

# JESUS PRAYED FOR HIS DISCIPLES

## JOHN 17:09–19

### ***Introduction***

Jesus prayed for His disciples. What He prayed was striking and full of meaning for believers of every generation.

- I. Jesus prayed for His disciples (vv. 9-11).
- II. Request 1: that God would keep them and keep them together as one (vv. 11-12).
- III. Request 2: that they might have His joy in all its fullness (v. 13).
- IV. Request 3: that God would keep them from the evil one, from Satan (vv. 14-16).
- V. Request 4: that God would sanctify them (vv. 17-19).

### **I. *John 17:09–11 Jesus Prayed for His Disciples***

Jesus prayed for His disciples. He was not praying for the world, not now. He specifically said so. Why?

=> It was not because He and the Father do not love the world. They do; they love the world deeply (Jn. 3:16). The world was the very reason Jesus had come to earth: to save the world and keep it from perishing.

=> It was not because the world did not need prayer. It did, and He prayed for the forgiveness and conversion of men in the world (Lk. 23:34).

There are four reasons why Jesus was praying only for His disciples. Note that the reasons are part of His prayer.

1. Jesus' disciples had been given to Him *by His Father* (v. 9). They belonged to His Father, but they had been *entrusted into His hands*. He was responsible for them and their welfare. Therefore, He had to pray for them, that His Father would give them special strength in the coming days.

*Eph 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love.*

*1 Pet 1:2 Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

2. Jesus' disciples belonged to both Him and the Father (v. 10). Note exactly how Jesus worded this: "All I have is yours, and all you have is mine." All the disciples were God's; they belonged to God. But all the disciples of God also belonged to Jesus. This is the mutual possession of all believers by both Jesus and God. They are both deeply concerned over the welfare of believers. God is as concerned over believers as Jesus is; therefore, Jesus can count on God's hearing and answering His prayer.
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**John 10:29** “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

**John 17:23** “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

**Rom 8:29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers.

3. Jesus’ disciples glorified Jesus; their lives brought glory to Him (v. 10). They lived for Him by obeying His Word and working for Him and showing loyalty and allegiance. They lifted Him up to the world and proclaimed Him to be the Saviour of the world and the Lord of the universe. He was thereby glorified, honoured and praised; therefore, He prayed for them — that they might become strong in their lives and witness for Him.

**2 Th 1:12** We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Pet 2:9** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

4. Jesus was leaving the world and returning to heaven and the Father (v. 11). The whole mission of preaching the gospel to the world rested upon the shoulders of His disciples. They were the ones who were to go out into the world as His ambassadors to proclaim His Word. As they went, they needed to be strengthened and equipped by God to stand against some terrible forces. His followers were the ones who needed special prayer. His whole mission of reaching the world for God depended upon their endurance and faithfulness. In these last hours before He returned to heaven, He had to pray for them with power and intensity, asking great things of God.

**Mat 28:19-20** “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**John 20:21** Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

### JOHN 17:10 JESUS CLAIMS DEITY

“All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.” **John 17:10**

“All I have is yours, and all you have is mine.” What a phenomenal claim! A man can say that all he is and has belongs to God, but no man can say that all God is and has belongs to him. In Jesus’ very prayer He was claiming deity — oneness with God.

The clear evidence that Jesus was the embodiment of God is threefold. (See Jn. 14:10; Jn. 10:30.)

1. God's presence was proof that Jesus was the embodiment of God. God was *in* Jesus, and Jesus was *in* God. This can be called the *mutual Indwelling Presence* of God and Christ, each dwelling in the other. This simply means that each has the nature and being, the Spirit and Mind, of the other. Each has the Presence, the very Being and Spirit, of the other dwelling within Him — *perfectly*.

