John 17:
The Real “Lord’s Prayer”

A Bible Study by
Dorothy Catlin


Introduction

If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, how would you spend your last evening?

What would you talk about with your family and friends?

And how would you pray?

Jesus knew that the time had come. This would be His last conversation with His disciples before going to the cross, and so He spoke and acted in a very deliberate manner. They had no idea of what the coming hours would bring. The Apostle John records in great detail the events of that evening, and the intimate fellowship and conversation around the Passover table.

Jesus had washed their feet. He had told them He was going away. He’d spoken to them of love, of abiding in His word, and of the Helper who would soon come to them bringing a whole new way of relating to God: He would abide in them. He had warned them of trouble ahead, but reassured them that He had already overcome it. Then He moved smoothly into direct conversation with His Father, inviting His friends to eavesdrop on this intensely personal prayer.

They had heard Him pray countless times, had privately asked Him to teach them to pray, and had listened intently as He had instructed the crowds, “do not heap up empty phrases as the gentiles do…” But His prayer on this night was different than any of His other prayers recorded in the gospels. It is the beautiful culmination of a whole evening of intensely personal conversation. Opening His heart to them, He poured out His deep desires and concerns before His Father.

We too have been invited, not only to listen in, but to enter into to our Lord’s prayer. Through this study we will seek to understand His heart, His purpose, and His joy as we pray along with Him.

May the Word of God dwell richly within you, my friends.

Dorothy Catlin, 2020

“These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”
John 17:13
Lesson 1
Overview and Context
John 17:1-26, John 13-16

The Context

John 17:1 tells us, “These things Jesus spoke...” What things? To gain a sense of the context for this prayer, read through chapters 13-16 of John’s gospel; do this in a single sitting if possible. Do not try to study deeply, but simply read to capture the general flow of the events and conversation of that night. Later on as we study the prayer more deeply, we will look carefully for ways in which it relates to these chapters, and to the rest of John’s gospel.

1. What were the main events of the evening?

2. From John 13:1-4, what do you discover about the attitude and intention of the Lord Jesus on that night? How would you describe His purpose?

3. What topics did He discuss with His friends? (Take notice of repeated words, phrases, and ideas)

4. Why do you think He chose these particular subjects? What makes them so important?
The Prayer

Read John 17:1-26. You may find that reading it aloud is helpful. The text is provided on page 4 in the English Standard Version (ESV) so you can make marks if you like. Don’t try to go into detail, just gather a general sense of the prayer. Use the following questions as a guide to make note of your observations.

5. What repeated words and ideas do you find? What seems to be most important to Jesus?

6. What connections do you find with what you read in chapters 13-16? Bear in mind that this is just a first observation; we will continue to explore these connections in the coming lessons.

7. Jesus prays for three different groups of people. You may find it helpful to underline them in the provided text. Who are they, and how do they relate to one another? What is His emphasis for each group?

v. 1-5

v. 6-19

v. 20-26
John 17:1-26 (ESV)

1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said,
   "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,
2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give
   eternal life.
3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
4 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.
5 "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world
   was.
6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and
   You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.
7 "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;
8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received [them] and truly understood
   that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.
9 "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me;
   for they are Yours;
10 and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.
11 "I am no longer in the world; and [yet] they themselves are in the world, and I come to You.
   Holy Father, keep them in Your name, [the name] which You have given Me, that they may be one
   even as We [are.]
12 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded
   them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.
13 "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full
   in themselves.
14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world,
   even as I am not of the world.
15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil [one.]
16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;
21 that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me.
22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;
23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You
   sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.
24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may
   see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have
   known that You sent Me;
26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You
   loved Me may be in them, and I in them."
8. Use the space below to write down any thoughts or questions that have come to mind from this first lesson.

For Prayer and Consideration:
Ask the Lord Jesus to give you an understanding of His heart and His purposes as you prepare to study this prayer in more detail.
Lesson 2
The Son Who Was Sent

Read John 17:1-5.

1. As the Lord Jesus begins to pray, His focus is on His own relationship with His Father. What does this part of the prayer seem to be about? What repeated words or ideas are here?

