And so we should pray for Jesus to come back soon
- That's actually how the New Testament ends – read Rev 22:20
- "Come Lord Jesus" – that should be the cry of our hearts – come and fix all that is broken

### Let's reflect for a moment on this list of Jesus' priorities in prayer

- **What stands out to you?**
- **What convicts you?**
- **What needs to change in your prayer-life to make it more like Jesus'?**

### Here's what stands out to me

- **Jesus knew pain and suffering were coming** – knew He was being betrayed!
- **Yet He didn't pray for physical safety, health, comfort, happiness**

- Not that any of those are bad to pray for – can & should pray for them
- But none of them are the highest priorities
- When Jesus thought of our greatest needs, health, happiness, & long life didn't make the top of His list
- What He wants most of all for us are these 6 things...
- **That's what should top of our lists when we pray for ourselves & one another**
  - Don't be like my kids as toddlers in the souvenir shop
    - settling for small things when they could have had the best things!
- **Focus on these priorities... because this is BEST**
- **So if you are sick or love someone who's sick...**
  - pray that God would heal; that's good and proper to pray for
  - but first, pray He would be glorified through this sickness and that He would use the sickness to grow the love and loyalty of the person who's sick
- **If you're single...**
  - pray for a godly spouse – that's good and proper
  - but first, pray that God would use your current singleness to grow you in obedience, love, contentment – that's more important than finding a spouse
- **Parents, this is how we should pray for our kids**
  - Good to pray for their health, happiness, success at school, friendships
  - All good things, but all secondary
  - Our primary prayer should be for...
    - their holiness – not their happiness
    - their godliness – not their grades
  - These 6 priorities are the most important things our kids need
- When we pray – our priorities in prayer should match those of Jesus Himself
- This is what Jesus wants for us above all else