

Life Group Discussion Guide

The Lord's Prayer: Delighting in How Jesus Prayed
Week 3: Prayer & Identity • John 17:13-19

As we continue our study of the true "Lord's Prayer" recorded in John chapter 17, we're holding fast to our dual focus to (1) delight in how Jesus prayed and (2) learn to pray as Jesus prayed.

This week's portion of our Lord's prayer revolves around something every one of us is searching for: identity. Together, we'll uncover 3 realities that shape the identity of those who follow Jesus. Let's dive in!

1. Not of the World

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." John 17:13-16

Jesus begins this portion of His prayer by explaining that what He says (His words) bring joy to those who follow Him. The world, on the other hand, has the opposite reaction. The world responds to Jesus' words, and those who receive them, with hatred. Why?

"Jesus came from the Father and, with His coming, He brought a substance from heaven that is foreign to the world, and that is His word. The world is allergic to this substance. It convulses with hatred toward it and all those who carry it. Part of Jesus' mission was to deposit this substance, God's word, into the hearts of His followers. When we receive it, we become people who are no longer 'of the world,' just as Jesus isn't."

Each of us was born into the world and grew up as citizens of the world, in the values and ways of the world. But when we encounter the word of God, if we receive Jesus (the Word), our identity **changes**. We are now "not of the world."

- As someone who was physically born into the world and currently lives in it, what does it mean to be *not of the world*?
- Are you currently living as if you're *of the world* or *not of it*? Why do you answer that way? How would other people in your life (friends, coworkers, etc.) answer about you?
- Jesus' prayer reveals that one sure-fire way to know whether or not we're *of the world* is by our response to His words. What does your relationship with God's word look like? Do you love and obey it? Neglect or pick-and-choose from it? What does this reveal about whether or not you're *still of the world*?

Even though we're no longer *of* the world, we're still *in* the world, and, although Jesus knew how intense the world's hatred would get, He didn't ask the Father to take us out of it. Instead, He asked for

protection while we're in it. Jesus knows the enemy of His people is real and vicious, but He also knows the Father's protection is greater still.

- Take time now to thank our Father for protecting us against the evil one. Pray that, when faced with the world's hatred, you would live in "the full measure of [Jesus'] joy."

2. Sanctified for the World

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth...For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." John 17:17; 19

The word sanctify comes from the same root for the word holy. Holiness is an attribute of God that speaks of His transcendence, His otherness. Anything in creation that is set apart for service to a holy God becomes holy and must be holy.

Jesus set Himself apart for service to God, and the purpose of His holy service was our redemption. He, being the Holy One, gave Himself up for us, so that by His holy sacrifice we might become holy. And now Jesus is praying the same for us. He's asking the Father, *Set them apart for yourself, for your purposes.*

Just as Jesus sanctified Himself *for* us, we also become sanctified *for* the world. If we don't become truly sanctified, we have no witness to the world, because we're just like it.

- In what ways have you witnessed God's sanctifying work in your life?
- What opportunities for sanctification do you see in yourself?

How do we become sanctified? Jesus says it's by "the truth," that is, the word of God.

"In one sense we are already made holy because we are in Christ, and He is holy. And yet we must ever grow in holiness. We must become holy as our God is holy. This is the Christian doctrine of sanctification. And our guide in sanctification, in becoming holy, is the truth—the word of God. It's how we come to know the Holy One and to become like Him."

- How will you devote yourself to knowing, believing, and obeying God's Word in pursuit of sanctification? Be practical and specific.

3. Sent into the World

"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." John 17:18

No longer *of* the world, we have been sanctified *for* the world, and are now sent *into* the world as a witness to it. Try saying that 5 times fast.

The truth is, this can be just as difficult to live as it is to say. When we face the world's hatred for following Jesus, it would be much easier to hate the world back, remove ourselves from it, or give into the pressure and be like it. But Jesus labors in this prayer to help us see another way—His way. He prays, *Don't hate the world. Don't leave the world. Don't be like the world. Be different **for** the world.*

- Have you been tempted to hate the world, cut yourself off from it, or give into its ways? Tell us about it.
- How is Jesus' way different than any of these?
- How will you go into the world as a witness to it? Be practical and specific.

In closing, Pastor Jon left us with this week's **Big Idea: God-centered prayer rehearses our identity with Christ for the good of the world.**

"Let's pray that our identity would come from the Savior. That we may have His joy in us more than the world's angst and anger. That we would know and believe that our citizenship is in heaven, that we are not of the world as He is not of the world. That we like our Savior may be made holy, different, for the sake of the world, so that our witness might be compelling. And that we would go into the world because Jesus sends us into it, just as He was sent into the world."

- Pray together as Pastor Jon guided us above.