2. What do you learn about His authority? What additional insight do you gain from the verses below?
   
   John 5:21-27
   
   John 10:17-18
   
   John 14:10
   
   Matthew 28:18
   
   Luke 4:36
   
   Luke 5:24

3. Jesus had not yet gone to the cross, but says that He has “accomplished the work” given to Him by the Father (v.4). Considering the passages below, what work might He have in mind?

   John 1:14, 18
   
   John 4:34
   
   John 5:36
   
   John 6:29
4. The Lord Jesus speaks repeatedly of glory in this section, and He will mention it again later (see vv. 10, 22, 24). What is **glory**? Look up a definition in a dictionary.

5. In what way did He glorify the Father through His work on earth *before* His death and resurrection?

6. According to **Philippians 2:6-7**, and **John 1:1-5**, what glory did He have before?

7. What might Jesus mean by asking the Father to glorify Him *now*? Keep in mind the definition of glory from question 4 as you read the verses below, then put into your own words what it might mean for the Father to glorify the Son.

   **John 8:54**

   **John 12:20-28**

   **John 13:31-32**
8. According to v. 3, what is *eternal life*? How does one obtain it?
   (Optional: see John 3:14-16; John 5:21; John 6:40; John 14:6; 1 John 5:11, 12)

9. Put into your own words what it means to “know” the Father.
   (Optional: see John 8:19; 14:6-9; 14:16, 20; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 4:7,13; 1 John 5:20)

10. Here at the beginning of His prayer, what specific requests does Jesus make of the Father? As you encounter each request in the lessons ahead, make note of it in the chart provided on page 9. Charting can be a helpful way to gather information into one place for comparison.

11. What have you learned from this lesson about the relationship between the Son and His Father?

*For Prayer and Consideration:*

*How has what you have just studied begun to affect you in the following areas? Write a brief prayer about these things.*

- *Your understanding and possession of eternal life*

- *The authority and glory of the Lord Jesus*

- *His accomplished work*
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<th>Reference</th>
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<th>What it means for me</th>
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Lesson 3
Receiving and Believing the Son who was Sent

Read John 17:6-10

1. This part of the prayer is devoted to the men who were eye-witnesses of Jesus’ earthly ministry. What do you learn about them from v. 6-10?

2. According to verses 7-8, what have they come to know, to understand and to believe?

3. Why is it so important for these eye-witnesses to grasp the truth of his identity? (Optional: Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:30-31)

4. A person’s name represents their identity and character. God made His personal name known for the first time in the Bible at the encounter with Moses at the burning bush, saying “I Am who I Am” (Exodus 3:14-15; 6:3). When Jesus said “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am,” the religious leaders clearly understood this to be a claim to deity (John 8:58), and they immediately picked up rocks to stone him for blasphemy. Read the verses below as you consider what it means that Christ “manifested” the Father’s name to these eye-witnesses (v.6).

Note: The Greek word translated as manifest means “to render apparent, to declare or show.” As it is used in the scriptures, it means to make known or visible something that has been hidden or unknown; to cause something to be become plainly recognized. This may take place through words, deeds, or any other way. (Blue Letter Bible)
5. John’s gospel records seven “I Am” statements made by Christ. Choose at least one from the list below to explore more fully by reading the whole chapter in which it occurs. How did Jesus reveal each of these aspects of the Father’s identity and character through His own earthly ministry?

I am the bread of life  John 6:35, 48, 51

I am the light of the world  John 8:12, 28, 58

I am the door  John 10:9

I am the good shepherd  John 10:11

I am the resurrection and the life  John 11:25

I am the way, and the truth, and the life  John 14:6

I am the true vine  John 15:1, 5
6. According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary, to *keep* means to "attend carefully, to take care of: to guard; to observe." Consider the verses below, then put into your own words what Jesus may have meant by “they have kept Your word.” (17:6)

John 8:31-32

John 8:51

John 14:23-24

John 15:10

1 John 2:3-6

7. What might it mean for you *personally* to keep His word in this way?
8. What might be the “all things” that Jesus refers to in v.10? In what ways has He “been glorified in them”? How do the passages below add to your understanding?

Hebrews 1:1-3

2 Corinthians 4:4, 6


John 3:34-36

John 16:13-15

John 16:28-30

9. Review your responses to Questions 2 and 4, then put into your own words what you have personally come to know, to understand and to believe regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

For Prayer and Consideration:
Choose one of the “I Am” statements above for personal meditation this week. In what ways do you see the Lord fulfilling this “I Am” for you personally?

