Reader

Jesus's Farewell Message

Session 6: Christ's Prayer for Us

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea

Knowing God causes us to grow in our desire to live for him and to build unity with other Christians.

Head Change

To know our oneness with God and one another has a direct influence on our witness to the unbelieving world.

Heart Change

To feel unified with God, knowing his love and presence in our everyday lives.

Life Change

To build unity amongst believers in our communities so that the world might believe in Jesus.

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OPEN

What hobby would you like to pick up? What would you need to do to start learning and practicing that hobby?

When we start a new hobby, we often have a lot to learn. We may have to read books, research online, or find a teacher just to get started. Building your base of knowledge can be both exciting and overwhelming, but it doesn't count for much unless you start practicing your hobby. What good is knowing everything about carpentry if you never use a hammer?

In the same way, learning about God is a good and necessary step to growing in our faith. But if we don't start practicing God's commands and trusting his promises, that knowledge won't make much of a difference.

As we begin the last session of this series, consider everything we have learned so far. We can't leave that knowledge unused. We need to live and experience what John 13–17 teaches.

READ

Read John 17. If you are running short on time, you can shorten your reading to John 17:1–5, 20–26.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

How does Jesus define eternal life?

What is the purpose of unity in the church?

Watch Session 6: Christ's Prayer for Us (13 minutes).

DISCUSS

Throughout this series, Francis has asked us to know the truths of John 13–17 in a deeper way. He has called Jesus's final message a kind of menu, an invitation to "taste" Jesus's goodness. In this session, we'll see why it is so essential for us to know God in an intimate way. Read John 17:1–5.

According to Jesus, eternal life is found in knowing God. If you have a relationship with God, in what ways has your life changed since you first met him?

Eternal life is not just something we receive after death but a new life we can experience today. As Francis said in the video, there are multiple ways we experience eternal life today. We have peace during the chaos of life, love that will not fail, security in unsure times, and wisdom from the Holy Spirit. Having a relationship with God gives us a taste of what it will be like to be with God in eternity. **In what ways are you experiencing tastes of eternal life?**

No matter if you have known Jesus since you were a child or if you just put your faith in him last week, there is always room for us to deepen our relationship with God. What could it look like for you to grow in your knowledge of God? In what ways has your relationship with him grown during this series?

In the middle section of John 17, Jesus prays to the Father, giving us insight into the relationship between him and his disciples. Read John 17:6–19. What requests does Jesus make on behalf of his disciples? What did Jesus do for his disciples? What are Jesus's hopes for his disciples?

Jesus prays for his disciples' protection but makes an interesting request. He asks that they would be protected *in* a hostile world but not that they would be taken *away from* that hostility. **Would you rather be protected during hostility or never experience hostility at all? Why?**

Francis said that Jesus's ministry did not end at the cross; it continues through us. It is better for the world if we remain in it, even if it is difficult for us. **What benefits could we bring to the world if we remain in it, even when it gives us trouble?**

Re-read verse 15. In what ways could we be confident, knowing that we are protected by Jesus?

[**Note:** To learn more about what it means to be in the world but not of it, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.]

In John 17, Jesus prays for those who would come to know him after he left. Read John 17:20–23. What is the purpose of our love and unity?

In John 13, Jesus told his disciples they will be known by their love. If we love one another, we will be unified. If we are unified, the world will be drawn to know God. **Would you say that the church today is unified? Why or why not?**

What stands in the way of us being "one"?

Unity feels optional in today's church, but it was Jesus's final plea to the Father before his arrest. Our unity—our love for one another—is part of our witness to the world. We cannot ignore that what Jesus said will cause the world to believe in him. What steps could we take today to unify the churches we attend? Our local Christian community?

Francis challenged us to love one another, to get outside of our comfort zones, to forgive each other, and to actively seek to be unified. What differences will we have to overlook or overcome to make unity in the church a reality? What challenges might you face as you seek to build unity? How could we work together to overcome these challenges?

[**Note:** To learn more about church unity, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.]

Jesus ends his prayer with two final requests. Read John 17:24–26.

Jesus wants us to know his glory, his love, and his presence. During this series, how have you become more aware of God's glory? His love? His presence?

[Note: "Glory" can feel like an ambiguous Christian word, one that we can't quite define. If you want to learn respectfically what it means, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.] In the end, Jesus invites us into his love. He doesn't want us to be able to ace a theological exam; he wants us to be in a relationship with him. What will you take away from this series to help you continue to know Jesus more deeply?

