

Leader's Guide

JESUS TEACHES Us... ABOUT LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

January 28, 2007
John 17:1-26

LEADER'S GUIDE
for small group
discussion prepared
to aid you in digging
deeper and taking to
heart what we are
exploring on
Sunday mornings.



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Overview

When we face tough times, most of us will look for someone to “pray with” us. And, typically, we look for someone who “prays well” and seems to have the ear of God. Who better to have praying for us than Jesus. And He does; that is what we look at today.

Walk it through

We don't want to begin morbidly, but the idea of apprehension about arriving at one's destination can be an appropriate lead in to the discussion. What is in view? The apprehension that many Christians seem to have is whether they are going to “make it” as followers of Jesus; the fear we often have is that we're only going to muddle through. Jesus addresses that as He prays for His followers as recorded by John.

At the heart of Jesus' prayer for us (yes, for us; note John 17:20), are two requests: (1) That the Father would “keep” us, and (2) that the Father would “sanctify” us.

To “keep” us tells us that the Father will protect or guard us. As Jesus cared for and watched over His followers (17:11-12), He asks the Father to do the same. To “sanctify” us is to ask that we be set apart especially for God, as His own. Jesus was “sanctified” by the Father (John 10:36), being set apart for the Father's special call on His life. And so, Jesus prays similarly for you.

What an incredible thought-and prayer! Jesus has asked the Father that He protect us, keeping us secure in this life we have found in Jesus; and He asked the Father to work in a way that sets us apart and marks us out as God's own. Jesus, obviously, prayed for and received from the Father what He asked for. How could that reality shape the way you live life with Jesus today?

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Thinking it through . . .

Some people are afraid of flying, of traveling. When they step on board, they wonder: “Will I get to the destination? Will something happen that will end up derailing this trip?” Have you ever felt similar apprehensions?

Sometimes, we can feel such apprehensions in the Christian life. We're not quite sure what is supposed to be happening; and we wonder how we are supposed to end up getting to where Jesus wants us in life. But, Jesus hasn't left us alone in that. As we have seen, Jesus sent the Spirit for that very reason. But there's more. Read John 17:1-26.

Who is it that Jesus is praying for here? (Don't overlook 17:9 and 20.)

In the midst of His prayer, Jesus asks for a couple of specific things. What does He want from the Father for those who are His? (Notice, in particular, verses 11-17.)

What does Jesus mean when He says that He has “kept” His followers?

What does that tell us about what He is praying for you?

What difference does this make?

How would you approach the adventure that walking with Jesus entails if you were sure that you would “make it in the end”?

How does Jesus' praying (for you!) impact your thinking about that?