
JOHN 17:1-26

**Christ intercedes for believers who still
need to be kept and sanctified**

Customized for: Ruperto Bravo Benavente (R.B.B.)

Reina-Valera 1960 · Greek-Spanish Interlinear by Francisco Lacueva

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Purpose of the study

This study examines Jesus' prayer in John 17:1-26 and asks what it reveals about the believer's present condition. The chapter does not teach sinless perfection during earthly life. Jesus prays for people who are still in the world, face opposition, need to be kept from evil, and must be sanctified in the truth. That need confirms that God's work continues in them.

At the same time, the passage does not allow us to define believers only by their sin. The disciples belong to the Father and the Son, have received the word, are not of the world, and are promised a

place with Christ. Scripture holds two truths together: while we live in the body we remain vulnerable to sin; in Christ we are forgiven, kept, and transformed by God's action.

The purpose is to distinguish the direct texts of John 17 from complementary texts in the rest of Scripture, respect their context, and offer a pastoral application that produces neither presumption nor despair.

Central passages

- **John 17:1-5:** The Son glorifies the Father, has authority to give eternal life, and declares the assigned work completed.
- **John 17:6-10:** The disciples received the word, believed that Jesus was sent by the Father, and belong to the Father and the Son.
- **John 17:11-19:** Jesus asks that they be kept, protected from evil, and sanctified in the truth while remaining in the world.
- **John 17:20-23:** The prayer reaches those who will believe through the apostolic witness and presents unity as testimony before the world.
- **John 17:24-26:** Christ secures the final destiny of His own: to be with Him, behold His glory, and share in the Father's love.

Doctrinal thesis

John 17 presents true believers who already belong to God but have not yet been removed from the realm where sin operates. They therefore need Christ's intercession, the Father's protection, and sanctification through the truth. Their security rests not on supposed personal sinlessness but on Christ's finished work and God's faithfulness.

To say that we remain sinners requires precision. It means that sin still affects our experience and that no believer can live independently of grace. It does not mean that sin is our only identity, that it may rule without resistance, or that sanctification is unnecessary. A believer is both still imperfect and set apart for God, justified through Christ, and being led toward glory.

Direct texts and exposition

1 The Son's hour and eternal life

Biblical text: John 17:1-5: Jesus announces that the hour has come, asks to be glorified, and defines eternal life as knowing the Father and the sent Son.

Textual explanation: The prayer follows the upper-room teaching and precedes the arrest. The hour is no accident: it gathers the cross, resurrection, and glorification. Eternal life comes from the Son's authority and a true relationship with God; it is not a reward for flawless human conduct.

Doctrinal relationship: Salvation begins in divine initiative. The Son has authority to give life and completes the assigned work. The believer's security rests first in who Christ is and what He does, not in human ability to attain moral perfection.

Application: Believers confess dependence on Christ. When sin is exposed, they must not excuse it, but neither should they conclude that Christ's work has lost its power. They return to the Son in whom they received eternal life.

2 They received the word and believed

Biblical text: John 17:6-10: the disciples received the Father's words, recognized Jesus' origin, and believed that He was sent.

Textual explanation: Jesus describes His disciples by their response to revelation: they received the word and believed. He does not claim that they understood everything or never failed. That same night they would scatter, and Peter would deny the Lord. Their faith was real although their maturity was incomplete.

Doctrinal relationship: Saving faith can coexist with remaining weakness, fear, and ignorance. A disciple's frailty does not automatically make faith false. Christ fully knows His own and still intercedes for them.

Application: We must not confuse incomplete growth with a total absence of spiritual life. The right response to weakness is to receive the word again, believe Christ, and walk in obedience, not pretend to possess nonexistent perfection.

3 Christ prays for His own

Biblical text: John 17:9-10: Jesus declares that He prays for those the Father gave Him because they belong to God.

Textual explanation: The prayer has a defined object: the disciples and later those who will believe through their word. Jesus does not present His own as self-sufficient. His intercession shows real need; the identity of the Intercessor gives secure hope.

Doctrinal relationship: Christ's intercession does not deny human weakness; it answers it. Believers remain dependent on grace but are not abandoned to their own resources. The Son upholds before the Father those who belong to Him.

Application: Awareness of sin should lead to confession and trust in Christ, not concealment. We may draw near to God because our Mediator knows our condition and His work is sufficient.

4 Kept in the Father's name

Biblical text: John 17:11-13: Jesus asks the Father to keep the disciples and recalls that He kept them during His earthly ministry.

Textual explanation: The request to keep them assumes danger. The disciples will remain in a hostile world without Jesus' visible presence. Their preservation will depend on the Father's name and power. The requested unity grows from their common belonging.

Doctrinal relationship: Christian perseverance cannot be separated from divine preservation. God keeps His own without making them passive; He keeps them through the word, prayer, correction, and obedience produced by grace.

