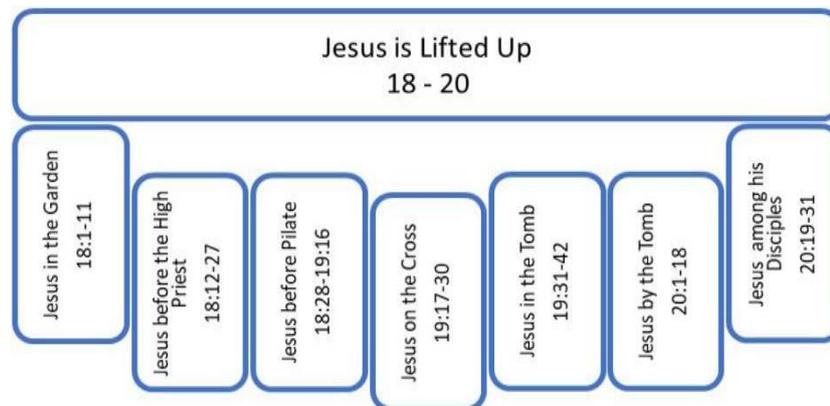


Lesson 29: John 17:1-5 Jesus Prays for His Glory

Introduction



John chapter 17 begins, “These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said...”

“These things Jesus spoke.” At the beginning of chapter 13 Jesus laid aside his garments, took up a towel and washed his disciples’ feet. He challenged them to wash one another’s feet, be humble. Troubled in spirit, he then announced that one of them would betray him. When Judas had left, he charged the others with a new commandment, “Love as I have loved you.” Jesus then commenced to speak. From chapter 13 to 16, we have the words of Jesus preparing his disciples for life after his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.

Jesus spoke to them of a new reality that would be framed by belief in him. Followers of God love as he loves, pray in his name, abide in him. They would see the Father through seeing Jesus. They would love the Father by loving Jesus.

Much would remain the same. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. His nature has not changed. His moral character has not changed. The God of the New Testament is a God of justice, just as the God of the Old Testament is a God of grace. God’s character does not change, ever. He’s always been a God of grace and justice. He always will be a God of grace and justice. But he had given promises that were only now finding fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Covenant God spoke his name to Moses,

⁶ Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” Exodus 34:6–7

God proclaimed his name, proclaimed his character. In the New Covenant we behold his name in Jesus, “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

In the Old Covenant, the Law was given externally to the people of God who were then called to live up to it. In the New Covenant, God sends his Son through the Spirit and we live through him. Abiding in Christ becomes our central metaphor for what it means to live in a dependent relationship with God. Apart from him we can do nothing. In him we produce fruit that lasts.

“These things Jesus spoke.” He spoke to them of a new reality; a new paradigm for following God. And now, in chapter 17, having finished speaking to the disciples, Jesus gives them into the hands of the Father through prayer.

The Prayer of Sanctification

Let’s read Jesus’ prayer in full and then we will address it in two lessons. It is truly amazing to stop for a moment and just consider the fact that John has written down here words prayed from the soul

and heart of Jesus to God the Father concerning us. We are listening to Jesus pray for us. This is John 17:1-26,

¹ Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

⁶ I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; ⁸ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ⁹ I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You.

Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as *We are*. ¹² While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰ I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me. ²² The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as *We are one*; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; ²⁶ and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Jesus sanctified his disciples when he washed their feet. To be sanctified is to be cleansed for use by God and set apart for special purpose. It means, to be made holy. Jesus uses the language of holiness in this prayer when he asks the Father in verse 17 to sanctify the disciples in truth. This prayer is an act of sanctification that parallels the washing in chapter 13. It is a setting apart of his disciples for holy purpose. It is an act that does not apply only to these 11 men. Jesus expands his prayer in verse 20. Did you hear that? He prayed not only for them, but "for those also who believe in me through their word." That's you and me. We're the ones who have believed in Jesus through the word of the apostles. So, this prayer is for us also.