LAST WORD

When we think back on all we have learned in John 13–17, there is one thing that stands out: Jesus wants us to know him in a deep, relational way. The truths of Jesus's farewell message are not trivia we can master; they are truths to live by. We cannot master a relationship with God —we have to spend time with him in prayer, meditate on his Word, and obey his commands so that we can know his love, power, and presence more deeply. Knowing him is the key to life today and eternally.

This is just the beginning. What comes next is up to you. Do you want to know him—his peace, security, and love? What will you do to get to know him more deeply?

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Reader

GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.

2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of John 13–17.

1. In But Not Of

In John 17, Jesus prays that his disciples would be protected from the world, but specifically asks that they would not be removed from it. As Christians often quote this passage to say we are "in the world, but not of it." But what do we mean when we say that?

There are two passages in the New Testament that give us insight into how we should live in the world, but not of it. First, read 1 Peter 2:11–12. Make a note of the goal for our good deeds.

As Christians, we don't quite fit into our culture as easily as we once did before knowing Jesus. While we are a part of our society—"in the world"—our beliefs, purposes, hopes, and habits look different from our culture at large. In some ways, we are like foreigners, people who speak a different language and have a different worldview than our surrounding culture. While we are in the world, we are separated—not of it. As a Christian, what sets you apart from your culture or friend groups? How do you feel about being outside of the social norm?

Being an outsider is not comfortable and many times we will desperately want to be like the world so that we can fit in. Turn to 1 John 2:15–17. How does John define "the world" in verse 16? What is the danger of loving the world?

We have a choice to make: to love God or the things of the world. One is passing away, the other lasts forever. **rightnow** MEDIA

What worldly things try to tempt you from God's love? Why do you think they appeal to you?

When we reject the lies of the world and find our satisfaction in Jesus, we shouldn't be surprised when our actions confuse or even anger people. But we shouldn't respond to hostility in kind. Go back to 1 Peter 2:11–12. How should we respond to people who mock or insult us? What is the goal of our good behavior?

Why did Jesus want us to remain in the world? So that more people could know God and see his glory. Your outsider status is God's evangelistic strategy. **What could you do to communicate his glory and goodness through your words and actions?**

2. Be Unified

In John 17, Jesus prayed that his disciples would be unified. But building unity is easier said than done, especially when we think of church as an event we attend on Sunday mornings. Read Philippians 2:1–4. According to verse 2, what are the qualities of a unified church? Would you say these qualities describe your church? Your individual relationship with other Christians?

Verse 1 is rhetorical: of course there is comfort in love, encouragement in Christ, fellowship in the Spirit, affection, and mercy! But these things are often marred by our selfishness, vanity, and pride. **In what ways is it easy to think about our own interests when we go to church?**

If we want to experience all the blessings of Christ, live as an influential community, and share the gospel, we must be unified. That requires all of us to individually choose to live out verses 3 and 4. Why do you think our own needs and accomplishments often seem more important than those of the people around us?

In what ways do you cultivate humility and attention to the needs of others?

In this passage, Paul is calling each of us to live like Jesus. In other words, our unity reflects our oneness with God. The more each of us is like Jesus, the more our unity will grow, and the more the world will see the goodness of God. Read verses 5–11. This passage is believed to be an ancient hymn, praising Jesus's humility and sacrifice.

our needs?

What would it look like to adopt Jesus's attitude in your church? Your work? Your neighborhood?

3. Glory

Dozens of places in the Bible talk about God's glory. In Jesus's final message, glory is something Jesus shares with the Father. John 17 mentions God's glory six times but what exactly is God's glory?

Before we dive into this word, how would you define "glory"?

Glory can be hard to define. It is almost like asking someone to pin down what it means for something to be beautiful. In general, we can refer to it as a majestic splendor, a high esteem that always results in praise and honor. To see his glory is to behold all the praiseworthy aspects of his character that move us to worship. Often worship is referred to as *glorifying* God or drawing attention to his glory. In what ways have you seen Jesus's glory in this series? How have you responded to the glory he has revealed to you? In what ways do you glorify him?

Our necessary response to Jesus's glory is to worship him. But his glory demands far more than a musical experience on Sunday morning. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17.

When are you meant to worship or glorify God?

In what ways do these verses expand your view of when you worship God?

Even when we are doing the most basic daily tasks like eating or drinking, we should be doing it with a heart of worship. Everything you do should point to, highlight, or *glorify* Jesus.

What can you do to glorify God in your daily routine? At work? With your neighbors? When no one is watching?