Application: Security does not authorize neglect. Precisely because we depend on the Father's care, we use the means He supplies: Scripture, prayer, fellowship, and honest confession.

5 Judas and the son of perdition

Biblical text: John 17:12: none of those kept was lost except the son of perdition, so that Scripture might be fulfilled.

Textual explanation: Judas held an outward place among the disciples, but the Gospel had already shown him as unbelieving and treacherous. The text does not portray a regenerated believer who lost eternal life; it distinguishes the son of perdition from those who were kept.

Doctrinal relationship: Visible presence in the community does not by itself equal saving union with Christ. At the same time, Judas must not be used to sow permanent doubt in those who trust Christ, receive His word, and come to Him.

Application: Spiritual examination should look to Christ and the fruit of His word, not imagined perfection. The question is not whether we have never failed, but whether we have received the Son and depend on His grace.

6 In the world and exposed to evil

Biblical text: John 17:14-16: the world hates the disciples; Jesus does not ask that they be removed but that they be kept from evil.

Textual explanation: The disciples possess a new allegiance while continuing to live in the world. External opposition and internal temptation are present realities. The request for protection would be unnecessary if they were already unable to sin or be drawn aside.

Doctrinal relationship: Separation from the world is an identity and calling, not physical isolation or instant sinlessness. Believers live in tension: they belong to Christ while still resisting influences opposed to Christ.

Application: Holiness does not deny temptation. It seeks protection, discerns evil, and obeys God within the received mission. Humble watchfulness is more biblical than self-confidence.

7 Sanctified in the truth

Biblical text: John 17:17-19: Jesus asks, Sanctify them in Your truth; Your word is truth.

Textual explanation: To sanctify is to set apart for God and conform to His purpose. Here the truth of the word is the appointed means. The request shows a necessary process: the disciples already belong to God but still must be formed to live and serve consistently with that belonging.

Doctrinal relationship: Sanctification does not purchase salvation or complete an insufficient cross. It is God's work in those who are already His. Growth, correction, and struggle show that grace does not leave the believer's life unchanged.

Application: We must not turn grace into permission to sin. Every area exposed by the word must be brought to God in repentance, faith, and willingness to obey. The goal is not appearance but transformation in truth.

8 Unity, witness, and future glory

Biblical text: John 17:20-26: Jesus includes future believers, asks for their unity, and desires that they be with Him to behold His glory.

Textual explanation: The prayer looks from the apostles to the future Church and from the present to eternity. Unity arises from communion with the Father and Son; it does not require erasing truth. The final destiny is not endless struggle but being with Christ.

Doctrinal relationship: Salvation has a secure goal: full communion and glory with Christ. Remaining sin exists now; then the work will be complete. Future hope prevents both despair and conformity to present sin.

Application: Believers seek unity founded on truth, serve so that the world may see God's love, and await the day when they will behold Christ's glory. That hope produces sober and grateful living.

Complementary texts on sin, grace, and preservation

- **Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 130:3-4:** No human being can stand before God on the basis of total sinlessness; divine forgiveness produces reverence.
- **Romans 3:23-24:** The universality of sin stands against free justification by grace through Christ's redemption.
- **Romans 6:1-14:** Grace does not authorize life under sin's dominion. Believers are to reckon themselves alive to God and yield their lives to Him.
- **Romans 7:14-25:** The passage exposes sin's gravity and the inability of isolated human will; deliverance is found in Jesus Christ.
- **Romans 8:1-4, 26-39:** There is no condemnation for those in Christ; the Spirit helps in weakness, and nothing separates them from God's love.
- **Galatians 5:16-17:** The conflict between flesh and Spirit explains the present struggle and calls believers to walk by the Spirit.
- **James 3:2:** Even believers stumble in many ways; teaching and speech therefore require special accountability.
- **1 John 1:8-2:2:** To deny that we have sin is self-deception. Confession meets forgiveness and cleansing, and Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father.
- **Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25:** The compassionate High Priest opens the throne of grace and lives to intercede for those who draw near to God.
- **Hebrews 10:10-14:** Christ's sacrifice is once for all and sufficient; those set apart for God are being perfected by His work.

- **Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13:** God began the good work and will complete it; His action produces both desire and action without erasing human responsibility.
- **1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24-25:** Believers are guarded by God's power, and He is able to keep them and present them before His glory.

The expression always sinners in light of John 17

The phrase can be useful if it confesses that during this life we never become morally independent of grace. We continue to need the word, Christ's intercession, the Father's protection, and God's sanctifying action. To claim otherwise would deny the reality of sin and diminish our daily need for the gospel.

The phrase becomes misleading, however, if it means that nothing changed, that sin retains a rightful dominion, or that God sees the believer only as guilty. John 17 speaks of people given to the Son, recipients of the word, separated from the world, and loved by the Father. Christian identity rests not on personal sinlessness but on union with Christ.

