

# YOU

Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus

To be used with: Intimacy with Jesus

Sermon Title Possibilities: Growing through Prayer

Scripture: John 17:1-5,21-26

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “*Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus*,” this sermon from John 17:1-5,21-26 looks at the prayer of Jesus right before His arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. The verses we’re considering speaks to us about ***the priority of prayer, the privilege of prayer, and the product of prayer.***

**Introduction:** With the exception of John’s first ten words, this whole chapter is a record of the prayer that Christ prayed to the Father, for His disciples. This prayer comes on the heels of Christ’s last conversation with His core group of disciples. In chapter 13, He gives them a Picture of Servanthood—when He washes their feet. In 14, He gives them the Promise of the Father—when He tells them they will receive the Holy Spirit. In 15, Christ teaches them about the Priority of Relationship—when He tells them to abide in Him. Again, He speaks of the Holy Spirit in 16, showing the Purpose of the Holy Spirit—when He tells them that He (the Holy Ghost) will guide them in to all truth and glorify Christ. Now, here in John 17, Christ models for them, the Practice that Draws—you see, prayer draws us closer to Jesus as our hearts align with His.

## 1. Notice the Priority of Prayer (v. 1-5)

When you study the life of Christ in the New Testament, it becomes clear—in the words of the late Dr. Adrian Rogers—that the life and ministry of Jesus commenced with prayer (Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:35), was carried-out with prayer (John 11:41-43), concluded with prayer (John 17 and on the cross), and even now, it continues in prayer (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). Christ embodied and exemplified ***The Priority of Prayer***—that is prayer was a priority for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In John 17:1-5, we see, not only that the practice of prayer should be a priority for the believer, but we see also the what was of priority in the prayer of our Master. The text shows us that Christ’s first request of the Father was “Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.” When we pray for the glory of God in and through our lives we are getting closer to Christ and aligning our hearts with His. May the deliver us from just praying to get God in on our desires, and may He mature us where we are praying to get our desires in alignment with His design.

## 2. Notice the Privilege of Prayer (v. 21-24)

In verse 20 the prayer shifts from just being for the disciples that were present with Christ, to being about all saints who would come to trust Christ after them. In these verses Christ is praying for you and me. He's praying that we may be one in Him and that through that oneness the world would see and know that Christ has loved us and sent us. He has already prayed for the preservation of His disciples (v.9-15), and sanctification of His disciples (v.15-19), now He is praying for the unification of His disciples (v.20-25).

The reason we can—and should—pray to the Father is because we are in the Son. The reason we can be unified in space is because we are already unified in His Spirit. We pray to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. This my friend is the privilege of prayer. Pray is one of our greatest privileges and one of our most powerful weapons. We grow through the Word and prayer because when we pray—we are talking to God, and when we read the Bible—God is talking to us. This constant communication keeps us growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

### **3. Notice the Product of Prayer (v. 25-26)**

Some people think that prayer is useless and unnecessary. They think it is useless because God is sovereign and we can't change His mind. They think it is unnecessary because God already knows everything. Let me say this, God is sovereign, and God does know everything. But prayer is not designed to inform nor influence God. Prayer is designed to help us grow in our closeness to Christ and compassion towards the world. Notice what He says in these verses.

"I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them" (v.26). The Product of Prayer is more intimacy with Christ and more love like Christ. The more we talk to Him, the more we become like Him. The more we become like Him, the more we love people the way that He loves people.

**Conclusion:** Friend, a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. A Christian that does not pray is a Christian that will not progress in his faith. The Christian that does not fellowship with Christ is a Christian that will not be formed by Christ. To keep growing, we must keep praying. To bear spiritual fruit, we must regularly be in spiritual fellowship. Today, let's make prayer a priority, let's make God's glory the priority of our prayers, let's seize the privilege of prayer, and grow in the product of prayer—that is getting more close to Christ and having more compassion like Christ.

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