

The Prayer: John 17:1-26

JOHN 17:1-26 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

The Son who shared God's glory prayed for you before the cross.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 22): John 15:1-17, Abide in Me. Its big idea: Remain in Jesus' love; lasting fruit grows from him, not from us.
- After this passage (day 24): John 18:15-27, I Am Not. Its big idea: While Jesus stands true under blows, his friend says, 'I am not.'

Open

Recall last time: in John 15 Jesus called himself the vine and said, "Abide in Me." Today he stops talking to his friends and talks to his Father while they listen. Ask: "Has anyone ever told you they were praying for you? How did that land?" Read John 17:20 aloud. Big idea: The Son who shared God's glory prayed for you before the cross. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. The Son Asks for Glory (John 17:1-5, about 12 min)

The one thing: The one praying here is no ordinary man. He shared the Father's glory before the world began.

Ask: What kind of person could honestly pray verse 5?

2. Keep Them (John 17:6-19, about 15 min)

The one thing: Jesus puts his friends in the Father's keeping. Their safety rests on his request, not on their strength.

Ask: Jesus asks for protection, not escape. Why might that matter to someone whose faith feels thin?

3. And for Those Who Will Believe (John 17:20-26, about 13 min)

The one thing: Everyone who believes through the apostles' message was in this prayer, and Jesus asked to have them with him.

Ask: Jesus' last request is to have his people with him. What does that show about how he feels toward them?

Close (never cut it)

This passage mostly shows us who Jesus is and what he asked for, so land on rest. Say plainly: the Son who shared the Father's glory before the world asked to keep his people and to have them with him, and the Father loves him. Read v24 and let it stand without adding homework.

PROTECT THE ENDING

If section 3 starts late, drop vv21-23, read v20 and v24 aloud, and go straight to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 3, 4, 1, 5, 2 (top to bottom) · Feelings: Jesus happy, The disciples worried, The Father happy, People who will believe later happy · Code: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH

Act it out: Teacher lifts eyes and prays the lines. Group 1, 'his friends', stands close. Group 2, 'later believers', stands across the room. Each group stands up when Jesus prays for them (v9, then v20), and everyone gathers together at v24.

1. The Son Asks for Glory

JOHN 17:1-5 · ABOUT 12 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- "The hour has come": the moment John's whole Gospel has pointed toward.
- Eternal life is knowing God and the one he sent.
- Jesus speaks of glory he shared with the Father before creation.

"Now this is eternal life, that they may KNOW You, the only true God." (v3)

"Glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the WORLD existed." (v5)

Discuss: What kind of person could honestly pray verse 5?

The one praying here is no ordinary man. He shared the Father's glory before the world began.

MUST COVER

- v1: "The hour has come." Earlier, John kept saying his hour had not yet come (John 2:4; 7:30). Now it has.
- v5: glory "before the world existed." Through Isaiah, a prophet centuries earlier, God said, "I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

IF THERE'S TIME

- v3: eternal life is a relationship, knowing God. It is more than living a very long time.
- v4: "accomplishing the work You gave Me". He prays as one whose task is done.

Illustration idea: What people say before major surgery shows what matters most to them. Here Jesus' first words are about his Father and his glory.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: "He's claiming to be God."
- Listen for: "He sounds calm, not afraid."

If it drifts: If it turns into abstract talk about the Trinity, go back to v5 and ask what Jesus says about himself in plain words.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Notice who is praying. He shared God's glory before the world, and he is about to pray for you.

Short on time? Cut the optional v4 point. Keep v1 and v5.

Bridge → Having spoken of his own glory, Jesus turns to the eleven men in the room.

2. Keep Them

JOHN 17:6-19 · ABOUT 15 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus hands his friends to the Father: "They were Yours; You gave them to Me."
- He asks for protection, not escape from the world.
- He sends them into the world as the Father sent him.

"Holy Father, PROTECT them by Your name." (v11)

"I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You KEEP them from the evil one." (v15)

Discuss: Jesus asks for protection, not escape. Why might that matter to someone whose faith feels thin?

Jesus puts his friends in the Father's keeping. Their safety rests on his request, not on their strength.

MUST COVER

- vv11-12: "protect them by Your name." None was lost except "the son of destruction," meaning Judas, the disciple who betrayed him.
- vv15-18: not taken out of the world but kept in it, and sent: "As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them."

