

“Jesus’ High Priestly Prayers” A Study of John 17

Background: In John 17, Jesus prays three prayers: one for Himself, one for His disciples, and one for future believers. These prayers are known as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayers.

The setting is the Upper Room where Jesus celebrates Passover with the disciples after entering Jerusalem amidst praise and palm branches. This Passover celebration becomes what we know as the Last Supper and communion. Jesus explains that the Passover bread is like His body which will soon to be broken and the wine is like His blood soon to be poured out for our sins. Shortly after this last supper, Jesus prays alone in the Garden of Gethsemane so fervently that He sweats blood. Then He is arrested...

Read John 16:25-33 for a good preface to this study.

Week 1: Jesus Prays for Himself-John 17:1-5

Monday: This week we start with Jesus’ prayer or conversation with God about Himself. Read John 17:1-5 in a few different translations. New King James, Message, New International Version, New Living Translation, Passion, and Common English Bible are good options for variety. Choose the translation you like best for this week’s study and write down first impressions, tone of the passage, repeating words, and main themes.

Remember, the first step of Bible study is to read the Bible passage a few times and write your first impressions. It is likely that whatever stands out to you is what God wants you to hear or what will be most interesting and impactful. Next research the background, audience, and surrounding events of the passage.

Tuesday: Jesus states 4 things that have happened in these verses. List them and then write the significance of each statement. Bible dictionaries, concordances, and Biblegateway.com are good resources.

Wednesday: In verse 5, Jesus asks God to be glorified along with Him. Read back through 17:1-5 and count how many times Jesus uses the word “glorify” or “glory.” Why is this word repeated so often? What does glorify mean in this passage? Look up and write down the definition of “glorify.” Now look up these verses which use the same word: Exodus 34:29, Matthew 17:1-8, and Acts 9:1-6. How do these verses help you understand what Jesus meant when He asked God to glorify Him? Also note that Jesus states this is the same glory He had before the world was. How can this be? Look up John 1:1-5, Genesis 1:26, and Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 to understand better who Jesus was and is.

Thursday: One of the things Jesus accomplished according to these verses is giving eternal life to those given to Him. What is eternal life according to verse 3? The word “know” or “ginoskosin” here means to “know experientially” or to know through personal experience. Think of the way you know your children, spouse, family, and friends. Now ask yourself, “Do I know God or just know about Him?” Take some time conversing with God about this prayer and your relationship with Him.

Week 2: Jesus Prays for His Disciples-John 17:6-19

Pray about what you have learned so far and what God will teach you still. Ask how God wants you to apply these words to your life and relationship with Him.

Monday: This is a lengthy passage, so we will take it in chunks this week. But first, read John 17:6-19 and write any questions, impressions, notes, or even a summary of these verses. If something gets your attention, feel free to spend the week studying it rather than answering the daily questions. We will all benefit from your research.

Tuesday: Today read 17:6-8. Jesus states that He revealed God to the men given Him (v6). The disciples in turn, did 4 things (v 6, 7, 8). List them here. Why is it significant that the disciples did these things? Consider Judas, the one disciple who did not. John 6:44-47 may also help understanding.

Wednesday: Read 17:9-17. Jesus prays specific things for His disciples in these verses. Write them down using verses 11, 13, 15, and 17 as your reference. Verse 15 is interesting because Jesus does not ask for His disciples to be removed from the world but to be kept from the evil one. What does this mean since the disciples were later beaten, mocked, imprisoned, and eventually killed by evil? John 12:23-36 gives additional insight to this prayer.

Thursday: Read 17:18-19. Write these verses in your own words or copy them from a favorite translation. Now look up the definition of “sanctify” or “sanctification.” What do these verses mean to you? Are there other verses in the Bible that help you understand sanctification? Your Bible concordance or an online search will help.

Week 3 Jesus Prays for Us-John 17:20-26

Read through this short passage and write down first impressions. I particularly like The Living Bible translation for these verses.

Monday: In this passage, Jesus prays 4 things for us, the future believers. List them here from verses 21a and 23b, 21b and 23a, 24, and 26. Take time today to reflect. Are we fulfilling Jesus’ prayer for us? Why or why not? Of all the things Jesus could pray, why do you think He prays these things specifically?

Tuesday: Let’s look at the first two prayer requests today.

1. **Be one as God and Jesus are one.** Read back through and count how many times Jesus says “one.” What does this mean? Again, using a dictionary to look up the definition of “one” is very helpful. “United” is another good word choice here.
2. **Be connected with Jesus and God as they are connected.** What does this mean? Read John 15:5 for clarification (15:1-17 is all good if you have the time).

Wednesday: Let’s look at the last two prayer requests today.

3. **Be with Jesus wherever He is and behold His glory.** Think of what this means that Jesus WANTS us to be with Him and see His glory. Remember and look back to week one, Wednesday, when we studied the word “glory.” Also refer to John 1:14. Take time praising Jesus.

4. **God's love be in us.** I just love the personal tone of verses 17:25-26. It is so impassioned! Jesus loves us and wants His love (the Father's love) in us. Why? Not only for our enjoyment but why? Notice verse 25 states that the "world does not know God." Jesus prays all this so that_____. Reference verse 17:21b, 23b.

Thursday: Look back on this prayer for us and the reasons Jesus prayed. What stands out to you personally? For your family, church, community, world...

Conclude this study by rereading the entire passage. Look back over your notes. What can you apply? Choose a verse to memorize.