Note the point Jesus was making. The proof that He was the embodiment of God, that He was the One who came to earth to reveal God, is clear: God's presence is not only *with* Him; God's presence is *in* Him. He Himself *is* God. He Himself — His Person, His Being, His nature, His character, His love, His care, His just dealings, all that He is — revealed exactly what God is. Note also that Jesus asked Philip a question: "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"

**John 10:30** *"I and the Father are one."*

**John 10:37-38** *"Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."*

**John 14:10-11** *"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."*

**John 14:20** *"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."*

**John 17:11** *"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one."*

**John 17:21-22** *"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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one."*

2. Jesus' words were proof that He was the embodiment of God. His words were the very Words of God which God Himself wanted to say to man. When Jesus spoke, it was the Father who was speaking through Him. Look at His words, His teaching, and His doctrine, and know that He was who He claimed to be: the Son of God Himself, the very embodiment of God. (Jn. 7:16-19)

**Mark 13:31** *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

**Luke 4:22** All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

**Luke 4:32** They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

**John 3:34** For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

**John 6:63** “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”

**John 6:68** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

**John 7:16** Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.”

**John 7:46** “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.

**John 8:51** “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

**John 12:48** “There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.”

**John 14:23-24** Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

**1 Tim 6:3-4** If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions.

**1 John 2:3** We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

**2 John 1:9** Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

3. Jesus’ works were proof that He was the embodiment of God (Jn. 5:19; 5:20; 5:36; See *Jesus Christ Claims Deity*, Jn. 10:25). □

## II. **John 17:11–12** *Jesus Prayed for the Unity of His Disciples*

First, Jesus prayed that God would keep His disciples — keep them together as one. Jesus was praying for the disciples to be kept from the *divisiveness* of the world, not that they would be kept from evil. He dealt with the evil of the world later (vv. 14-15). Note two points.

1. The disciples were in an extremely divisive world (See *Unity*, Jn. 17:11).

2. Jesus kept the disciples while He was in the world. He lost none except Judas, and Judas' betrayal was to fulfil Scripture. Jesus was faithful *to God's name*, faithful in revealing God and lifting up His name to the disciples. Now He was leaving the world, so God had to take over. It was now up to God to keep them, and He would. God would keep the disciples as well as Christ did, for God was both faithful and able.

### JOHN 17:11 BELIEVERS ARE TO WALK IN UNITY

*“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one.”*

**John 17:11**

Believers are to be one just as Jesus and the Father are one. The unity between believers is to be as strong as the unity between Jesus and His Father. This is a phenomenal truth, a truth that consumed the Lord's thoughts. It was the very theme of Jesus' prayer (vv. 11, 21, 22, 23). Believers must be one. Note two points.

1. Believers are in an extremely divisive world, a world full of...

- prejudice
- angry spirits
- competition
- possessiveness
- lust
- pride
- selfishness
- self-praise
- egotism
- hate
- hurt
- war

The list is unlimited, for divisiveness comes from the depraved nature of man, the nature that Christ came to change and to convert to love. The divisive world was a threat to the early disciples. Being in the world, they could have been influenced and led astray in the ways of divisiveness. Jesus had to pray for them, for God to keep them together as one.

Note Jesus' request. It is an eye-opener, an astounding request: “That they may be one, *as we are one*.” Believers are to be as unified as God and Christ are. What does this mean? It means that we are to have the *same kind* of unity that Jesus and the Father have. We are to be one in *nature, character and purpose*.

- a. Believers are to be one in nature. The believer is a person who...

- has been “born again” (See *New Birth, Born Again*, Jn. 3:1-15. See Jn. 1:13; Tit. 3:5; 1 Jn. 2:29; 4:7.)

**1 Pet 1:23** *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

**1 John 5:1** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

- has been made into a “new creation,” become a “new self” or “new man” (see Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

**2 Cor 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

- has become a partaker of the “divine nature.”

**2 Pet 1:4** *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

However, the nature of believers includes more than just a personal rebirth of one’s spirit. When a man becomes a believer, his new nature makes him a member of God’s...

