

John 17:20 - 26 - Jesus Prays for all believers.

²⁰“**My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,**”¹ My emphasis.

Because the 11 disciples will have fulfilled the [Great Commission](#) Jesus now moves on to the final portion of His High Priestly Prayer: namely He is now praying for , “...***those who will believe in me through their message,***...” (My emphasis)

Here’s an outline of this passage (John 17:20 - 26, [NIV](#), [NASB](#), [AMP](#), [KJV](#)).

Jesus’ prayer is that all believers have:

- The Same Oneness - verse 21.
- The Same Glory - verse 22.
- The Same Intimacy - verse 23.
- The Same Place - verse 24.
- The Same Close Relationship - verse 25.
- The Same Love - verse 26.

We tend to blend the previous section together with this one and perhaps that is permitted by extension. But when we do this we must guard against an important division that Jesus is making in His prayer. Here’s how chapter 17 has been divided:²

- **Jesus’ prayer regarding Himself** (vs’ 1 - 5).
- **Jesus’ prayer for the 11 disciples** (vs’ 6 - 19).
- **Jesus’ prayer for all believers down through the church age** (vs’ 20 - 26).

So while much of the second section can be applied though extension, I prefer to develop the third section based on a very important dynamic of the Christian experience: discipleship. Verses 21 though 26 have been introduced by verse 20. Let’s take a look at our passage.

“**My prayer is not for them alone....**” Here we have a transition from Jesus’ immediate concern for His disciples to that of disciples that the 11 will engender. In this transition we seen the beginning of discipleship. Look at the phrase “...***those who will believe in me through their message,***...” “Those” refers to you and me. “...Their message...” refers to the disciples fulfilling the Great Commission.

This whole prayer is one of inclusion. First Jesus prays that He be restored to the glory He had before the incarnation. Then He brings the 11 into this circle of heavenly fellowship. In [verse 6](#) He communes with the Father that He revealed the Father to the 11. He gave the same Word that He had been taught in His hypostasis to the disciples ([verse 7, 14](#)) and they had accept that Word as true. Now within the circle of

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² See Past lesson “[Jesus Christ the Intercessor.](#)”

fellowship, Jesus prays that they be protected just as He was - by including them under the Father's protective care ([verse 11](#)).

Next Jesus includes those whom the 11 will engender - all believers of the church age. We must note that the service of discipleship is in view here. Consider our own blessed relationship with the LORD. If it were not for the passing of the Gospel from generation to generation we would be still in our sins! So when Jesus prays for us, we must remember what went on before - the loving inclusion of the 11 in that circle of heavenly fellowship and the inclusion of all believers of the church age in that blessed family of God - all because the 11 disciples obeyed the Great Commission to make disciples in all the world ([Matt 28:16 - 20](#)). Let us take a look at the wonderful results of this discipleship and the blessings that come from our relationship with Him.

Transitional Verse

²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me *through their message*, NIV, My emphasis.

Jesus Prays That We Have the Same Oneness as the Father and the Son.

²¹**that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.** NIV.

This Oneness is not merely referring to church unity - it certainly includes that but Jesus is praying for much more than this. He is praying that we all enjoy the same fellowship that the Father and the Son have. There are three “in”s in this passage [*gk = prep en - in the sphere of, in connection with*] - this is where I get the thought of inclusion from.³ The first two refer to the reciprocity of fellowship between the Father and the Son. The third inclusion “in” puts all believers in that circle of fellowship. Lenski points out that this Oneness is not a “likeness” but is a vital connection.⁴ Lenski points out further that in order for the church to have unity with each member of the church, each member must be One with the Father and Jesus. He goes on to say that “...*Union with God and with Christ makes us a unit in ourselves.*”

The result of this relationship with the Godhead is that others are brought into this blessed relationship [through fulfilling the Great Commission]. Note the purpose clause introduced by “so.” The heavenly desire of the Father and the Son is that the rest of the world be included in this circle of fellowship “...**so that the world may believe that you have sent me...**”⁵ 'This is the fruit of our Oneness with the Godhead' - a quote of Luther by Lenski. What we have here is of great missionary importance. In order to have an outreach throughout the world in bringing millions to Christ, we must first start at home. Oneness with the Godhead will result in an outreach to the world - that is the divine commission!

³ We must guard against the English usage of the preposition “in” as though, somehow we can put the Father into the Son and the Son into the Father. That is not the force of the Greek preposition *en* - see main text for this.

⁴ THE INTERPRETATION OF JOHN, Lenski, page 1156.

⁵ [2 Peter 3:9](#). [2 Tim 2:3, 4](#).

Jesus Prays That We Have the Same Glory as the Father and the Son.

²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: NIV.

