

John 17

ENGAGE FELLOWSHIP

“And I ask not only for these disciples, but also for all those who will one day believe in me through their message. I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me.” (John 17:20-21)

MY JOURNAL

Over and over throughout the evening, Jesus had said, *“Ask the Father... Ask in my name... He will not refuse you!”*

Now He asks, He prays. The one who promised that His name would shatter the ceiling between heaven and earth, the one who promised that requests in His name would resonate throughout the throne room of God, He prays. And His prayer will not be refused.

He prays for all believers throughout the centuries until His second return. Verse 20 records that this prayer is not just for these eleven disciples but also *“for those who will believe in me through their word.”*

He prays that we would be in unity.

He prays that the unity would emulate the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is the reason He prays though that is so often ignored... *“So that the world will recognize that you sent me.”*

Imagine this most sacred time in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. The Passover meal is finished. The Servant Christ has washed the feet of each disciple, and the betrayer has departed to complete his betrayal of the Messiah. Christ will soon be arrested, crucified, and buried; and three days later He will rise from the dead, but now he prays!

It’s during these final moments together that Christ and His now eleven disciples must complete preparations for His death and for their leadership of the early church. Christ will provide instruction, encouragement, and hope in this “Upper Room Discourse,” culminating in His longest recorded prayer (John 13-17). It is during this John 17 prayer that we also see the personal relevance to our lives.

Are you not one of His disciples? If not, pause quietly even now to invite **Him into your life**: *“Lord Jesus, thanks for loving me, praying for me and desiring a relationship with me. I need You to forgive me and change me as You come into my life to make me part of Your family. Thank you for doing so even now; by faith I receive You as my Savior and Lord.”*

Please stop and read verses 20 and 21 again. Christ has declared a critical ingredient in our lives as we follow Him: that we would live in oneness—without division, strife, jealousy, or pride—being diligent to mutually care for, yield to, and love one another (1 Corinthians 12:24-27; Ephesians 5:21; Galatians 5:13). And it will have divine results: *“that the world may believe!” (John 17:21)*

The greatest tool of evangelism is the unity the church shares. That also means that the greatest detriment to people coming to Christ is disunity: Jealousy, bitterness, pride and other unity-breakers keep souls from heaven and deliver souls to hell. **Now, pray together this way:** *“Father, in order to fulfill your desire and the prayer of Jesus, I ask you to give me more (patience, faith, forbearance, grace) to fulfill your desires for unity. I ask you to change me and let my life be an answer to Your prayer.”*

