



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 17:1-8 Commentary New International Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 17:1) After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

In John 17, before Jesus prayed what has been titled His “High Priestly Prayer,” a prayer of intercession as our High Priest, He encouraged His disciples by saying in John 16:33, “I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” Our heavenly Father answers all the prayers of Jesus and all who trust Him as Lord and Savior. When Jesus tells His disciples to have peace in Him and take courage (and His disciples for the past 2,000 years have needed His peace and to take courage), the Holy Spirit helps them have His peace and take courage in answer to His and their prayers to the Father. In John 17, Jesus prayed for His disciples and for all His disciples through the years who would come to know and love Him because His disciples taught His words and the words of His Father. Jesus’ last command to His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 included the words, “Go and make disciples of all nations,” and His disciples have continued to make disciple in peace—despite facing persecution from those of this world.

Jesus prayed aloud for His disciples to hear, learn, and remember because His time had come for Him to leave them. He knew that He would leave them in such a terrifying way (as John saw at the foot of Jesus' cross) that they would need to remember His reassuring prayer for them. From all they had seen during the ministry of Jesus, they knew that God answered all Jesus' prayers. And His Father answered Jesus' prayer for them before and after those of the world arrested, tried, tortured, and crucified Jesus.

As Jesus looked ahead to His betrayal, suffering, and death, we might think of Jesus' prayer as His "progress report" to His heavenly Father and a declaration that He would continue to obey His Father—even unto death. Jesus prayed an unselfish prayer. He prayed and asked the Father to help Him glorify His Father. In asking the Father to glorify Him, Jesus wanted His glorification to glorify His Father. Another word for "glorify" is honor. Jesus only wanted His Father to honor Him so He could honor His Father by all He said and did, especially when He suffered and died on the cross in obedience to His Father.

Obedying God glorifies God. When believers pray for success, they can pray that their success in some way will glorify or honor the Father and the Son. Disciples of Jesus can pray that everything they do will show they love the Father and the Son and want to honor them by the way they act. Believers can pray that whenever they love and serve others that some will see they are also loving and serving God as they follow the teachings of Jesus. Jesus came into the world to love, serve, and save people, and by doing so He glorified, honored, and obeyed His Father. When disciples of Jesus love, serve, and share the good news about Jesus, they are glorifying, honoring, and obeying the Father and His Son.

(John 17:2) For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

The Father gave Jesus, the Son, authority over all people. In Matthew 9:6, we learn that Jesus, the Son of Man, had "authority on earth to forgive sins." In Matthew 28:18, Jesus told His disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." In John 5:27, Jesus said the Father had "given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man." In

John 17:2, Jesus said that He has the authority to give eternal life. In John 19:11, Jesus told Pilate that he would have no power or authority over Him unless it had been given him from above. The Father and Jesus gave Pilate the authority or power as governor of Judea to order the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus did not use His authority or power to stop Pilate or His persecutors, because He came to die as a substitutionary sacrifice for all He came to save.

For good reasons, Jesus shares His authority with His disciples. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus gave His disciples “authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.” Jesus died and rose again to save sinners and give eternal life to all who believed in Him (see John 3:16). Disciples of Jesus have the authority to share this good news.

Remember Jesus prayed, “to give eternal life *to all whom you have given him.*” The Father gave to Jesus all those who would be saved by grace through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. When disciples of Jesus worship the Father and the Son, they thank the Father for giving them to Jesus as a precious gift to Jesus. The Apostle Paul explained this great blessing and mystery to all who believe in Jesus when he wrote in Ephesians 2:4-7, “But God, who is *rich in mercy*, out of the *great love* with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show *the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness* toward us in Christ Jesus.” All Jesus’ disciples can have peace in Him and take courage because Jesus has given them eternal life and they are spiritually seated with Jesus in heavenly places—they will never die though their body may die. Neither the Father nor the Son will take their gift of eternal life from a follower of Jesus. Believers know that the Father will never take from Jesus any gift that He has given Jesus. Believers can remember that they are the Father’s gifts to Jesus. Every disciple of Jesus is the Father’s gift to Jesus—they are God’s precious gift to Him! Therefore, disciples of Jesus will not misuse the authority that Jesus has given them.

(John 17:3) Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

In His prayer, Jesus defined the meaning of “eternal life.” Eternal life can begin now in this present world and last forever. Eternal life involves knowing the only true God, the Father and Jesus Christ, the One the Father sent to save sinners by loving them and dying for them. Eternal life involves and depends on knowing both the Father and the Son. Knowing the truth about them will fill the believer with true love for them. Knowing God involves more than having an intellectual conception of some facts about God. Knowing God involves a personal relationship with God that includes listening to God when reading the Bible, loving God, praying to God, worshiping God, serving God, and obeying God as they serve others.