To be set apart does not mean narrowly to be set apart in a special Christian leadership role as an apostle, or preacher, or missionary. The prayer here is to be set apart in life in this world for God. This prayer of sanctification is for everyone who believes and receives the good news about Jesus. I love the way Ephesians 2:8-10 brings together the gospel message and the call to live it out for God.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

It's basic Gospel message. You are not saved by what you do. You are saved as a gift of grace. So where, then, do works fit in? Well, verse 10,

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

If you have been born again, created anew in Christ Jesus, then God has works prepared for you to do - among your family, among your neighbors, among the people you interact with, with your children, with your spouse. He has chosen you to go and bear fruit for his glory as you walk with him through life abiding in Christ. There are good works for you to do. And Jesus prays this prayer of sanctification for you, that God would set you aside and enable you to live for him.

Jesus prays for us, but we not only for us in this prayer. In fact, his first request is going to be for himself. That request is in verses 1-5, and that's our focus for this lesson. We will cover the rest of the prayer in our next lesson.

The First Request: Glorify Me. (John 17:1-5)

What is Jesus requesting in his request for glory?

Jesus begins his prayer with a request for himself. In verse 2, Jesus asks, "Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son." He repeats the request in verse 5, "Glorify me in your own presence."

Glory is one of the oft repeated words in John 13-17. It shows up 17 times. Of course, Glory is a theme not just in these chapters but of the whole Gospel. John declared in the prologue, "We have beheld his glory." More recently, in Chapter 12, the chapter that transitioned us from the first half of the gospel to the second, Jesus announced, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. There Jesus spoke to God, asking, "Father glorify your name." Here Jesus asks that he himself be glorified.

Jesus makes an astounding claim to go along with the request. It's right up there with some of the most astonishing things he has said about himself so far. He specifically prayed, "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." This is Jesus' self-concept. This is who he considers himself to be: the one who shared glory with the Father before the Universe came to be. This isn't just a claim to predate Abraham, if that wasn't audacious enough. This is a claim to predate creation. "Restore the glory I had before the world existed." Remember John 1:1. John gets this from Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Jesus has always existed.

The request to be glorified with the glory he had before the world, suggests that Jesus set aside his glory or covered over his glory when he came to earth. We can only approximately understand what that means, since this is getting us into the mystery of the nature of God. What does it mean to be Trinity? What does it mean for Jesus to be fully God, fully man? It's mysterious. We can think about it rationally, but ultimately it is super-rational. It is beyond our reasoning ability. It's beyond our experience. I am reminded of Philippians 2:7 where Paul says Jesus "emptied himself" when he came to earth as a man. Somehow, in some sense he gave up his glory, or set it aside during his time on earth, which is how we understand some of the things that Jesus said about his relationship to God, his submission to God, his not knowing all things, that only the Father knows all things. Well, how can that be if Jesus is God? There's a setting aside during his period on earth where he is not omniscient, he is not omnipresent; he's not everywhere, he is somehow contained in a human body, in the flesh. He dwelt in the flesh and so he had to empty himself, give up his glory. Peter, James and John got a glimpse, and nothing like the full glory of Christ but when other Gospels report going up on the mountain, and the three of them are with Jesus and he's transfigured before their eyes, that's just a peak of the glory of God.

God can reveal his glory along a continuum, something like using a dimmer switch with a light. We are told that God spoke face to face with Moses. Moses returned from those conversations with his own face shining. We are also told that no man can look upon God. God allowed Moses only to see a corner of his robe. "You can't see my glory, Moses." So, can we see God in his glory or not? That one's not so difficult. We cannot see God in his full glory. We can see God somehow in his veiled or filtered glory, when it's dimmed down for us.

But then what even do we mean when we talk about seeing God's glory? Glory is often related to light. Glory shines. God's glory was seen as a pillar of fire and it was seen as shining out from the tabernacle.

Is glory light? Well, no. It's manifested in light, but it's more than light. The connection of glory with God's name in Exodus 34:6-7, which I read before, takes us further in our understanding. The name of God is the essence of who he is, gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, just. When John says, "We beheld the glory of Jesus", he goes on to say, that Jesus is the only begotten, full of grace and truth. That's his name. That's who he is. It's his nature. Glory is connected with his nature, with his attributes, with the character of who he is.

