

# Life Group Discussion Guide

The Lord's Prayer: Delighting in How Jesus Prayed  
Week 4: Prayer & Love • John 17:20–26

This week, we come to the end of our study of John 17, through which we've sought to grow in our love for the Savior and learn to pray as He did. Today, we'll conclude the same way Jesus does: with a reflection on prayer and love.

## 1. Unity Witnesses to Love

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

John 17:20

Here, Jesus shifts from praying specifically for His first disciples to praying for all who will believe in Him—which includes us! And what does He pray for us? That we may be one. Jesus' prayer is that we would have unity as the Father and Son have unity. When we display this unity, He says, it reveals two truths to the world:

- a. Jesus was sent from the Father
- b. The Father loves us with the love He has for Jesus

In many ways, the unity Jesus prays for may seem like a far cry from the reality of the Church today. One culprit of our disunity is a fixation on issues. Whether political, cultural, theological, or otherwise, we've become a people who think we know better than everyone else. We draw battle lines over the hot topics of our day, with a stubborn pride that breeds division.

- How have you witnessed division in the Church?
- In what ways have you contributed to that division?

How do we repair the fractures in the Body of Christ? By shifting our focus from the issues of our day to our identity in Jesus. Fixating our minds on Jesus—on His glory and our unity with Him—cultivates our unity with one another.

"Does this mean that we ignore issues, be they political, cultural, or theological? No. But when we're saturated in the gospel, the issues are reframed and our hearts are humbled. And when, instead of being an issue-driven people, we're a gospel-centered church, the world sees something different. Our unity waves a missionary flag for the world to see, with the love of God written on it."

- If needed, take time now to pray in repentance for prioritizing your opinions above unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray these issues would take their proper place in your life and that you would become an agent of unity in the Church.
- How will you cultivate unity among the body of believers—a concern that is so dear to the heart of Jesus? Be practical and specific.

## **2. Glory Surrenders Priority to Love**

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” John 17:24

How captivating it is to think that Jesus wants us to be with Him! The great desire of His heart is for us to live with Him forever in the fullness of His greatness, majesty, and power—what He calls His glory.

Our world is intoxicated with glory, but not the kind Jesus is talking about. We throw ourselves at the people we deem glorious because of wealth, beauty, and influence, endlessly striving to gain some of that glory for ourselves. But, through this prayer, Jesus reminds us that His is the true glory. Jesus is the most glorious being in the universe. And yet He reveals something even more important, even greater, than His glory: the love the Father has had for Him since eternity past.

“At the very center of the universe, there’s a being radiating in glory: Jesus Christ. But when you look at why He’s been given so much glory—when you peek behind the glory, so to speak—you discover love, the love of the Father. Jesus is so glorious because He is so loved. Glory and love are not in conflict or tension, but one is prior to the other. Glory surrenders priority to love.”

It’s when we seek glory without love that people use each other, discard each other, and cancel each other. Can we learn then from Jesus, who reveals that at the bottom of His matchless glory is the love of the Father?

- Have you prioritized glory over love? In what ways have you chased earthly glory?
- How does it challenge you to redefine glory as being loved by the Father? How does it encourage you to know you are wanted by Jesus? Take time now to meditate on these truths.
- What changes when, like Jesus, we prioritize love over glory?

## **3. Revelation Produces Love**

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” John 17:25–26

In essence, Jesus is saying, Mission accomplished. He has made the Father known, which is what He was sent to do. He then says He'll continue revealing the Father to us (alluding to the ongoing ministry of His Spirit) and, finally, concludes His prayer by giving us the why: "in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

So let's put all of this together. Greater than human glory is the glory of God, and greater than the glory of God is the love of God—the love the Father has had for all eternity for His Son. The reason Jesus came to earth was to make the Father known to us, so that the love the Father has for Him may be in us.

"What Jesus wants is for the same love He's known before the creation of the world to be in us—transforming us, making us full, killing our sin, softening our hearts, making us able to forgive, to sacrifice, to let go of wrongs and wrongdoing. He wants this love to be so compelling that anger dissipates, mercy triumphs over justice, and material wealth flows to lift the poor."

This is the kind of love that changes the world. As summed up in this week's Big Idea: God-centered prayer aims for the Father's love to transform the earth.

- In closing, pray together as Jesus prayed: that the more He reveals the Father to us, the fuller we will become with the Father's love, a love marked by humility and unity—one that holds the power to transform the earth.