

## What Did Jesus Pray for? Part 2

John 17:17-19

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

1. The Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Them (17:17a)
2. The Means: The \_\_\_\_\_ of God (17:17b)
3. The Purpose: To \_\_\_\_\_ Them into the World (17:18)
4. The Cost: Jesus on the \_\_\_\_\_ (17:19)
5. Applying the Word
  - a. Is your default posture isolation, assimilation, or \_\_\_\_\_?
  - b. Be sanctified by the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Did Jesus pray for \_\_\_\_\_?

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 17:17-19

1. What are the key ideas in the previous section of Jesus's prayer for His disciples? (John 17:6-16) Note what He says about the environment they will be in and the dangers from it.
2. How does the prayer for the Father to "keep" them lead logically into the prayer for the Father to "sanctify" them? (17:17-19)
3. What does the word "sanctify" mean? (17:17)
  - a. See also 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11 and note that "sanctified" and "saints" are both forms of the same word translated elsewhere as "holy."
4. In what way does the Lord use His Word to sanctify His people? (17:17)
5. DA Carson wrote, "In practical terms, no-one can be 'sanctified' or set apart for the Lord's use without learning to think God's thoughts after Him, without learning to live in conformity with the 'word' He has graciously given."
  - a. In what sense is this true? How does the truth sanctify us?
6. How are our sending and sanctification connected in this passage? (17:18)
7. In what sense is our "sending" the same as Jesus' "sending" in John 17:18? How is our sending like His sending? How is it different?
8. Does your default position tend more toward isolation from the world or conformity to the world? What steps can you take to more intentionally reach out to the world with the gospel? Who do you know that you can invest in, engage with, explain the gospel to, and invite to dig deeper into the truth?

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Intro:

The first request: Glorify (17:1-5)

The second request: Keep (17:6-16)

They (and we) will be left in the world. They will face challenges in the world. They will at times be hated by the world. Father, keep them!

If the world is like this - corrupt and corrupting – how can we keep from loving it? Being stained by it?

His third prayer addresses this.

The third request: Sanctify (17:17-19)

“set them apart” – but it is for the purpose of being sent into the world not for the purpose of judging the world from a safe distance.

### 1. The Request: **Sanctify** Them (17:17a)

- a. The previous prayer was If we are sent into the world – and the world is so corrupt and corrupting – how can we keep from loving it? Being stained by it?
  - i. The answer is that we must be sanctified.
  - ii. God desires a holy people who will mirror His image well.
- b. Sanctified: Set apart for special use.
  - i. Verb form of the word “holy” – Make them holy – “holy” them
    1. Trend to take nouns and make them verbs – rather than giving someone something we “gift” it to them, you can “friend” people. It’s actually been part of English language for a long time.
  - ii. We tend to think of “holy” in ethical terms but it is more than that.
  - iii. God is holy – transcendent, “other”, distinct, separate from his creation.
    1. The angels cry out, “holy, holy, holy” in his presence (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8)
    2. **Lev. 19:2** 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.
  - iv. Items in the tabernacle were holy – set apart to God and to be used in the service of Him. The Jewish people were to be a holy people. NT believers are to be a holy people – set apart for God’s purposes.
  - v. You might have somethings in your home that are “set apart for special use” – maybe it is a set of dishes that only come out for the holidays, maybe they are special towels for guests in the guest bathroom that you better not touch with your grubby hands. That’s a small glimpse of the idea here about being set apart.
- c. Contrasted with being worldly - in the sense of loving the world and following the world’s pattern.
  - i. **John 15:19** If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because **you are not of the world**, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

- ii. **1 John 2:15-16** *Do not love the world nor the things in the world.* If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
  - 1. Do not be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:1), keep yourself unstained by the world (James 1:27)
- iii. Demas illustrates the danger of loving the world
  - 1. **2 Timothy 4:10** for Demas, having loved this present WORLD, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
  - 2. Don't know much about Demas except he was with Paul when Paul wrote Colossians and Philemon (Col. 4:14; Phm. 1:24) and so was a ministry companion of his. Would seem like a solid guy, sacrificing for the gospel.
  - 3. But love of the world led Demas to leave Paul and ministry
- iv. "Today, the greatest challenge facing American evangelicals is not persecution from the world, but seduction by the world." (Mahaney 22)
- v. Worldliness not defined by outward rules or the rejection of externals. It exists in our hearts. (1 John 2:16 – lusts of the flesh, eyes, boastful pride of life) – these play out in our outward actions
  - 1. Wiersbe – "heart of every problem is a problem in the heart"
- vi. ***How can you recognize if you are loving the world?***
  - 1. Some value in looking at outward things – Are you indistinguishable from someone who doesn't know Christ based on your conversations, internet activity, manner of dress, music, tv habits, hobbies, use of money, thoughts, passions, and goals?
    - a. But you can polish up the outside and still have a heart that is corrupt – Jesus called out the religious leaders for being white washed tombs, the equivalent of calling them caskets that are beautiful and shiny on the outside but contain a decaying body on the inside.
  - 2. Where is your identity found?
    - a. Successful guy, good looking guy, athlete, Mr. Outdoorsy, well-educated
  - 3. Are you driven by temporal goals that you want too much?
    - a. Financial security, more friends, successful kids, promotions
- d. It's not enough that we are protected from outside influences (the world). We need to be internally conformed more and more into the image of Jesus.
  - i. What people have discovered if they try to pull away from all worldly influences is that sin still follows them because it is in their hearts.
  - ii. Example: If it's just you and two other guys living out in the desert as monks to escape the temptations of the world, you may still get jealous of brother Larry because he has the bigger cave.