In what ways are you growing in “keeping” His Word? Where do you see a need for growth?

Write a brief prayer about these things.
Lesson 4  
One with the Father through the Son

Read John 17:11-13

1. In this part of the prayer, what does the Son say about Himself, His activities and His concerns? What repeated words or ideas do you find?

   v. 11

   v. 12

   v. 13

2. In v. 11-12, what request does Jesus make of the Father, and what is His reason for asking? Make a note of the request in the chart provided on page 9.

3. Earlier Jesus had referred to the disciples keeping the Word they had received from Him, 17:6. Now He asks the Father to keep the disciples in His name. Observe carefully all that Jesus says about keeping in v. 11-13. Why do you think He is so concerned about it? Why might it be important for the disciples to hear Him pray this way?
4. The Lord Jesus was identified by many names, but in this lesson we will focus on just one, “Son of God.” This is the name spoken by the Father at His baptism, and the name by which our salvation is secured (see Matthew 3:16-17; John 20:30-31; Acts 4:12). The disciples had come to believe the truth of His identity as the Son of God (17:8), so now He prays that they will be kept in that name. Review the verses below to be reminded of what had Jesus told them earlier about His name.

   John 14:13-14

   John 14:26

   John 15:16

   John 16:24-26

5. According to John 1:12, those who believe in the name of Jesus as the Son of God are born again as children of God. Jesus is never referred to as a “child of God,” but always as “the Son.” According to the verses below, what distinguishes a child from a son?

   Matthew 5:9

   Matthew 5:44-45

   Romans 8:14-17 (optional: add v.18-39)

   Galatians 3:26-28

   Ephesians 3:14-21
6. What do you learn from the verses below about the oneness of the Father and the Son? In what ways might this oneness apply to the disciples? How might it apply to us?

   John 5:17-18

   John 8:26-29

   John 10:27-30

   John 14:10, 20-21, 23

   John 15:9-10

7. Considering your responses to questions 5 and 6 above, what do you think the Lord Jesus is asking when He prays that they would “be one even as We are one” (v.11)? From what you have studied so far, how does being kept in His name relate to being one as He and the Father are one? (We will continue to explore this later lessons.)
8. The unity of believers in Christ, and with Christ is a major theme of John 17. The phrase “even as” occurs eight times. It is the translation of a single Greek word which means “according as; just as; in proportion or degree.” In each of the following verses, what is being compared? We will continue to explore the significance of each comparison throughout the next two lessons.

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<tr>
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<th>You gave Him authority</th>
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<td>17:23</td>
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9. Jesus speaks these things that they may have His joy made full in themselves, v.13. Knowing what is about to happen, how important is it for them to hear this? How might it bring them joy? Imagine that you are with the disciples, hearing Jesus pray for you in this way. How important is it for us to hear? From the verses below what do you learn about joy?

John 15:11

John 16:20-22, 24


Hebrews 12:2

Psalm 16:11

*For Prayer and Consideration:*

What does it mean for you to be kept in the name of the Son of God?

How does this bring you joy?

Choose one of the statements from Question 8 for meditation this week.
Lesson 5
Kept, Sanctified and Sent

Read John 17:14-19

1. What repeated words or phrases do you find in this section? What themes continue to develop?

2. What new subjects are introduced? How do they relate to what came before?

3. What specific requests does Jesus make in verses 15 and 17? Make note of these on the chart, page 9. We will explore them in more detail in Questions 4 and 9.

4. Review what Jesus had told the disciples earlier about the world, John 15:18-25; 16:1-4, 11, 33. What does He now say about their relationship to the world?

17:14

17:16

17:18
5. The *world* in this context means not just the created earth, but the human system of thought and values that characterize fallen humanity. According to the passages below, what are some primary characteristics of *the world*? How do these influence peoples’ thoughts and attitudes?

*John 7:5-7*

*Romans 1:18-21, 25*

*1 John 2:15-17*

*1 John 4:1-5*

*1 John 5:19*

6. Twice Jesus says, “*they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*” (v.14, 16). How was the Son “not of the world”? How might these characteristics apply to the disciples? How might they apply to us?