- new body of people

**Eph 2:16** *And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

- new nation

**Eph 2:19** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.*

- new temple

**Eph 2:21** *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.*

- new family

**Eph 2:19** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.*

- new fellowship or church

**Eph 2:22** *And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

- new building

**Eph 2:20-22** *Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

- new race (see Eph. 4:17-19)

**Eph 4:17** *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

(Note: the word *other* is not in the Greek. The believer is a new creation, a new race distinct from the Gentiles. He is no longer to walk as the Gentiles walk.)



This, of course, means that a believer is to live and walk in unity with other believers. He is not to allow the divisive spirit of the world to infiltrate his life: grumbling, griping, complaining, criticizing, envying, gossiping, opposing, bypassing, overlooking, ignoring, isolating. (See Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Cor. 3:16.)

b. Believers are to be one in character. They are...

- to be godly and holy, denying the works of the flesh (sinful nature) and living pure lives even as Jesus and His Father are one in their holy Being and Life (see “Holy Father,” v. 11).

**Titus 2:12-13** *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

**1 Pet 1:15-16** *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

**2 Pet 1:5-7** *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

**Gal 5:19-21** *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

- to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

**Gal 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

c. Believers are to be one in purpose. They are to surrender and give all they are and have to minister and proclaim the message of salvation to a lost and dying world, a world reeling in desperate need. Believers are to give all for the salvation of the world just as Jesus and the Father gave all for the salvation of the world.

**2 Cor 5:20** *We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

**John 20:21** *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

**Mat 20:28** *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” □*

JOHN 17:11–12 SECURITY AND ASSURANCE

*“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one. While I am with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.”* **John 17:11-12**

The *keeping power* of God does not mean that God delivers believers from the trials of this world, but He delivers them through the trials. It means that He gives a victorious life. The believer is guaranteed a victorious life if he will just follow Christ. There are two reasons for this guaranteed security. First, God is bound to answer the prayer of His Son; and second, God the Father has given all Christian believers to Christ. This fact is said six times in this chapter alone (Jn. 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). God will allow absolutely nothing to separate Christian believers from His Son.

**John 6:39** *“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”*

**John 10:27-29** *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”*

**Rom 8:35** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

**Phil 1:6** *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

**2 Th 3:3** *But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

**2 Tim 1:12** *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

**1 Pet 1:5** *Who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

**Jude 1:24** *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.*

**Rev 3:10** *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. □*



### III. *John 17:13 Jesus Prayed for Joy in All Its Fullness*

Second, Jesus prayed that the disciples would have His joy in all its full measure. The joy of believers is fulfilled as believers study His Word, the promises and commandments which He made. (See *Joy*, Jn. 15:11.)

*John 15:11* “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

*John 17:13* “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”

*1 Pet 2:2-3* Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

*Jer 15:16* When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.

The source of joy, of rejoicing and being glad. Joy (chara) and rejoicing or *being glad* (echarete, the same root word as joy) mean an inner gladness and a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behaviour. The source of joy is threefold.

1. The return of Jesus to the Father causes believers to joy and rejoice. “I am going away and I am coming back to you” is a reference to His death, resurrection, and ascension.
  - a. The death or cross of Christ attracts and causes men to joy and rejoice. The cross is the source of their deliverance from sin, death, and hell (Jn. 12:32).

*John 12:32* “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

- b. The resurrection and ascension of Christ attracts and causes men to joy and rejoice or be glad. The resurrection and ascension are the sources of their new life and hope for eternity.

*Rom 5:1-2* Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

*Psa 16:11* You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

2. The Father's greatness causes believers to joy and rejoice or be glad. The Father demonstrated His great love and power by releasing Jesus...
  - from the sinful nature, the flesh: with all its limitations and weaknesses
  - from the world: with all its trials and temptations
  - from the devil: with all his oppression, deception, accusations and attacks
  - from the pressure of men: with all their demands, threats, attacks and rejection

The Father took Jesus home, back from where He had come; and He restored Him to His seat of glory, exalting Him above every name that is named (Phil. 2:9-11). The believer joys and rejoices in the phenomenal power of the Father's greatness.