Jesus did not have to ask for glory - we have already studied that subject - the subject of the *kenosis* or the *humiliation*.⁶ What Jesus asked for in verses 1 - 5 was that He be ascended from His *humiliation* in hypostasis as the God-Man to His glory. But he never did *not* have glory - He merely limited His glory in such a way that He could take upon Himself the form of a servant. He now affirms that He has given all believers the same glory that had been given Him in His humanity.

What? How can we as sinners be given the same glory as Jesus had been given in His humanity? Let's take a look at some passages. In 2 Peter 1:4 ([NIV](#), [NASB](#), [AMP](#), [KJV](#)) we are told that we are partakers - sharers in the divine nature [*gk = Koinonos - to have fellowship in to share or partake in*]. In 2 Cor 3:18 ([NIV](#), [NASB](#), [AMP](#), [KJV](#)) we look with an unveiled face - a face that is unencumbered in viewing, hence unveiled so that we can see clearly and are as a result transformed - see also [2 Cor 3:14](#). In this way we are transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory. I think we have the final commentary on this glory that is given to all believers in 1 John 3:2 ([NIV](#), [NASB](#), [AMP](#), [KJV](#)) where John says that we will be like (resemble) Him for we shall see [*gk = Optanomai from which we get our word Opthamology*] Him as He is [in His glory]. So how, or more appropriately, why are we to be given the same glory as was given Jesus in His humanity? The answer is in the second part of this verse in the form of a purpose clause: "...**that they may be one as we are one:...**". If I can be a bit irreverent, this is the Crème de la Crème of our fellowship with the Father and the Son. If I can take this even a bit further - we are not God's *pets* - but we *are* His *children*. We are going to be able to fellowship with the LORD in the ultimate way because we share in His glory.

Jesus Prays That We Have the Same Intimacy as the Father and the Son.

²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. KJV.

Oh! This is truly a crescendo of the theme of Oneness. We have already covered the word "in" - but look at the building of this mighty theme - we are to be made *perfect in one*. "Perfect" here is related to the words that Jesus said on the cross when He said "It is *finished!*" If it wasn't enough for us to realize that we will be with the LORD in eternity - what more of a wonderful prospect can we hope for than our relationship with Him will be *completely fulfilled*? And to be loved by the Father just as He loved the Son? This intimacy is just so perfect and fulfilling. There are two purpose clauses in this verse. The first one tells of the perfection in our relationship with the LORD. The second purpose clause brings us back down to earth and says that the world will see this love and will be drawn to it.

⁶ Read [Phil 2:5 - 8](#). Also see my lesson "[Jesus Christ, the Intercessor](#)", last par page 1, page 2.

Jesus Prays That We Be in the Same Place as the Father and the Son.

²⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. NIV.

I take this with a note of poignancy but also of great anticipation by Jesus. “Father, I *want*... the original *Thebo* denotes a strong desire. Jesus has enjoyed the closeness of the disciples. He is going to miss them - I hope I’m being not too sentimental here, but I think this is the force of “I want.” Yes, it’s necessary that the disciples stay behind and be the evangelists - the church apostles - but He is stating an earnest desire here that He and His friends be reunited - together. See [14:1 - 3](#). Afterward, John and the disciples missed Jesus, their Lord. Every disciple down through the church has and will miss the Lord - and it should be that way. Well, some day we *will* be with Him at the same place as He affirmed in this, His prayer for us.

Jesus Affirms That We Will Know the Father as He Knows the Father.

²⁵O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.. KJV (a better translation than NIV).

Jesus uses the attribute “Righteous” along with the Father’s name. There is a reason for this as was “Holy” when used in verse 11. Holy was used in verse 11 in connection with the Holy Father’s care and possession of the 11. The 11 were to be set aside as holy unto the Father and so, they would be protected. Now, however another attribute, Righteous, is used and for this reason: two groups of mankind are set before the Father - those who did not know⁷ the Father and those who did know⁸ the Father. In using the attribute of “righteous” Jesus is at once condemning the unbelieving world by placing them before the righteous Father/Judge and at the same time commending all believers to the Father/God as His own friends worthy through His shed blood for intimate communion with Him *because of the imputed righteousness of Christ*.

Jesus Affirms That We Will be Loved by the Father as He is Loved by the Father.

²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” NIV.

Oh! What a wonderful end to Jesus’ priestly prayer for us all! Jesus is promising us that He will be constantly interceding for us. This is more for our benefit. The Father does not need to be reminded that He needs to Love us. No. But we will need this constant reminder. And so He promises just that. Look at the constant, never-ending love that Jesus showed the disciples. There was never a time when His love would have been called into question. And so it is and will be with us. He will always intercede for us and will always make the Father known to us. Amen.

⁷ Aorist - all points of time when unbelief and rejection left sinners in ignorance of the Father.

⁸ Again aorist - all points of time when belief in Christ and the Father led to intimacy with the Father.