

# JESUS PRAYED FOR HIS DISCIPLES

All Activity Sheets

## KEY WORDS

SANCTIFY   SANCTIFICATION   UNITY

## BIBLICAL REFERENCE

John 17:6-9

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand that God is with them when they face a hostile world in the same way that Jesus was with his followers

## MEMORY VERSE

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”  
(Philippians 4:6-7, NIV\*).

## PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Christian preadolescents have to face constant opposition in relation to their beliefs. Many times they feel lonely and vulnerable because they're believers. They live the reality of “being in the world but not being part of the world.”

This lesson will help them discover that Jesus knew those difficulties many centuries before they were born. Not only did he know that his disciples would feel like foreigners in a world that hated them, but he did something to help them.

In the second part of the priestly prayer, Jesus prayed for the disciples. Preadolescents can identify with the first followers of Christ. By learning more about Jesus' prayer for his disciples, and by reflecting on the way God answers the prayer, they'll grow with the confidence that God can help them. By feeling his protection, they'll be encouraged.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Jesus' prayer for his disciples in John 17:6-9 also applies to today's Christians, since these things are needed to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ today. In his prayer, Jesus made four important requests to the Father:

### **Protection**

He understood that there were two enemies that his disciples would face, and said: "The world hated them" (17:14). The world did not accept Jesus' message, and tried to silence him. To his disciples, Jesus left the same message to spread: they could not expect better treatment from an unbelieving generation than Jesus had received.

In addition, Judas, who had moved away from the disciples' close group to do the will of the devil, was a horrifying example of the power of the evil one.

Thus, Jesus prayed that the disciples would be protected from the "evil one" in the midst of a world that hated the Gospel. The words "evil one" indicate that the Bible does not consider "evil" as an abstract term that is difficult to understand. Evil is an active and personal power that's always in opposition to the goodness of God.

Jesus' prayer was that God would protect them: "by the power of your [God's] name" (17:11). This was not a weak protection. The name of God reveals his character and nature. "The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." (Proverbs 18:10). Genesis 4:26 tells us that during Seth and Enosh's time people "began to call on the name of the LORD (Yahweh)." *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Clark, Eby, Lyons and Truesdale: 2004) says: "Names were very important in the Bible. A name usually showed what a person was like...The personal name of the God of Israel is Yahweh. His name means that He is always present with His people to help them. He alone is God of all the earth. God warns people not to use His name carelessly. They are to use the name of God with reverence. The name of God represents Him. People show their faith in God's power when they use His name in worship."

### **Unity**

In the power of God's name, the disciples would be protected and united. Jesus wanted them to have the same unity he had with his Father. It was a unity of purpose and strength. *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Clark, Eby, Lyons and Truesdale) says: "The unity of God is the belief that the Holy Trinity is one God. The one God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." It adds: "Unity is the quality of being one. Unity is a whole made of different parts that have a single purpose. The unity of the Church refers to its shared life in Jesus Christ. It is like a body with many members working together for a common goal."

"All for one, and one for all" is a saying that can help us understand how the disciples should unite to spread the Gospel. This would also help them endure the persecution that would come upon them.

### **Joy**

Jesus' desire was for his disciples to have "my complete joy in themselves" (17:13). *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Clark, Eby, Lyons and Truesdale) says: "Joy is the emotion of one who is pleased and happy. A person may have joy even though conditions are not desirable. Joy is the result of salvation. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. God gives inner joy which nothing can take away." Disappointment and despair were not attitudes Jesus wanted for them when carrying out his mission. Rather, Jesus had restored "the joy ... of salvation" (Psalm 51:12) that marked the arrival of his kingdom.

### **Sanctification**

Finally, Jesus prayed for his disciples to be sanctified. In this case "sanctified" means "set apart" and "dedicated to the cause of God." Jesus was praying that they would be separated from the evil of this world, that is, holy and spotless, and dedicated to fulfilling his mission.

*A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Clark, Eby, Lyons and Truesdale) says: "Sanctification is God's act by which He makes people holy...Initial sanctification takes place when a person is born again." It describes entire sanctification as: "...the act of God which makes Christians completely His. God destroys the sinful nature in Christians through the Holy Spirit. He helps them to live in a way that pleases God. He destroys the power of sin in their lives and makes them truly holy. Entire sanctification is a crisis experience that happens after a person has become a Christian. The Holy Spirit sanctifies Christians when they give themselves fully to God. Entire sanctification happens at once when Christians trust God to purify their hearts. The Holy Spirit cleanses consecrated Christians from original sin. He helps them to love God completely and to love others as themselves. He gives Christians power to live lives that please God. This is possible because Jesus died on the Cross to give full salvation. Entire sanctification increases the desire of Christians to grow in grace. Entire sanctification does not do away with the need for self-discipline. Sanctified believers must daily obey the Holy Spirit. He leads the sanctified Christians toward maturity."