IF THERE'S TIME

- v13: he prays aloud "so that they may have My joy." The prayer was meant to be overheard.
- v19: "For them I sanctify Myself." This is priestly language for setting apart an offering, spoken in Passover week.

Illustration idea: A parent at the school gate doesn't pull the child out of school. The parent asks the teacher to watch over the child while they are there.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: "It would be easier to be taken out."
- Listen for: "Protected doesn't mean nothing bad happens."

If it drifts: If people start debating whether believers can lose salvation, go back to what Jesus actually asked in vv11-12 and v15.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The Son who shared God's glory asked the Father to keep his friends. He wanted them kept in the world, not taken out of it.

Short on time? Skip the v19 priestly point. Read vv11 and 15 aloud and discuss.

Bridge → Then Jesus looks past the room, to people who had not yet heard of him.

3. And for Those Who Will Believe

JOHN 17:20-26 · ABOUT 13 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus prays for people who had not believed yet.
- He asks that they be one, "so that the world may believe."
- His final request: to have them with him and let them see his glory.

"Also on behalf of those who will BELIEVE in Me through their message." (v20)

"Father, I want those You have given Me to be WITH ME where I am." (v24)

Discuss: Jesus' last request is to have his people with him. What does that show about how he feels toward them?

Everyone who believes through the apostles' message was in this prayer, and Jesus asked to have them with him.

MUST COVER

- v20: the prayer reaches beyond the eleven to all who would believe through their message, which includes readers today.
- v24: "with Me where I am, that they may see the glory." He speaks with the love of the Father "before the foundation of the world."

IF THERE'S TIME

- vv21-23: unity like the Father's and the Son's, so the world may know he was sent.
- Hebrews 7:25, a letter to early Christians, says the risen Christ "always lives to intercede." The praying did not stop that night.

Illustration idea: Imagine finding an old letter from a grandparent addressed "to my grandchildren not yet born." You were loved before you arrived.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: "He actually wants us, not just puts up with us."
- Listen for: "Hard to believe that includes me."

If it drifts: If it turns into church-conflict stories, go back to v21. Unity is something Jesus asked the Father for, and it exists so the world may believe.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

You were in that prayer. The Son who shared God's glory asked to have you with him.

Short on time? Cut vv21-23. Read v20 and v24 slowly.

Bridge → Let the class sit with the fact that this prayer is what Jesus wants.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Set the scene. This is the night before Jesus' death. He has finished talking with his friends, and now he prays out loud while they listen. Read vv1-5 together.
2. Notice the claim. Point to v5: glory "before the world existed." Ask what they make of a man saying that.
3. Face the objection honestly. Talk through how anyone could know what he prayed. He prayed aloud before his friends, and John presents it as what they heard. Admit we can't check a transcript.
4. Read the wider circle. Read vv20 and 24. He prays for people who would believe later and asks to have them with him.
5. Leave the question. The Gospel keeps asking who this man is. Leave it with them: who is the one praying here, and could he have meant people like you?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

"How could anyone know what he prayed?"

He prayed aloud, and his friends were in the room. John writes as someone who was there. It is likely in John's own wording, but the claim fits everything else Jesus said in this Gospel.

"If he is God, why is he praying?"

John presents the Son and the Father as distinct but sharing one glory and love (vv5, 24). Christians have wrestled with that mystery ever since. It is hard, and it is what the text says.

"Who is the 'son of destruction'?"

Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Jesus says he protected all the others.

"Does 'those who will believe' include me if I'm unsure?"

It is for those who come to believe through the apostles' message, and that message is what you're reading now. The door is described as open.

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).

If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.

If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.

If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.

If you've taught for years: Don't lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.

If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.

If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn't serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).

If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?

If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Let the Bible do the talking

This is Jesus' own voice, and commentary can bury it.

If you're new: Read v5, v20 and v24 slowly and ask what he says. Don't explain first.

If you've taught for years: Resist a Trinity lecture. Let the text's claims do the work.

2. Plan for the skeptic and the grieving

Newcomers will doubt v5, and people who have drifted may fear they are 'the lost one.'

If you're new: Have the coffee objection answer ready, and have a gentle word ready about v12.