If our nature is praiseworthy, then it is glorious. That which is beautiful and good and true about the name is the glory of the name. Your praiseworthy characteristics are your glory. God's praiseworthy nature, characteristics, attributes, that's his glory. And we can speak of that glory in two ways. His glory is the praiseworthiness of his character. It is an attribute that God, or it's a statement about the attributes of God. His glory is the praiseworthiness of his nature, of his character. We can also speak of God's glory as the manifestation of his character. In that sense, his glory is seen. It radiates out.

The sun provides a concrete example that can help us think about this. The sun exists as a gaseous ball of incredible power. That power extends out as both light and heat are released. When we consider the nature of the sun, we can say it is glorious. We can also say that the visible manifestation of the sun is glorious. You know, both when we think about the awesome power contained in it, and also when we're just talking about the phenomena that we witness, what we see. Both its attributes are glorious, but also that which emanates from it: we see the glory.

The manifestation of the sun's power, you know, just the tiny bit that we see, prevents us from viewing the sun directly for much more than a few seconds without harming our eyes. It is much better to view the sun through filtered glasses or even to take a video and watch the video instead of directly viewing the sun. That will protect our eyes from the light and the heat. If we were taken into space to stand before the sun, we would disintegrate in its presence. It's power, it's glory would overwhelm us. We can only view the sun from millions of miles distance. Even then, we have to filter the sun.

Imagine, then, the full exposure to the power, the glory of the one who made the sun. Imagine not only the physical power of God but the moral holiness of God. Standing in the presence of God's uncontained power would disintegrate us. Likewise, how can we stand in the presence of God's holiness unfiltered? It would undo us. Isaiah, exposed to that holiness, even filtered through a vision, cried out after saying, "Holy, holy, holy, he's glorious," Isaiah then cried out, "I am cursed, I am ruined for I am a man of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the Lord of Hosts." He could feel, he could sense the holy glory of God. And it was overwhelming. Peter, exposed on a fishing boat to the glory of Jesus when Jesus calmed the waves and Peter thought for a second about what just happened and realized who he was in a boat with, even with that glory filtered as it was, even as Jesus had emptied himself and this is his incarnate form, Peter could sense not only his power, but his holiness, and he cried out, "Away from me Lord, I am a sinful man. Get away from me."

God's glory is the praiseworthiness of his name and the manifestation of that praiseworthiness. Humans cannot stand in the presence of that glory without being undone. The Son alone has seen the Father fully revealed (1:18).

What is this glory of God that Jesus makes known?

In verse 4 Jesus says, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." And in verse 6 he says, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world." This is pretty significant because Jesus has not only asked for glory. He is indicating that his purpose on earth has been to reveal the glory of God.

I do not mean to say that his purpose was not to come and save, that he only came as a witness to reflect the glory of God. His purpose was to save through his atoning death. That's John 3:17. But the two purposes are one and the same or, at least, they are intricately intertwined.

Jesus' purpose was to come as the light of the world to make God known to people, not only through teaching, but also through action. He's not making God known only symbolically. He's making God known by acting as God acts, by loving, and sometimes in miraculous ways. And though Jesus speaks here as though he has completed his mission - "I have done the work you have called me to do" - he's including, he's looking ahead to what is getting ready to happen. So it's as good as done. This is the hour of the cross and that cross is the ultimate witness to the glory of God. And it is not just symbolic. The cross is not just a symbol of unconditional love, where a person gives up his life for no reason, as representative of how much God loves us. No, this is God's love in action. This was a necessary act to procure forgiveness for us. This is the manifestation of his glorious nature through his saving righteousness. He is saving us as he displays his glory.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we witness his love. We also witness his justice. He will not leave sin unpunished. But he will take the punishment on himself. We also witness his power because death cannot hold him. And we witness his wisdom. This is what God has been planning through the ages. Even before he created mankind, he knew that he would have to save. It's the whole plan, from re-robing Adam and Eve after their expulsion, he can re-inherit them at that point because he knows what he's going to do through Jesus. In the call of Abraham, in the cutting a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 and walking through those pieces of those animals God is saying, "The only way you keep covenant with me is if I die. You sin, I die." Through the Passover lamb God is announcing that the Angel of Wrath must come because God is just and holy. But God himself will become the lamb who will die and by his blood the Angel of Wrath is turned away. Symbol after symbol, through the history of Israel, all of the promises to bring the people back, to bring them close to his, the promise to work in their hearts so that they would love him with their heart, mind, and soul, all of those promises come to fruition in Jesus Christ. God's wisdom, his power, his love, and his justice is all made known on the cross. The cross is the banner that stand for the world to see: this is your God. He is holy and just, and he is incredibly loving.