A fuller statement is this: we remain people capable of sin and dependent on grace, but we are no longer without Christ or under condemnation. We are His, are being sanctified, and will be brought into His presence.

Frequently raised objections

If we still sin, was salvation ineffective?

Salvation is effective because it changes our relationship with God, breaks sin's condemning authority, and begins transformation. The presence of struggle is not absence of life; chosen indifference to sin does call for serious self-examination.

Does the prayer to keep them imply that they can be lost?

The request reveals real danger and also the means of preservation: the Father's care and the Son's intercession. The chapter emphasizes divine faithfulness, not security produced by self-sufficiency.

Does Judas prove that a believer can lose salvation?

The narrative identifies Judas as the son of perdition and has already exposed his unbelief. His outward proximity to Jesus is not presented as regeneration followed by loss.

Does sanctification mean sinless perfection now?

In John 17 it is being set apart for God and formed through truth. It is real and bears fruit, but complete freedom from sin belongs to the consummation when believers are with Christ.

Does grace reduce responsibility?

No. Grace forgives and teaches believers to reject evil. They respond because God works in them, not to purchase acceptance, but because they already belong to the Father and the Son.

Does unity require accepting every doctrine?

The unity of John 17 arises in the Father, the Son, and the received word. It is not institutional uniformity or abandonment of truth; it is spiritual communion expressed in love, holiness, and faithful witness.

Conclusion

John 17 gives a pastorally balanced answer to the reality of sin. Jesus does not idealize His disciples. He knows that they will be weak, remain in a hostile world, and need protection and

sanctification. Therefore He prays for them. His prayer confirms that believers never outgrow their need for grace in this life.

Yet the chapter does not leave believers defined by guilt. His own belong to the Father and the Son, have received the word, are kept in God's name, and possess a final hope: to be with Christ and behold His glory. The present struggle is not the conclusion of the story.

The biblical response is neither presumption nor despair. It is honest confession, trust in Christ's sufficient sacrifice, obedience to the word, and hope in God's faithfulness. We still need to be sanctified; for that very reason we rest in the One who intercedes and completes His work.

Study questions

1. How are the Father's glory, the Son's work, and eternal life related?
2. How does Jesus describe those whom the Father gave Him?
3. What is the difference between genuine faith and complete maturity?
4. Why does Christ's intercession reveal both our need and our hope?
5. What means of keeping and sanctifying believers appear in the chapter?
6. What does Judas' case teach, and what does it not permit us to claim?
7. How can believers be in the world without belonging to its rebellious system?
8. Why is truth indispensable to sanctification and unity?

9. How does 1 John 1:8-2:2 complement John 17?
10. How does security in Christ protect against despair?
11. How does sanctification keep grace from becoming permission to sin?
12. What hope is offered by Jesus' request in John 17:24?

Bibliographic references

- Holy Bible, Reina-Valera 1960. United Bible Societies.
- Lacueva, Francisco. Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament. Editorial CLIE.
- Base text: John 17:1-26. Observations remain within the context of John's Gospel and the whole of Scripture.
- Methodological note: no particular rendering is attributed to the interlinear unless verified. Greek-language claims are omitted when unnecessary to explain the contextual meaning.

A PRAYER THAT
EMBRACES
THE PRESENT,
THE FUTURE
AND ETERNITY

JOHN 17:1-26

THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST

FOR HIS GLORY,
HIS PEOPLE,
AND THE WORLD

1 THE HOUR HAS COME

John 17:1



Jesus asks to be glorified so that the Father may be glorified in Him.

2 ETERNAL LIFE IN THE SON

John 17:2



The Son has authority to give eternal life to those the Father gave Him.

3 KNOWING THE TRUE GOD

John 17:3



Eternal life is knowing the Father and Jesus Christ, the One He sent.

4 THE WORK COMPLETED

John 17:4-5



Christ fulfilled His mission and returns to the glory He had before the world existed.

5 THEY RECEIVED THE WORD

John 17:6-8



The disciples received the word and believed that Jesus was sent by God.

6 CHRIST INTERCEDES

John 17:9-10



Jesus prays for His own, who belong to the Father and the Son.

7 KEPT BY THE FATHER

John 17:11-13



The disciples' security depends on God's faithful care.

8 IN THE WORLD, NOT OF IT

John 17:14-16



Christ asks that His own be kept from evil.

9 SANCTIFIED IN THE TRUTH

John 17:17-19



God's Word is truth and sets the believer apart for mission.

10 PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE

John 17:20-21



Christ's intercession reaches every generation of believers.

11 UNITED IN CHRIST

John 17:21-23



Spiritual unity reveals the Father's love to the world.

12 WITH CHRIST IN HIS GLORY

John 17:24-26



His own will be with Him, behold His glory, and remain in His love.

*Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me,
may be with Me where I am. — John 17:24*

Reseña curricular del compilador



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