

## John Lesson 19 Articles

Jesus came into a Jewish world that had developed a remote view of God, one that needed angels to carry messages. The people had ceased to use the name of God for fear of taking his name in vain, just like the Prodigal Son, who could speak of “heaven” but not use the name of God (Luke 15:18, 21). Into this context of speaking of God by means of surrogate titles Jesus came and called God his Father. But what was even more astounding was that he taught his disciples to pray “Our Father” (Matt 6:9). For the Jews of that day such a personal view of God was very degrading of God and akin to blasphemy (John 5:18). Yet in spite of his personal sense of the Father’s presence, Jesus modeled for his disciples how to honor and glorify God through consistent obedience to the will of the Father. It is this wonderful sense of Jesus’ personal relationship to God that John captured in this magisterial prayer of John 17. Few passages of Scripture come so close to revealing the heart of God’s special agent as these magnificent twenty-six verses.<sup>1</sup>

**John 17:1–5** The great theme of these verses is that He has finished the work of salvation. Beginning at 2:4, John has often mentioned “the hour.” Use your concordance and trace the pattern of these verses for yourself. “I have finished the work”—the work of salvation—and because of this, “I have glorified Thee on the earth” (v. 4). Christ always looked upon the cross as a means of glorifying God (12:23). Paul also saw glory in the cross (Gal. 6:14).

Christ prays that the Father will give Him again the glory He laid aside when He came to earth to die (Phil. 2:1–12). The only time that His glory was revealed on earth was on the Mount of Transfiguration (John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16–18). Note the “gives” in v. 2: (1) The Father has given the Son authority over all mankind; (2) the Son gives eternal life to (3) those the Father has given the Son. One of the precious truths in John 17 is that each believer is God’s love gift to the Son! (John 6:37) This is a mystery we cannot explain, but we thank God for it! “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29). This means that our salvation is secure, for the Father will not take us from the Son!

“I have manifested Thy name” (v. 6)—this statement should be related to the “I AM” statements of Christ in John’s Gospel. God’s name is I AM (Ex. 3:13–14), and Christ reveals that God is to us whatever we need Him to be. To the hungry Christ says, “I am the Bread of Life.” To the lost He says, “I am the Way.” To the blind He says, “I am the Light of the World.”<sup>2</sup>

**John 17** stresses Christ’s desire for believers to “be one as We are One.” This has been taken as a prayer for Christian unity, and an argument for denomination unification.

Believers across the ages have yearned for the new community Jesus described to His disciples in the Upper Room. We long for the loving fellowship, the humility expressed in foot-washing, the deep experience of Jesus’ presence, the sense of remaining in Him.

Some have found this ideal impossible to reach in society, and so they have formed separate communities. The monastery of the Middle Ages and the commune of the twentieth century often have been attempts to withdraw from carnal Christians or from the pollution of pagan culture.

But in these chapters (John 13–17) we do not hear Jesus advocate *withdrawal*. He calls us to *involvement*! The Christian does not experience Christ by removing himself from the world; we experience Christ *in* the world, though we are distinctly not *of* the world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Borchert, G. L. (2002). *John 12–21* (Vol. 25B, pp. 187–188). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 257–258). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher’s commentary* (p. 745). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.