

**Topic:** Disciplines - Prayer

### **Scriptural References**

John 17:1-26

### **Biblical Explanation**

It has been said that communication is the foundation of all relationships. Prayer is the means by which humanity communicates with God and God's response during prayer is one of the ways He communicates with us. Prayer can simply be defined as personal communication with God.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was fully God and fully man and modeled all aspects of life perfectly (Hebrews 5:9) and Jesus prayed to God the Father often. John 17:1-26 captures a glimpse into Jesus' prayer life.

In verse 1, Jesus lifts his eyes to heaven and then He prays to God the Father. Looking to heaven is not expected of all Christians but our posture, which is how we position our body, communicates reverence and worship. In the Bible we see sitting (1 Chron 17:16-27), kneeling (1 Kings 8:54), bowing (Exodus 34:8), standing (Neh 9:5), hands lifted (2 Chron 6:12), walking (2 Kings 4:35), and lying down or prostrate (Ezra 10:1) all as postures of prayer. You would do well to consider the posture that helps you communicate with God. As your mind and soul connect with God, help your body by considering a posture of prayer.

In verses 1 through 5 of John 17, Jesus prays that the Father would glorify Him and that He would glorify the Father. Glory in this text means to give honor or attention. The Father brings glory to Jesus by allowing him to endure persecution, conquer death, and be resurrected, and ascend to the right hand of the Father. Jesus brings the Father glory by being obedient to the plan the Father set and giving the Father all honor for the plan of salvation that kept humanity from hell. Jesus prays that both He and the Father would glorify one another. While glorifying one another was something Jesus and the Father had done before the dawn of time (v.5), Jesus still communicates His desire for this glory to be manifested when he is talking to God. Simply put, in prayer it's quite ok to state the obvious. Your prayers can flow from your gratitude for norms in your life or declaring norms that you want to see God continue. Pray for God to be glorified in you as you communicate with Him. Pray that your life,

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<sup>1</sup> Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology

situations, and even your prayers would bring much honor and attention to God and that God would use you to make much of His name.

In verses 6 through 8, Jesus prays for the manifestation of God's name in the lives the believers. Manifest means to make known or make clear and obvious to the eye or mind.<sup>2</sup> It is the physical expression of an idea or concept. A good examples of manifestations can be drawn from the film industry. A person may have an idea for a movie and a manifestation of that idea takes place once a script is written or the idea is shown in movie form on the big screen. Jesus wants the beauty of God to go from idea to physical expressions and that happens through lives of believers. The Father is on full display to the world when we live for Jesus. Prayer is a way of asking God the Father for the manifestation of His presence in your life to encourage you and share Jesus with the world.

In verses 9 through 16, Jesus prays for power for believers to have joy (v.13) and be protected (v.15) while in an evil world. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is most known for his speeches and non-violent protests against injustice but an essential part of his power to combat systemic oppression was prayer. Before marching, preaching, or organizing it was common to find Dr. King praying with his team. Prayer allows us to communicate with God our need for Him to intervene in our lives and it is a powerful weapon that God responds to. If Jesus prays such a prayer for us we would do well to pray the same for ourselves and others.

Lastly in verses 17 through 26 of John 17 Jesus prays with purpose. Jesus prays for the Father to sanctify (v.17) the disciples, to set them apart for purposes that will bring Him glory. Jesus prays that their sanctification would be a catalyst for others believing. He prays that believers would experience what Jesus and the Father experience: unity and love (v.22, 26). These are specific prayers with a purpose of empowering the believer and glorifying The Father and Jesus. You and I are Christians today because this prayer was answered. God desires to answer prayer that aligns with His will and purpose.

## **Main Points**

- Prayer is personal communication with God.
- Your posture can help strengthen your connection to God while you pray.

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<sup>2</sup> Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Jesus glorifies the Father by being obedient to the Father's plan of salvation. The Father glorifies Jesus by making Him the focal point of salvation.
- Jesus prays for God to be manifested in the lives of believers.
- Jesus prays for believers to experience power that allows them to be protected and have joy in the midst of an evil world.
- Jesus prays with purpose, specifically for certain things like believers being sanctified and experiencing unity and love.

## Questions

1. What makes prayer personal for you?
2. What posture or other things do you prefer to help you experience God in prayer?
3. What would prayer absent of glorifying God look like? How might you glorify God while praying?
4. What are some manifestations of God that have taken place in your life and in your character? What are some manifestations of God you have seen after praying for others or external situations?
5. What has the power of sanctification looked like in your life? Do you think it's wise to pray for sanctification for non-believers, new believers, and current believers?
6. What can hinder or serve as obstacles to unity? What is the benefit of unity?
7. How has the power of God's love made an impact on your life? Do you think it's wise and valuable to pray that others (and you) would know and feel the love of God?

## Additional Resources

### Books

- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*
- Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### Videos

- A.C.T.S. Prayer - In addition to the points listed above the approach to adoring God, confessing to God, thanking God, and making requests (supplication) of God in prayer is very helpful. This video helps break down this model. "How to Pray: The A.C.T.S. Method of Prayer". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgOHQnjXd6I>