

# #1 A Prayer to Prepare for the New Year

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Introduction, Part 1

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Scripture: John 17

John 17 is set between the Upper Room—"Table talk" with the disciples—and Gethsemane.

Before, in John 13-16, Jesus washed their feet, commanded them to love, and told them of the unfolding events about to happen to Him. Then Jesus began to describe the work of a Helper who would enable them to live out God's plan and purpose for their lives.

After, in John 18, Jesus went to the garden to pray before He was betrayed, arrested, beaten, crucified, resurrected.

## Introduction

### Perspective of the Prayer

- Serious and solemn, but not despondent and defeated.

It is not the prayer of a victim (just before the cross), but a victor! There is triumph and overcoming power. Nice to know you don't have to begin your year thinking of self as a victim and being defeated, but you can overcome!

John 16:33

### Posture of the Prayer

- Jesus prayed with eyes toward heaven. Eyes upward = Dependence, Obedience. This is to be the posture of our lives standing at the doorway of 2019.

### Petition of the Prayer

- Jesus Prayed For Himself

John 1:1-5

(v. 3) Eternal life is found in knowing God. We were made to know God and to live in light of the knowledge of the true God who made us.

(v. 4) The Father sent His Son on a redeeming mission—"It is finished." Jesus came from heaven to earth to fulfill a mission—a mission of redemption of fallen creation that we may know the God who made us and be reconciled to Him.

The finished work of Christ means we can "know God." Life's highest aim and ambition is to know God. We were made to know God; Christ has made a way for us.

Not our performance, but His perfect sacrifice for us!

- Jesus Prayed For His Disciples

John 15:6-19; 17:15-18

Jesus sent His followers with a redeeming message. (17:18) Jesus not only completed this mission, but He also has called us and sent us to engage in this same mission in the world.

- Jesus Prayed For His Church

Who is the church? We are the church! Thus, we are included in this prayer. John 17:20-21, 24-26.

For all the goals, desires, hopes, dreams and resolutions you may make in a New Year, one of the greatest things to know and be assured of is Jesus prayer for you then and there, and here and now. You will quickly see and know this prayer is a prayer for missional living.

The unfinished work of Christ—making Him known. How? Through us and our witness to His name.

The greatest aim, ambition and alignment of life for the year to come can be summed up in one word: *Missional*. Whether you have planned it or not, you will live your life on mission this year. What will that mission be? Prosperity? Health? Graduation? Pleasure? Etc. The greatest mission that consumes your passion and becomes your purpose is the mission of knowing God and making Him known.

I've chosen to take my first message of this New Year and break it in half. When I finish, you're going to be glad I resolved not to preach it all in one gathering. Because of the finished work of Christ, we can know God, personally and experientially! (17:3) (*gnosko*)

Week 2: Because of the unfinished work of Christ, we must make God known intentionally and obediently.

## Knowing God is...

### 1. Exchanging Past Shame for Future Glory

Jesus prayed about returning to “glory,” a place unlike the world. The world is a place of darkness, sin and shame. Five times, Jesus mentions “glory” as a condition and a place.

John 17:3, 24

If knowing Him brings eternal life, then this is a life that is free from the shame and condemnation of the past. Eternal life is not just a quantity (forever); it is a quality of life—freedom, joy and peace today.

Jesus is the life-giver.

Many struggle to begin again in a New Year because of failure, guilt and shame, but this does not have to be so. When we receive the finished work of Christ for us, He takes care of all that is unfinished in us. He gives us forgiveness, freedom and life. Sin consumes and destroys, but Jesus replaces shame with glory.

Romans 8:1-4. I’m forgiven and I am free!

### 2. Embracing Present Security Despite Persisting Fears

John 17:6-17 (v.14). Where do we find clarity and confidence? In the name of God and in the truth of God.

The names of God help us to know the nature of God. Jesus has made known the Father to us. His nature is to love and care for His own—referenced over 50 times in John 13-17.

*Our safety depends on the nature of God, not our own character and conduct.* —Warren Wiersbe

We risk our lives and futures on the name of our great God. The truth of God helps us to know and be assured of God’s promises in our lives. The way to know God and trust Him is in His Word. In the pages of Scripture, you will discover cause for joy even in pain. You will be assured of God’s everlasting love and you will have a foundation for peace.

God uses His Word to set us apart and to sustain us in this world. The outcome of God’s word in our lives is “holiness,” being set apart for His purpose. We must become the message to share the message. I am His and He is mine!

### 3. Experiencing Sustaining Love in a World of Resisting Hate

John 17:14, 26

To know God is not only to be aware and assured of His love for us, but also His love in us with fellow believers. The church of God is a precious community of faith, hope and love.

*The world stands for human society organizing itself without God. —William Barclay*

We are and have been sent to bear witness to the love of God in a world that rejects, resists and resents this message.

We are in it (the world), but not of it. The value of our lives and the vision of our future are different from the world we live in.

*Christianity was never meant to withdraw a man from life, but to better equip him for it. It does not offer us release from problems, but a way to solve them. It does not offer us a life in which troubles are escaped and evaded, but a life in which troubles are faced and conquered. However much it is true that the Christian is not of the world, it remains true that it is within the world that His Christianity must be lived out. He must never desire to abandon the world, but always desire to win it. —William Barclay*

“O love that will not let me go.”

### 4. Esteeming Christ's Riches greater than Earthly Treasures

John 17:24 —“to see and share a greater glory than the world”

Hebrews 11:24-27—Moses grew up in a wealthy family, yet he knew his identity was not with Egypt, but with a greater community—those who were the family of Abraham by faith. He was part of the covenant and promises of God. It was a vision of something, Someone, somewhere greater that moved Moses from the security and identity with Egypt to seek the greater glory and riches of Christ.

Most of us have never given over or given up anything of great value for Christ. We've just added Christ to the mix of our lives. But His finished work and our future hope calls and demands a willingness to release and risk all for His honor and glory.

Here's my final challenge to you as I seek your care and concern to know God and live in the knowledge of God:

Jeremiah 9:23-24—Looking forward. Here is the call, the challenge and the appeal. Because of the finished work of Christ, you can know God and know that nothing you do for Him and His glory will be lost.

1 Corinthians 15:58—Resurrection = Finished and victorious work of Christ. Salvation is provided. Satan has been defeated. Sin is destroyed. Death is overcome. Life is lived all for His glory!

Let's end this reflection and study on the prayer of Jesus with a prayer from us that says, "Lord, I want to know You." May we be missional with focused attention and affection on knowing You. How I pray for a church filled with people who know God and live in light of the knowledge of God day by day—those who express this knowledge of eternal life as visible life for Christ and His Kingdom.