**John 16:24** *"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."*

**Rom 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**Phil 4:4** *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

**Thought 1.** The implication of the Father's power for the believer is phenomenal. The believer will also be released from the sinful nature, the flesh, the world, the devil, and the pressure of men, just as Jesus was.

3. A confirmed faith causes believers to joy and rejoice or be glad. The claims of Jesus have been proven and verified. Just as He told His disciples, all that He predicted has come to pass.

⇒ He did leave (die).

⇒ He did return (the resurrection).

⇒ He did go to His Father (the ascension).

⇒ He did send the Holy Spirit.

Note: by foretelling these things, Jesus strengthened the faith of believers enormously. (In fact, think about it: He could have chosen no better way to strengthen the faith of believers.)

**John 15:11** *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

### JOHN 15:11 JOY (CHARA)

*"I told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:11*

An inner gladness; a deep-seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behaviour.

Several things need to be said about the believer's joy.

1. Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy (Jn.15:11; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; 1 Th. 1:6).
2. Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the most troublesome matters of life and death (Psa. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:10; 7:4).

3. Joy springs from faith (Rom. 15:13; Phil. 1:25; 2 Tim. 1:4; see Mt. 2:10).
4. Joy of future reward makes and keeps one faithful (Mt. 25:21, 23; Acts 20:24; Heb. 12:2).

The source of the believer's joy is several fold.

1. The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4; Psa. 16:11).
2. Victory over sin, death, and hell brings joy (Jn. 14:28; 16:20-22; Isa. 12:3; 61:10).
3. Repentance brings joy (Lk. 15:7, 10).
4. The hope of glory brings joy (Rom. 14:17; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 4:13).
5. The Lord's Word, the revelations, commandments, and promises which He made bring joy (Jn. 15:11).
6. The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer's heart (Jn. 15:11, 32; 17:13; Acts 13:52; Jer. 15:16).
7. Prayer brings joy (Jn. 16:24).
8. The presence and fellowship of believers bring joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4).
9. Converts bring joy (Lk. 15:5; Phil. 4:1; 1 Th. 2:19-20; Psa. 126:5).
10. Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy (3 Jn. 1:4).
11. Giving brings joy (2 Cor. 8:2; Heb. 10:34). □

#### **IV. *John 17:14–16 Prayer for Protection from Satan***

Third, Jesus prayed that God would keep the disciples from the world and from the evil one or Satan. Both the world and Satan are evil and stand opposed to all that Jesus and His disciples proclaimed.

- ⇒ The world and Satan stand against the love of God. Why? Because God's love is not the *grand-fatherly love of indulgence*. God's love is the true love of obedience, an obedience that gives all one *is* and *has* to meet the needs of a desperate world lost in sin and death. True love loves so much that it gives everything and does all it can to help any who are in desperate need. Most men in the world are unwilling to give anything other than a mere token, and even then recognition is desired for what little is given.
- ⇒ The world and Satan stand against the holiness and justice of God. Why? Because it means that both must stand before God some day to give an account of their lives and deeds, sins and dirt, pollution and evil.
- ⇒ The world and Satan stand against Jesus. Why? Because Jesus was the One who claimed to be the Son of God, and if He is truly the Son of God, then total allegiance is due Him. And neither the world nor Satan are willing to serve anyone other than self.

There were three primary reasons why God needed to protect the disciples from the world and the devil.

1. The world and the devil hated the disciples of Jesus. Note why.
  - a. The disciples of Christ have the Word of God. It is God's Word that reveals...
    - God's love, a sacrificial love that gives all it has, is different from the love the world wants. (See *Love*, Mt. 5:44; notes, 22:37-38; 22:39.)
    - God's holiness and justice and man's depravity, a fact that man rejects and refuses to face.
    - Christ, the Son of God Himself, who demands total allegiance and commitment to become ministers and servants of God.
  - b. The disciples were not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world.