Jesus manifests, makes known, the glorious name of God. The Father is glorious. The Son is glorious. So, we understand what the glory of God is - the praiseworthiness of his nature made manifest. And we understand that Jesus came to earth with the purpose of making God's glory visible. Jesus wants to magnify the glory of God to us so that we might truly know him. We get that. There is one thing here we might have trouble with. There is a potential problem here in this prayer, and it comes with the question, is it right to pray for your own glory?

Is it right for Jesus to pray for his own glory?

It does not feel right to us, does it? Do you pray for your own glory? "God, let me be glorified." You want to have glory, you just don't want to pray for it. A good person does not pray for his own glory. That would be self-centered. Though, to be honest, we have to admit that we are constantly seeking our own glory. We want to believe that we have praiseworthy qualities, and we love it when other people believe it; when other people praise us, when they recognize our goodness, our qualities, our smartness, our strength, our beauty, whatever. We want our glory made manifest to our parents, to our friends, to that special guy or that special girl, to our colleagues, we want our enemies to know how much better we are, to our employees or students, or children if you have them, to our friends, to the world. We dream about it and plan for it. We go about it in different ways. Some of us strive to

be liked. Some of us strive to be needed. Some of us strive to win, but there is this similar motivation behind it all, whatever your personality is like: we want our qualities to be known, and we want to receive affirmation and praise for who we are. This is something we crave. We crave to be glorified.

But we still know not to pray for it. You don't pray for this. That would be self-centered. And yet, Jesus' first request here in chapter 17 is this prayer for his own glory. So is Jesus self-centered?

I could defend Jesus' request here by saying there might be something right about a human being desiring that God make him known for who he is. And Jesus happens to be glorious. So for Jesus to pray for his glory is okay. It's right. But I don't think it really answers the problem. We still have the problem. Should God, if he is really good, should he be centered on himself? Should he want focus to be on him? Should he want to have glory, and should he want his glory manifested?

Thinking of God from a human perspective I think the answer is, "No." But that would be a mistake, to think of God from human perspective because God is absolutely not human. I think I have said this before in John, it is worth repeating. We are not the center of all things. That's a huge difference. God is. God is that which is most good, most true, most beautiful. We want to be the center of our little world. But God actually is the center of every world. All beauty, truth and goodness have their source in him.

And because God is good, he is obliged to magnify that which is most good. And in this case, and only in this case, God himself is that good, which he is obliged to magnify. He is the center and the source. He is the reality of all that which ought to be highlighted, which ought to be magnified and made known. If there's anything that should be praised, it is God. And we will benefit from the magnification of the characteristics, attributes of God. Just as we ought to seek the praise of God's glorious nature, so God ought to seek the praise of his glorious nature.

We might ask, why God created angels and human beings? This is a question that often comes into this discussion when we're talking about God pursuing his glory. In fact, I was just asked this by a college student after my online Bible study I do on Sunday afternoons. This college student who hung around happened to be my daughter, Anna, who is in her first year of college, and some of the other students stayed online with her. She had been having this discussion with some friends, and the discussion was, why did God create? Did he create for love or did he create for his own glory?

Well, we know God did not create out of a lack of love. The Father has always loved the Son who has always loved the Father. God is complete in himself. He does not lack. But it does seem that he was moved to magnify his glory by making known the overflowing abundance of his love by creating creatures who he can let that love of Father and Son and Spirit flow out upon. And these two things seem quite closely connected. The recognition of God's love - that's glorious! So in a sense, God created both for his glory and to expand his love because expanding his love magnifies his glory; who he is.