The task of the disciples was not new, but it was the continuation of Jesus' mission. The holiness of the Father was the basis of his Son's mission. Holiness, that is, separation from sin and dedication to a life of righteousness, is what Jesus longed for his followers.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Survival kit

Take a box or bag to your group in which you have placed some of the items that you think would be of the utmost importance to survive if you were stranded somewhere. Show students each article and explain what they're for. (Place a Bible or New Testament as one of the items.) Give them Student Activity Sheet #390-A (Survival Kit). Say: "Take a few minutes to write or draw everything you would need to survive if you were stranded somewhere." Give them time to do it, and if they do not know what to write, help them with creative ideas (food, toothpaste, medicines, music, etc.).

Notice if anyone writes "prayer." If some do, ask them to describe the reason why they need prayer to survive. If no one in the group mentions it, ask if they do not believe that prayer is necessary to survive.

Say: "Prayer, or communication with God, is like air to breathe. It is absolutely necessary. Today we'll talk about how important it is for the Christian's life."

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #390-B.

## TEACH THE LESSON

### I have a dream...

Divide into pairs. (If everyone already has their prayer partner, they can be divided that way.)

Tell the group: "Now we're going to read Jesus' prayer for his disciples. We can find it in John 17:6-19. Last week we talked about Jesus' priestly prayer. We learned about the first part of the prayer where Jesus prayed for himself: his desire was to glorify the Father. In the second part of the prayer he asked for his disciples. Next week we'll reveal the third part, and there we'll find a beautiful surprise, the best of all!"

Read or have the group read John 17:6-19. Then, ask them to work with their partners to answer the following questions:

How does Jesus describe the relationship of his disciples with God? (v. 6, 8 and 9)

What is Jesus' dream for his disciples? (v. 11)

What does Jesus ask of the Father for his disciples? (v. 11, 13 and 17)

After a few minutes, allow several pairs to present their answers to the rest of the group. Some possible answers could be:

They were from God. They were obedient to God. They accepted the Word of God. They believed and had confidence in Jesus.

That the Father would protect them and help them to be one, as Jesus and the Father are one.

That the Father would protect them. That they would have the full measure of Jesus' joy. That the Father would truly sanctify them.

At this time, briefly explain the meaning of the word "sanctify" (to separate and make holy). Say this was part of Jesus' dream for his disciples. Clarify that Jesus did not want God to take them out of the world. Why? Allow one or two students to answer.

Ask: "What would the world be like if God took away all believers, if after becoming a Christian everyone disappeared?" (There would be no Christians to witness to others, etc.). First, allow them to comment on what they think about it

## CONNECT THE LESSON

Choose some activities to capture the attention of the students concerning today's topic.

### Let's measure the progress

Guide the students to summarize how they think God's answers Jesus' prayer, based on what they know about the disciples. Then read and help the group answer the following statements:

The disciples realized how important they were to God. Yes or no

The disciples stayed together and built a church. Yes or no

The disciples found protection from the evil one. Yes or no

The disciples had the full measure of joy that Jesus had. Yes or no

The disciples knew that God's Word is truth. Yes or no

Ask: "If Jesus' prayer could do all this for the disciples, what can it do for you today?"

## **PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE**

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Get out the cards from the previous sessions with the memory verse. Mix them up well. Repeat the verse several times and give the students time to assemble it on the table. If there are volunteers who know it by memory, you can ask them to write it on the board.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #390-C and help the group apply these activities to the memory verse.

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

Lead the students to take a few minutes to take an "exam" of their lives with God. THE DOCTOR IS HERE:

How do you feel about your relationship with God?

How do you feel living as a Christian in a non-Christian world?

What do you need from God right now?

What is something that could take you away from your relationship with God?

Say: "God ALWAYS listens to you when you talk to Him." Talk with everyone about their answers after everyone has finished the activity. Have moments of prayer that are meaningful to students. Allow them to have appropriate time to pray and cry out to God with all their heart.

### **Encourage**

Encourage the group to tell about their prayers that God has answered in the next session.

### **Invite**

Share something interesting about the next session and encourage the group to attend it. Remind them to invite friends.