

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) The High Priestly Prayer (John 17) is Jesus' longest recorded prayer in the Bible. Thus far (we have progressed through 17 of the 26 verses), what significant observations have you made about how Jesus prays? How can this have an effect on the prayers which you share with God?
- B) When Jesus is commending His disciples to God, He makes a big deal of the disciples receiving and believing in the words which Christ has shared and embodied for them. Have you ever known a Christian (perhaps, you are one of these!) who believes in Jesus Christ, but not in some of the things He did or said? How does this square with Scripture, is it possible? From another perspective, is "right belief" required for "right faith?"
- C) Unity is a critical issue within Jesus Christ's relationship with God the Father. Christ called on His disciples to remain in unity with one another, as well as with God, despite His departure to the cross. It would be easy to look around at the hundreds (even thousands...) of denominations around the world and become convinced that we have all failed at the task of unity. Is unity possible in the church? How is the church unified? What was Christ's purpose in praying for unity, how should it work itself out here at Long Beach Alliance Church?
- D) Jesus felt deeply that His disciples would be able to handle their role in the world as they were sanctified (set apart, made holy) by the words which He shared with them. Of course, today, we are deeply blessed to have all of Christ's essential words preserved for us in the pages of the Bible, God's Word. It would seem that our time spent reading and understanding God's written Word, helps us in our relationship with the Living Word (Jesus Christ). In fact, the two are very much inseparable (Hebrews 4:12). Take some time in your group to pray for one another's burdens and for increased time spent in God's Word, the Bible. Before you pray, share with each other a creative way you will spend more time this month in God's Word, then, keep one another accountable for this time!

What Is Truth?

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 25th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**I HAVE GIVEN THEM YOUR WORD;
AND THE WORLD HAS HATED
THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT
OF THE WORLD, EVEN AS I AM
NOT OF THE WORLD.**

~JOHN 17:14 (NASB)

1) A Disciple Of Jesus Christ Is Obedient To The Word!

- A) Jesus, who has revealed God to those disciples which God has given to Him (John 17:6), commends His disciples to God as being obedient to God's self-revelation in Christ.
- B) Jesus continues to commend His disciples' knowledge of God as the source (like the source of a fountain) of Christ (17:7).
- C) Jesus details his commendation of His disciples as receiving, understanding and believing "the words" which Christ has shared (17:8).
- D) Jesus is essentially saying, "God, look at those You have

given to Me, they have received and believed in Your revelation, Jesus Christ.”

2) A Disciple Of Jesus Christ Remains In The Word!

- A) Jesus, preparing for His “hour of glory” (John 17:1-5), makes His requests on behalf of His disciples because they are remaining in the world, while Jesus is leaving the world (17:9-11), note the present tense of Christ’s departure!

- B) Appealing to the perfect unity which exists between God and Christ (17:10), Jesus asks that God guard (“keep,” NASB or “protect,” NIV) the disciples with the same relationship which exists between God and Jesus Christ (17:11).

- C) The relationship of unity which is “in the name” of God is characterized by unity in heart, mind and will. It is this unity with God and with each other which Christ has preserved (17:12) and is in contrast to the actions of Judas Iscariot*.

- D) This great “hand-off” from Jesus Christ to God results in the disciples remaining in the Word, fulfilling “Scripture” (17:12).

* The phrase “son of perdition” (NASB) or “the one doomed to destruction” (NIV) or “son of destruction” (ESV) is from a Greek idiom which points to the character of the person rather than the destiny of the person. In other words, Judas was a man who was characterized by “lostness,” not a man predestined to be “lost.” The idea is that Judas was a responsible person and that he acted freely, but that his actions were evil. God used this evil act of Judas for His own purpose. There is a combination of the human and divine, but it is the divine aspect which receives emphasis here. In the end, it was God’s will in handing Jesus over to be crucified (cf. Psalm 41:9, 109:4-13. John Calvin comments, “It would be wrong for anyone to infer from this that Judas’ fall should be imputed to God rather than to himself, in that necessity was laid on him by the prophecy.” Once again, this is an example of compatibilism between divine will and human action (various sources).

3) A Disciple Of Jesus Christ Grows In The Word!

- A) Jesus prays for His disciples to experience joy in all its fullness in themselves (17:13). This joy is found in abiding in unity with God through Christ (17:10-12) and recalls John’s previous teachings on abundant joy (John 10:10, 15:1-11).

- B) The gift of Christ to His disciples is “the word” (the full message of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ -- John 17:14). It is this gift which naturally stands in opposition to the world, and since the disciples have ‘received and believed,’ they are hated by the world.

- C) Christ’s prayer for His disciples is that God would protect them from the evil one (Satan, cf. 1st John 5:18-20), while they remain “in the world, but not of the world” (17:15-16).

- D) How will a disciple of Jesus Christ be able to be “in the world, but not of the world?” Jesus prays that the disciples will be sanctified (to be set apart, to be made holy (pure) for service). The disciples are to be set apart from the world, for service to the world (17:17).

- E) But how will this ‘sanctification’ occur? Through the “word of truth” which is from God. Namely, the revelation of God to the world, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ spoke God’s word for the people, and is even named the Word (God in the flesh -- John 1:1 & 14).

- F) A disciple of Jesus Christ in the world sets his/her life apart for service to God by abiding in the Word (the Bible, God’s written revelation -- 1st Timothy 2:16-17). Abiding in the Word of God means obedience to Jesus Christ, remaining in Jesus Christ and growth through Jesus Christ.