

Grace Church,

We have all heard that Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship. Christianity is not a list of do's and don'ts, but rather a real, intimate, personal relationship with God. From the very beginning, when God created humanity in His image, His greatest desire was to have an eternal, uninterrupted, personal relationship with us. And yet, for many of us, even seasoned believers, relating with God personally is a mystery. How are we to have a personal relationship with someone we cannot hear, see, or touch? How are we to relate with a God, who at times, seems so distant and unknowable? What efforts does God make to personally relate with us? Over the next 21 days, we are going to be using Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17 to learn how God relates with us so we can better relate with Him.

Take a moment right now to read Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17:1-26. As you read, see if you can identify and underline 7 specific ways that Jesus reported to His Father how He had related with His disciples. Here's a hint, pay attention to the times Jesus says, "I . . ." did this or "I . . ." did that . . .

1When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

6"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

20"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Did you find them? In Jesus' prayer to His Father in John 17 He describes 7 specific ways He related, and continued to relate, with those He intentionally discipled. Jesus prayed to His Father and reported to Him that He related with His disciples by 1) **manifesting His presence to them** (17:6), by 2) **giving them His Word** (17:6), by 3) **praying on their behalf** (17:9), by 4) **keeping them in His name** (17:12), by 5) **sending them on a mission** (17:18), by 6) **sanctifying them** (17:17, 19), and by 7) **giving them His glory** (17:22). If you did not find them all, take a few minutes and go back and underline them in the text.

These 7 specific ways that Jesus related with His disciples are the ways God desires to relate with us! Jesus' example of how He related with His disciples is how we can expect God to make effort to relate with us. If you've never had a relationship with God, if you are struggling in your relationship with God, or if you just need some encouragement in your relationship with God, use this devotional over the next 21 days and **invite God to personally relate with you** in way that you've never experienced before.

Scripture is clear that God wants a personal relationship with you, the question is, **do you want a personal relationship with Him?** Enjoy the next 21 days of "Relating with God"!

Pastor David Gross, Len Thebarger, Andy McLellan