*John 6:38*

*John 8:23, 28-29*

*John 12:49,50*

*John 14:10*
7. How would you describe the difference between being *in* the world and being *of* the world? Consider the verse below in your response.
   *Colossians 1:13-14a*

   **Ephesians 2:1-7**

   **Romans 12:1-2**

   **Philippians 2:15-16**

   **Philippians 3:20-21**

8. Jesus asks the Father to keep His disciples from the evil one, v.15.
   What do you learn about the evil one and his relationship to the world from the verses below?

   **John 8:44**

   **John 10:10**

   **John 14:30**

   **2 Corinthians 4:4**

   **Ephesians 2:1-3**

   **1 John 5:18, 19**

   **1 John 3:7-10**

   **Revelation 12:9**
9. What further insight do you gain from the verses below about the evil one’s intentions toward those who believe in Christ?
   **Luke 22:31-32**

   1 Peter 5:8

   **Ephesians 6:10-13**

10. To sanctify means to set apart or separate for a specific purpose, for a holy use. What might it mean that Jesus sanctifies Himself, that they may be sanctified in truth (v.19)? Explore the passages below, then describe in your own words the relationship between His sanctification and ours.

    **Hebrews 2:10-15**

    **2 Thessalonians 2:13**

    **Ephesians 5:25-27**

    **1 Peter 1:14-19 (see Leviticus 19:2)**

    **1 Peter 2:9-10**

11. We as humans will never become deity, but God’s Holy Spirit lives in us making us alive with His life. What might it mean to be sent into the world as He was sent (v.18)? Use the chart provided on the next page to review Christ’s purpose and mission (left column), comparing with the passages on the right which pertain to us. In what ways might His purpose and mission become our purpose and message?
## The Real “Lord’s Prayer”

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<td>Mark 10:45</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:21</td>
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### For prayer and consideration:

*In what ways have you been sent to the people God has placed in your life?*

*What might it mean to you personally to be sanctified in truth? What effect should this have on your life?*

*What difference does it make for you to know that the Lord Jesus has asked the Father to keep you from the evil one? How does this help you understand and resist the evil one’s activities in your life?*
The Real “Lord’s Prayer”

Lesson 6
That the World May Know

Read John 17:20-26

1. What repeated words, phrases, and ideas do you find in this final section? Based on these, what would you say is the primary focus in this portion of the prayer?

2. Three themes are listed below. How does Jesus continue to develop these in verses 20-26? What connections do you find with the earlier parts of the prayer?
   a) The world
   b) The unity of believers with the Son and the Father
   c) Love

3. How would you describe Jesus’ attitude toward the world? What does He want the world to know? (See also John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16)
4. What specific requests does Jesus make in v. 21 and v. 24? (Add these to the chart)
   How would you describe His purpose for asking these things?

5. **Glory** has been a major theme throughout this prayer. According to **Isaiah 42:8**, God does not give his glory to another, so what is the glory Christ has given to those who believe in Him (v.22)?
   Describe it in your own words, supporting your answer from text of the prayer and from the verses below.

   - 2 Corinthians 3:18
   - Ephesians 1:18-21
   - Ephesians 3:14-21
   - Colossians 1:27
   - Colossians 3:4
   - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
6. *Unity* is not the same as *uniformity*. Consider the verses below, then respond to these questions:

- What do you learn about true unity?
- What are some causes of disunity among believers? How might these be remedied?

   Romans 15:5-6

   Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

   Philippians 2:1-4; 14-16

   Colossians 3:12-14

7. What might Jesus have meant by the phrase “*perfected in unity*” (v.23)?

   - How might this kind of unity among believers cause the world to see and know Christ?

8. The Son’s desire is for all believers to be with Him where He is, v.24. Compare this with *John 14:3*, and the verses below. What do you learn about this future place of togetherness?

   Revelation 21:1-4

   Revelation 22:1-5
9. Look back over the whole prayer. Consider the specific requests, together with all Jesus has said about His disciples and about you.

   a) What would you identify as most important to Jesus?

   b) How does this deepen your understanding of God’s love for you, and His purposes for you in Christ?

   c) How do these truths affect your view of the world?

*For prayer and consideration*

Where do you fit into this prayer?

What has changed in your understanding or your heart through this study?

In what specific ways will you allow it to impact your life?

Use the following page to write your own prayer in response to your new understanding gained from this study.
The Real “Lord’s Prayer”