=> Jesus came from God, "out of heaven" (See *Christ from Above*, Jn. 3:31).

=> The disciples and other believers were born again by the Spirit of God and given the very nature of God. The world and the devil want absolutely nothing to do with a selfless and sacrificial nature, a righteous and godly nature that gives all one is and has to meet the needs of the diseased and starving and lost masses of the world. (See *New Birth, Born Again*, Jn. 3:1-15. See Jn. 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Jn. 5:1; 2:29; 4:7.)

**John 13:34-35** "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**Rom 5:8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 John 3:16** This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

2. The disciples were needed in the world. The need was not for them to be taken out of the world; the need was for them to be kept from the evil one or from Satan (see Eph. 6:10-18). The disciples were called to be ambassadors and messengers of God in the world. God's mission to save the world depended upon their loyalty and faithfulness. They had to be kept and protected and covered with the armour of God.

**Eph 6:10-11** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

**1 Pet 5:8** Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

3. The disciples were now of the same nature as Jesus. This is the same truth stated in v. 14. The truth is so glorious, it has to be re-emphasized. Note that it is also the main reason the world and the devil attack the believer (see Jn. 15:19-24).

**Rom 12:1-2** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

## V. **John 17:17–19** *Prayer for Sanctification of His Disciples*

Fourth, Jesus prayed that God would sanctify the disciples. Note the two things said about the disciple or believer.

=> He is to be sanctified (See *Sanctification*, Jn. 17:17).

=> He is to be sanctified through God's truth, and God's truth is said to be God's Word. God's Word would refer to both the *living Word*, the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ Himself (see *Comforter*, Jn. 14:16) and to the spoken or *written Word* (see notes, Jn. 7:16-19; 14:10; 2 Tim. 3:16; *Prophecy Fulfilled, Scripture Fulfilled*, 2 Pet. 1:19-21; *The Bible, Scripture*, 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

The disciples needed to be set apart to God *through His truth* for two reasons.

1. They were being sent into the world just as Jesus had been sent into the world. Jesus had come into the world to bring men back to God through reconciliation. The disciples had to be set apart to this same task.

**John 20:21** *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

**Mat 20:28** *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

**Mat 28:19-20** *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**Mark 16:15** *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*

**Acts 1:8** *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

**2 Cor 5:19-20** *That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

**1 Pet 3:15** *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*



2. Sanctification is the way of salvation chosen to reach the world. Jesus had set Himself apart to please God, and He pleased God to the ultimate degree. No matter the cost, the glory of God was to be done. Perfect obedience to God was the chosen way of salvation. Being set apart to serve and worship God is what salvation is all about. This is the reason Jesus prayed for His disciples to be sanctified. (See *Sanctification*, 1 Pet. 1:15-16.)

**Thought 1.** Believers are sanctified through the truth, that is, through God's Word. It is through the study and practice of God's Word that believers are set apart unto God. As a believer studies God's Word, he sees more and more how he is to live. As he sees, he sets himself apart to live the way God tells him to live. The Word of God holds new instructions for the believer every day. The Word of God shows the believer how to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ every day. But note the crucial point: the believer must come to the truth, to the Word of God *every day* if he wishes to be *set apart* unto God for that day. ■

### JOHN 17:17 SANCTIFY, SANCTIFICATION

*“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” John 17:17*

The word *sanctify* means to be set apart, to be separated (see 1 Pet. 1:15-16). There are three stages of sanctification.

1. There is initial or positional sanctification. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is immediately set apart for God permanently, once-for-all (Heb. 3:1; see Heb. 10:10).
2. There is progressive sanctification. The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him to the image of Christ more and more. This growth takes place as long as the believer walks upon this earth (see Jn. 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:25-26; 1 Th. 5:23-24).
3. There is eternal sanctification. The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service — without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer's eternal redemption (Eph. 5:27; 1 Jn. 3:2). □