If you've taught for years: Invite doubts aloud. Name drifted friends' fears without making anyone the example.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

This is a prayer of assurance, not a list of tasks.

If you're new: End on v24. Don't add a challenge.

If you've taught for years: Hold back the 'send' and 'unity' applications so rest isn't crowded out.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you'll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: Has anyone ever told you they were praying for you? How did it feel?

- start in the text: Read v1: "Father, the hour has come." Ask what hour John has been building toward.
- tell a short story: Tell of overhearing someone pray for you through a door, and how different it is to hear it than to be told.

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: The Son who shared God's glory prayed for you before the cross.
- allow quiet reflection: Read v24, then leave thirty seconds of quiet with no instructions.
- call back to the opening: We asked how it feels to be prayed for. Jesus did it, and he asked to have you with him.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone fears they, or a drifted loved one, are like Judas, 'the son of destruction' (v12).: Acknowledge the fear gently. Point out that the verse's weight falls on Jesus protecting the rest. Offer to talk afterwards rather than settle it in the room.
- Talk of unity (vv21-23) stirs pain from church splits or church hurt.: Don't defend the church. Say plainly that Christians have often failed this prayer, and that it is still Jesus' request and gift. Then move on to v24.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: "Thanks. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can't answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: "Great question. Let's catch it after class so we can finish the passage."

READ THIS WEEK

- Hebrews 7:23-25
- John 10:27-30
- Philippians 2:5-11

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/john/17-1-26/lesson

The Prayer: John 17:1-26

JOHN 17:1-26 (BSB) · WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: "I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message" John 17:20

THE BIG IDEA

The Son who shared God's glory prayed for you before the cross.

1. THE SON ASKS FOR GLORY · JOHN 17:1-5

- "The hour has come": the moment John's whole Gospel has pointed toward.
- Eternal life is knowing God and the one he sent.
- Jesus speaks of glory he shared with the Father before creation.

"Now this is eternal life, that they may _____ You, the only true God." (v3)

"Glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the _____ existed." (v5)

Discuss: What kind of person could honestly pray verse 5?

2. KEEP THEM · JOHN 17:6-19

- Jesus hands his friends to the Father: "They were Yours; You gave them to Me."
- He asks for protection, not escape from the world.
- He sends them into the world as the Father sent him.

"Holy Father, _____ them by Your name." (v11)

"I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You _____ them from the evil one." (v15)

Discuss: Jesus asks for protection, not escape. Why might that matter to someone whose faith feels thin?

3. AND FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE · JOHN 17:20-26

- Jesus prays for people who had not believed yet.
- He asks that they be one, "so that the world may believe."
- His final request: to have them with him and let them see his glory.

"Also on behalf of those who will _____ in Me through their message." (v20)

"Father, I want those You have given Me to be _____ where I am." (v24)

Discuss: Jesus' last request is to have his people with him. What does that show about how he feels toward them?

Read this week: Hebrews 7:23-25 · John 10:27-30 · Philippians 2:5-11

For Kids: The Prayer: John 17:1-26

JOHN 17:1-26 · NAME: _____

Big idea: Jesus prayed for me.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

- ☐ Jesus prays to keep his friends safe.
- ☐ Jesus prays for believers yet to come.
- ☐ Jesus looks up to heaven.
- ☐ Jesus asks them to be with him.
- ☐ Jesus asks the Father for glory.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

Jesus: happy · sad · worried

The disciples: happy · sad · worried

The Father: happy · sad · worried

People who will believe later: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

B S G T F B H F K
E F G R N V Y N O
L A D U P N O H U
I T S T N O S P U
E H R H P H O U R
V E J O Y H R O O
E R R C G L O R Y
S B P R O T E C T
D W O R L D C N O

GLORY · FATHER · HOUR · TRUTH · WORLD · PROTECT · BELIEVE · JOY

4. SECRET CODE

1=D 2=H 3=I 4=O 5=R 6=S 7=T 8=U 9=W 10=Y

10 4 8 5 9 4 5 1 3 6 7 5 8 7 2

5. DRAW IT!

Draw Jesus looking up and praying, with his friends near him and a long line of people far away. Put yourself in the line.

6. MEMORY VERSE

"I want those You have given Me to be with Me" John 17:24 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

Jesus prayed that I would be with him and _____.