

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

John 17:6-19

What a person prays for reveals their priorities. It provides a glimpse into what they value and hold most dear. In John 17, Jesus prays for himself (1-5), his disciples (6-19), and for future believers (20-26).

The way the prayer begins (17:1) and ends (18:1) links it to the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17). It indicates that Jesus most likely prayed it in the upper room before he entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

While Jesus prays for his own disciples in verses 6-19, we can apply it to our lives as well. Following Jesus' example, **we can pray for protection and spiritual growth because we belong to God.**

We belong to the Father (6-11a)

This section forms the basis of Jesus' requests. Since his disciples belonged to God, their welfare was his special interest.

6 Jesus had revealed the Father's name and nature to his disciples.

Scripture teaches both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God gave the disciples to Jesus. The disciples believed and obeyed God's word.

7-8 The disciples accepted Jesus' teachings as something that came from God the Father. While they didn't understand everything completely, what they did understand, they believed.

9 Jesus prayed for his disciples because they believed in him. In other places in the gospel, Jesus prayed for the world, but not in this section.

10 Because the disciples belonged to God, their welfare was his special interest and concern.

11a Jesus prayed for his disciples because he was going to leave them. They needed the Father's grace because they would not have the Son's encouraging presence.

Father, protect us (11b-16)

Jesus prays that the Father will protect his disciples from falling away, from disunity, and from the evil one.

11b "Holy Father" balances God's ultimate purity with the intimate relationship we can enjoy with him.

We should ask God to protect us from falling away, that he would keep us in his name, that we would remain loyal to him.

We should ask God to protect us from issues that would divide us. We should pray for unity.

12-16 We should ask God to protect us from evil people and the evil world system.

Judas' betrayal fulfilled the promises in the Old Testament.

The teachings of Jesus can bring us joy in the midst of a challenging world.

Rather than take us out of the world, God has left us to represent him in the world.

Jesus wants us to remain loyal to God while actively serving as his ambassadors to the unsaved in a fallen world.

Father, sanctify us (17-19)

Jesus prays that the Father will use the Word of God to set apart his disciples for their mission in the world.

17 To sanctify means to set apart for God's service.

We are sanctified by spending time in God's word. It is essential that we know, understand, believe, and obey what Scripture teaches.

18 Jesus sent us into the world with a mission, just as God sent Jesus into the world. In both cases, sanctification is necessary for the success of the mission.

19 Jesus had set himself apart to do God's will partially for the sake of his disciples.

Principles to Practice

Understand that you belong to Christ.

Pray for unity in FCBC.

Pray for protection from temptation and the evil one.

Grow in your knowledge of God's word.

Pray for fruitful service.