



Week 27
Discussion Questions

Text: John 17:1-26

Icebreaker: What is a spiritual gift God has produced in you lately for the benefit of his purposes? (You might take the opportunity to encourage someone in the ways you have seen the spirit gifting them if they do not see it in themselves).

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out from the text or sermon?
2. John 17 is called "the High-Priestly Prayer" in which Jesus prays to the Father before his arrest and crucifixion. The prayer has three general sections: Jesus prayer for himself, for his disciples, and for all future believers. Describe what he prays for in each section:
 - Prayer for Himself:
 - Glorify your son, that your son may glorify you (v. 4-5)
 - That his obedience would produce Eternal life for all
 - Prayer for Disciples:
 - That God would keep them/guard them
 - Sanctify and consecrate them toward unity and the mission of God, producing joy
 - Prayer for future believers:
 - Dwelling place tied to John 2, John 14, 17:23--we are the dwelling place of God, united people.
 - The aspiration and prayer of Jesus is for the unity of his body, love for one another
3. What does Jesus' prayers for himself and for us teach us about his nature and character?
The last thoughts and prayers of Jesus to God before his death are selfless: God's glory and our unity. Jesus' heart is to do the will of the Father and to draw all those who might believe to be known and be in relationship with the Father. And to be one with the Father. The God of the universe became flesh and dwelt among us for this purpose.
4. While the Bible is for us, it was not originally written to us. However, future believers, including each of us, are named specifically in Jesus' prayer in John 17. You were on Jesus' mind before he went to the cross. What is it he wanted most for you?
To know and be known by God, to have eternal life. To live in unity with him and one another. This would be life to the full.
5. How does Jesus define *eternal life*? How does this definition shape what you believe about the nature of eternal life?
So often we think of *eternal life* as simply going to heaven. But it is more than that—it is eternity with God, in relationship with the God of the universe, knowing him and being known by him. It's hard to really fathom, but how great is God that this is his desire for us?

6. In v. 11 and again in v. 20-21, Jesus prays for the unity of the believers and compares this unity to Jesus' unity with the Father. What should this kind of unity look like among believers? (Reference: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Romans 12:3-21; Ephesians 4:1-16).

Unity among the believers requires being unified with Christ and his Spirit. John 15 talked about abiding in Christ—when we are rooted in Christ and connected to the vine, the Holy Spirit indwells us and produces fruit—the fruit of the Spirit will naturally change our hearts towards others, changing our motivations from selfish ones to Christ centered ones. Unity comes when we all have the same motivations: Christ and his mission.

7. What makes unity difficult in the church? What causes disunity among believers?
The church is made up of sinful people. Like the Israelites, we can't help but want to do what is right in our own eyes. We are selfish and selfishly motivated. It is easy to be blinded by our own pride, ambitions, and desires, confusing our will for God's will.
8. Share a time when you experienced unity among the body of believers in a time when disunity would have been easier.
9. Jesus says that he has given his glory for the purpose of unity. Unity is important in the kingdom, and we should seek the unity of the Spirit. What is one area of your life presently in the body of believers that you could actively seek unity and how could you do it?
10. The word *know/known* is used nine times throughout John 17. Describe what it is like to *be known* by someone else. How does this experience translate to your relationship with God, *knowing* and *being known* by him?
11. Spend some time praying, specifically for unity in the body of believers: in your group, in our church, in the church in our community, in the church in America, and in the global church.