(John 17:4) I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

Jesus loved others, taught, healed, cast out demons, raised the dead, fed the multitudes, calmed the stormy sea, and did other things that were part of the work His Father intended for Him to do. Jesus looked forward to glorifying His Father and finishing His work by obeying Him and dying in our behalf to save believers in Him from practicing sin and the eternal consequences of sin. Jesus said and did what would glorify God and point people to the true God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit and the words of Jesus, the Father glorifies the Son by pointing those He has given Jesus to Jesus in ways that lead people to trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. As disciples of Jesus, we can honor and glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by finishing the work that Jesus has given us to do. Because we love Them, we want to glorify Them, just as Jesus loved His Father in heaven. Jesus wanted to glorify His Father by obeying Him and teaching others the words that His Father had given Him to share with them. We find these words in the Bible—the infallible Word of God written. Believers glorify the Father and the Son by obeying Them and teaching the works and words of the Father and the Son that they learn from the Bible.

(John 17:5) And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus did not take His Father’s love for Him and His plans for Him as simple matters of course. Jesus asked His Father to keep His promise to

Him fully while knowing that the Father would do what He promised and answer His prayers. Disciples of Jesus can pray according to the promises of God in the Bible fully knowing that God will do all that He has promised in the Bible. Jesus wanted to return to His place on the throne of God where He sat before the Father created the world through Him, for Jesus is the Word of God (see John 1:1). As we learned in John 1:1-18, Jesus was not a mere prophet or mere human being or an angel from heaven. Jesus is the Son of God who had the glory of God in the presence of God His Father before the world existed. Jesus came to earth fully God and fully human, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary, His mother. In Luke 1:35, “The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.’”

(John 17:6) “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.

Jesus prayed for His disciples and all who would become His disciples. The Father gave followers to Jesus, followers who would become Jesus’ disciples by taking them out of the world that they might enter the Kingdom of God under the rule of Jesus the King (the Messiah). Jesus reported in His prayer that He had made the Father’s Name (the true character and nature of God) known to them and they had believed and obeyed the word of God that had Jesus taught them and the crowds. Jesus knew that it was important for His disciples to hear His “progress report” in prayer and believe that God, His Father and their Father, had accepted His report and work. God the Father gave absolute proof that He accepted Jesus “progress report” when He raised Jesus from the dead and gave Jesus’ disciples the Holy Spirit to indwell them. The Father and the Son always worked and work together in perfect unity of heart and mind. Those who become Jesus’ disciples are those the Father has given Jesus. Today, by using the Bible’s teachings, Jesus’ disciples make the Name (the nature and character) of the Father and the Son known to those in the world. Those who come to believe in Jesus through the teachings of the followers of Jesus have been given to Jesus by the Father. Those who have been given to Jesus

by the Father will keep (obey) the word of God (the words of Jesus) because they love Them. In prayer, disciples of Jesus can ask the Father to help them make disciples of Jesus as Jesus did, and they can give the Father a “progress report” as Jesus did. In these and other ways, with the help of the Holy Spirit, disciples of Jesus can glorify the Father and the Son. They can glorify Jesus by finishing the work Jesus has given them.

(John 17:7) Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.

Jesus lived and taught in ways that always pointed people to the true God, the Father and the Son. Jesus taught and acted in such a way that people could hear with their ears and see with their eyes that everything Jesus said and did was consistent with the express will, the great love, and the rich mercy of His Father. The Father blessed and enabled His incarnate Son to do everything Jesus did and everything Jesus taught. All things belong to the Father and the Son, and Jesus taught His disciples this truth.

(John 17:8) For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”

Jesus spoke with authority, and Jesus always made it clear that He did not speak only on His own authority, and One who was independent from the Father. Jesus’ words and deeds convinced His followers that He came from God, and He was sent by God to them for their benefit and the benefit of all who would hear and believe the good news about and from Jesus. A true disciple of Jesus receives the words of Jesus as the words of God the Father. They know “in truth,” as “actual fact,” that Jesus Christ came into this world because the Father and He loved the world and the Father sent Jesus into the world. Jesus did what He was sent by the Father to do. Remember John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Disciples of Jesus know and believe what they have learned from and about Jesus as revealed in the Bible. Because they know and believe the words of Jesus they keep and obey the words of Jesus—the very words of God.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why did Jesus come into the world?
2. Why did Jesus want the Father to glorify the Son?
3. Why did the Father give Jesus authority over all people?
4. What is eternal life?
5. How did Jesus glorify the Father? How can we, if we are His disciples, glorify the Father and Jesus?

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