I will say for me, just personally the way I think about it is that I put God's pursuit of his own glory prior to anything else. God created to display his glory. And I think that is prior to his desire to manifest of his love, because I think he was manifesting equally all of his attributes: his love, his justice, his holiness.

So I think God does pursue his own glory and I think that's why he created everything, and I struggle sometimes to think about that as a human but when I think about God being God, it is right for him to magnify his glory. So Jesus, being God, it's right for him also to seek his own glory.

We, not being God, do not seek our own glory. Our glory is in his glory. He the sun, we're the moon. We exist to reflect him. So we wouldn't make the same request that Jesus is making. We would ask that God would use us to bring him glory.

Okay, let me wrap this up on talking about the theme of glory using a passage from Isaiah. The first verse I think of when I think about God's pursuit of his own glory is Isaiah 42:8, "I am the Lord, that is my name, I will not give my glory to another." I just looked that up to get the quote and was reminded, I'd forgotten that this quote comes from one of the servant passages in Isaiah. It's a foreshadowing of Jesus, so it fits so well with the focus on the glory of the Father and Son that we have here in this prayer. So I want to read a little more of the context to you. This is Isaiah 42:5-8.

The prophet begins, introducing God and something about his nature. This is verse 5,

⁵ Thus says God the Lord,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it,

Then In verses 6-7, Isaiah reports God's words to his servant, who is the Messiah.

⁶ "I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,
and I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations,
⁷ to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon
and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

Then after speaking of the servant to come, that's when God speaks of his own glory in verses 8-9.

⁸ I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another,
nor My praise to graven images.

⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things;
before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you."

God is jealous for his own glory, "I am the Lord, that is my name; I will not give my glory to another." And then he says, "I have proclaimed to you what has come to pass already, now I proclaim a new thing." This is 700 years before Jesus Christ. But he has just been talking about the Messiah who is coming as a light to the nations and to open blind eyes.

God's pursuit of his own glory is intertwined with his righteous salvation for us in Jesus Christ. Jesus makes known the glory of God both because it is good to magnify the One who is most good, but also because that glory, that nature, is a nature that loves to the degree of pursuing us, even to the cross. That is the glory of God.

How does God's pursuit of his own glory bring about good for us?

I skipped over verse 3. So, we are ready to come back to it.

"Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

Now this is verse 3.

³ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

The Father is glorified in the Son by giving eternal life to those who are his. This eternal life is essentially relational. The way of eternal life is relational, and the essence of eternal life is relational. I'm sure you've heard it quoted that Christianity is not a religion; it's a relationship. And that's exactly what we're seeing here. Human religion tends to miss on both of these truths. Human religion tends to make some kind of way to the afterlife that is distinct from relationship with God. It's stuff we have to do. And then human religion makes the afterlife about us, distinct from relationship with God. Whereas Jesus here declares, "this is eternal life", knowing God and knowing Jesus. It's about our relationship with God through Jesus.

Considering the way, human religion usually defines a path of ritual or moral code or something mystic that we have to do. It can range from asceticism to self-fulfillment. Whether it's Hinduism, or New Age, or cultural Christianity, or Islam, or Judaism, or just being a spiritual person, whatever it is, all religious conceptions promote some kind of way that is going to lead you to the next step of your self-realization, or lead you into paradise, or help you escape reincarnation so that you become one with God. So whatever the concept of eternal life is, the way you get there is by doing or being something. And in that sense, all religion is ultimately legalistic, whether it's a strict legalism, it's very moralistic, or whether it's this kind of heart legalism, just follow your heart, there is this code that you have to live by to prove yourself worthy and hopefully gain whatever reward there may be. So the path is not about relationship with God. The path is something else.

Jesus says that the way of eternal life is through knowing God and you come to know God through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way. You can't come to him through works or through ritual. You cannot make yourself worthy. You can only accept his gracious offer of relationship by faith and then, unified with him you die to sin and are raised to new life in relationship with him (Romans 6:4).

