

INTRO

- Can you tell us about one of the happiest days of your life?

In this series, we've been looking at what the Bible has to teach us about prayer. We will now begin to look at some of the prayers in the Bible.

READ

John 17

REFLECT

In this chapter Jesus Christ prays one of his last prayers. Right before he was arrested and crucified, he prayed to the Father for the sake of his disciples, both those with him and everyone who has believed through their word. That prayer can teach us what Christ thought most important to pray for, so we can seek and pray for these same things.

Qu: What do you think people ask God for? What have been the most common petitionary (asking) prayers in your life?

MAY GOD KEEP US (v. 11-12)

The first thing Christ prayed on our behalf was that God would keep us in His name. A name represented more than just a word, but rather the person's very character and being. Christ prayed that God would keep us from falling and would stay firm in Him.

Qu: Is this a common prayer, that God would keep us? In which sense?

Qu: Can you remember any other prayer in the Bible for a similar thing?

MAY GOD MAKE US ONE (v. 20-23)

The history of the Church doesn't seem to be one of unity, but to Jesus this was one of the most important requests. He prayed that our unity

would be similar to that between him and the Father and that this unity would cause people to believe in him.

Qu: How would you define church unity? What is essential to unity and what is not?

Qu: Are we praying for and working toward unity? Are there any steps we can take to obey God's will in that regard?

MAY GOD SANCTIFY US (v. 15-17)

Jesus also prayed that God would sanctify us. That means that God would set us apart from the world for a holy purpose. Note that there are two sides to it: we are to be set apart *from* the world and *to* a holy purpose. And for both things, Jesus prayed that we would be sanctified in the truth: God's word.

Qu: What should being set apart from the world look like in our lives?

Qu: What about being set apart to God? How does this differ from the first aspect? Is this something we pray for?

Qu: How does the word of God sanctify us? Has this been a truth in your life?

At the end of his prayer, Christ asked the Father that his disciples would be with him and see his glory (v. 24). At the end of the day, all these prayers are meant to bring us closer to the very purpose of our existence: to know God, to love Him and be with Him, and this is only possible through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and in our lives.

RESPOND & PRAY

- In what way/s does this part of God's Story encourage and or challenge you?
- How will you apply this to your life?
- Pray for one another in light of the discussion.