- iii. Application: Make what is often a wise choice to homeschool your kids to protect them from some aspects of the world, but can't protect them from their own hearts – they need to be sanctified.

## 2. The Means: The **Word** of God (17:17b)

- a. God's Word is the main instrument of our sanctification because it is true (about life and sin).
  - i. DA Carson: "In practical terms, no-one can be 'sanctified' or set apart for the Lord's use without learning to think God's thoughts after him, without learning to live in conformity with the 'word' he has graciously given."
    - 1. At the heart of worldliness is not that we are breaking some rules, but that we are not thinking and living what is true.
  - ii. We grow through the Word
    - 1. **1 Peter 2:2** like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,
    - 2. I worry that many believers are spiritually malnourished. They eat once a week and skip meals the rest of the week. That's not to guilt you into picking up your Bible more to be a "good Christian" any more than encouraging a child to eat is legalistic rule following. It's simply to say, don't starve yourself.
  - iii. God's Word reveals our sin to us.
  - iv. God's Word tells us what is true
    - 1. **John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
    - 2. Sanctification involves transitioning from believing lies to believing truth.
- b. God also uses other means of sanctification
  - i. Fellow believers
    - 1. **Hebrews 3:13** But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
    - 2. Prioritize community with other believers – consider jumping into a small group or smaller slice of ministry like youth or Crossroads if that fits your age.
  - ii. The providential use of life's circumstances
    - 1. **James 1:2-4** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

## 3. The Purpose: To **Send** Them into the World (17:18)

- a. Although we are not of the world and are to be distinct from it, Jesus has sent us into the world.
  - i. Bunker verses mirror
    - 1. Continuum of isolating self from the world completely to mirroring the world.
    - 2. Neither isolation nor assimilation
- b. Not sanctified just for the sake of being sanctified.

- i. It means to be set apart **for special use**.
- ii. We are set apart for service – set apart so that we can be sent into the world on a rescue mission.
  - 1. Amazing considering what He said about the world – He isn't casting it aside but pursuing it!
  - 2. **John 12:47b** “. . . for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.”
  - 3. **John 10:36** do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God '?
- iii. This all ties in to why we are to be **in** the world but **not of**.
- iv. We are to be distinct and separate because we are on a mission.
  - 1. Notice that it is connected with God sending Jesus into the world. As Christ was sent into a dark world to redeem lost people and reveal God to them, so are we sent to tell them how they can be redeemed and reveal God to them.
  - 2. **Luke 19:10** "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- v. Not just in defensive mode but going on the offense.
  - 1. Sent to seek and save the lost.
  - 2. Eric – Across the street and around the world
- c. Important to have godly Christians in the workplace and schools.
  - i. Not everyone is called into fulltime ministry as a job. But everyone can have a godly, redemptive influence wherever God has them.
  - ii. Not looking to establish a commune surrounded only by other Christians. That can be comfortable, but it's not what we are called to do.
    - 1. I love being in ministry but one thing that could pull me out of it is the influence I know that a godly person can have rubbing shoulders with people in the workplace.
  - iii. As you're a nurse of integrity, a compassionate teacher, a diligent engineer, etc. and you seek to represent Christ by your words as well you can have a significant impact in ways that we as "professionals" never can.
    - 1. They view us as having an agenda, look at us with skepticism thinking that we're only in for the money because the public gets burned by stories in the media of pastors (especially tv pastors) exploiting people.
    - 2. For many, there's an automatic barrier that goes up when they hear I'm a pastor. I can see it in their expressions when they ask what I do for a living. That's one less hurdle that you have.
    - 3. Don't waste that or underestimate the position you're in.
      - a. I heard of a woman who described herself as a "Follower of Jesus Christ cleverly disguised as a factory worker."
      - b. View yourself that way "A follower of Christ who is a college student or nurse, etc." not a "College student who is a Follower of Christ." See the difference?
- 4. The Cost: Jesus on the **Cross** (17:19)
  - a. He sanctified Himself for our sanctification.

- b. Not sanctification in the sense of “progressively growing in godliness” but in the sense of “set apart for special use.”
  - i. He came to fulfill His mission. The cross is the mission.
  - ii. **John 12:27** "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour.
  - iii. Jesus's Mission: To *leave this world* via the cross, saving those who believe in Him.
    - 1. That's a bit of an oversimplification, but those are essentially the terms He uses when he says “I am (or will be) no longer in the world” (v. 11) but I come to you (v. 13)
  - iv. Our Mission: To *remain in this world* to tell people about the saving work of Jesus on the cross.
    - 1. The goal of the mission is the same. Our role in the mission is different.
    - 2. You're a part of something bigger than your own life.

## 5. Applying the Word

- a. Is your default posture isolation, assimilation, or ***mission***?
  - i. Do you view yourself as one sent by God into the world?
    - 1. You are both kept by God and sent by God.
    - 2. Not to remain separate but to go to those who need Christ.
      - a. We can get so caught up in really important things – raising godly children, handling our money carefully – that we forget we are sent into the world on a mission.
      - b. So “set apart” that we aren't ever used (Illustration – my knife from my grandma)
  - ii. Think about people you know that don't know Christ. How can you invest, engage, explain, invite?
- b. Be sanctified by the ***truth***.
  - i. If you're on mission but not equipping, your motives are good but you will lack effectiveness. Sanctify and send are linked together in this prayer.
- c. Did Jesus pray for ***you***?
  - i. **John 17:20** "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;
  - ii. “Believe” is the key word in John's gospel – used over 100 times.
  - iii. Man has a problem, God has a solution, we have a responsibility

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- CJ Mahaney

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4. The **Cost**: Jesus on the Cross (17:19)

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b. Be sanctified by the *truth*.

c. Did Jesus pray for *you*?