Not only is Jesus the way to eternal life, Jesus is eternal life. We have to think about that. Eternal life is an everlasting relationship with God. This is eternal life, to know God and to know Jesus. God is the reward. There's not some other reward. Whatever your conception of heaven is, if it's not about relationship with God then you've missed the nature of heaven. Eternal life, in a sense, is the result of that relationship. Eternal life without God is not eternal life at all. It is eternal existence. And it's a very sad existence. Life is only truly experienced through God, in relationship with him. We get a taste of it on this earth even when we are separated from God and we don't yield to God. We're still in the creation that he has made and there's this image of him that shines out through people. And so we get, on this earth, while we're alive, at the very least a limited temporary of the goodness of life that God makes present in our reality through his common grace. He lets us all experience life. We don't give him credit for it all the time, for the harmony, the music, the beauty, the color, the relationship. Everything that you find good, beautiful, and true is because you exist in God's creation, and you experience his nature through what he's made or through who he's made.

After death, the reality of our separation from God becomes acute as a separation from all good things. We lose all goodness and beauty that we potentially experienced living in his world. We lose the warmth and light, the truth, the harmony, companionship. This is not taken away from us when we die. Rather, we are taken away from it. All the goodness we have tasted in this world remains with God. Everything that is true to life is in him. To walk away from relationship with God is to walk away from all that can be properly called life. We may continue to exist apart from God, but it is an existence of eternal death, not eternal life.

To enter into relationship with God is to know him. This is eternal life. God himself is our reward. God himself is heaven. Without the love for God, there can be no joy of heaven. With love for God, the joy is potentially endless.

Jesus has requested the full restoration of his glory. That was his first request in his prayer. The next three requests are going to be about us. Though we can say that we are also included even in this first request of Jesus for his own glory, because as the Father and Son make manifest the glory of their name, the great abundance of their love, as they make that known, overflows to us. The cross is an example of the magnification of the glory of who they are.

And as we come to love God, as we return his love back to him, we begin to know him and see the glory of who he is, the beauty of his goodness, the elegance of his wisdom, the abundance of his love, when we really begin to get God and to love God, the idea of magnifying his glory makes all the sense in the world. Like, of course that is my purpose. There is no one near as praiseworthy, or as intriguing, or as worth knowing than God. If I've ever wanted anybody to know about a soccer team or a particular soccer player, or if I've ever wanted to talk about who's the greatest basketball player of all time, or I have a band that I just have to promote, or a style of music, or something I saw on America's Got Talent, or a favorite course of study; if you've been around somebody who loves chemistry; or our friend Daniel is over tonight and he loves birds, and there were birds flying over our balcony, and he's so excited about birds that you get excited with him and he points them out and he takes these awesome photos, and you think, "He's right. Birds are awesome! They're beautiful!", and he's an evangelist for birds and it's effective because birds really are cool. But anything you've had that you just wanted to magnify to other people, there is no one near as praiseworthy, or as intriguing, or as worth knowing than God. Why would I not want my life to be about magnifying his glory and pointing other people to him? So I pray with Jesus, "God, magnify the glory of Jesus' name. Let the cross be a banner planted for the world to see. And help me in my little sphere, however I can, to point people to how beautiful and how good, and true, and loving you are."

Reflection questions

1. Read John 17:1-26. Identify the specific requests Jesus makes in this prayer.
2. Read John 1-5 more closely. What stands out to you as interesting, important, strange or confusing? What are some questions that come to mind?
3. How do glory, light and name relate to one another in the Gospel of John? Compare the prologue to these five verses.
4. John proclaimed in 1:14 that he and others beheld the glory of Jesus while he was on earth. What are some of the stories in the Gospel that provide concrete examples for this abstract idea?
5. Is it right for Jesus to pray for his own glory? Would it be right for you to pray for your own glory?
6. God's pursuit of his own glory conflicts with God's loving redemption of mankind. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?
7. Which would do you believe comes first? God's pursuit of his own glory or his redemption of people? How do the two relate?
8. How do you understand Jesus' declaration, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"? In what way is this truth counterintuitive to human religion?