



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 60”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 60

John 17:1-5

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: **“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.**

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

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As important as is the necessity of being obedient to God by following His instructions, the essence of our relationship with God is actually prayer. Every relationship in which a human being engages is based upon communication, and prayer is the form of communication that we have with God. Although Jesus makes it clear that God is our heavenly father, it might be more to the point to consider our relationship with God similar to a relationship with a person of the opposite sex in which we are interested. That type of relationship starts with a conversation, and grows as the conversation becomes more revealing and intimate between the two people. If the two can agree on the things that they have in common and the intimacy of the conversation can continue to grow, the two can become one another’s “confidante”.

A confidante is someone that we trust enough to share those things that would embarrass or disadvantage us if they were known by the general public. We count on our confidantes to keep our communications private and to provide us advice and perspective on those things that we share with them. A confidante is someone that we expect to have our best interests at heart. If the relationship continues to grow, we may choose this our confidante to become our spouse.

Genesis 2:23-24 says:

23 And Adam said: **“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”**

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his



wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Marriage between a man and a woman, as they agree to become one flesh with one another, means that they have become the ultimate in confidantes. Spouses agree to share every part of their lives with one another, even to the extent of becoming exclusive sexual partners. The spousal relationship should be the most secure relationship that you have; you should be able share your innermost thoughts with your spouse and count on your spouse to not share marital confidences with anyone, including their best friends, their siblings, or, as **Genesis 2:24** tells us, even their parents.

The design of God is that a spouse is to be a person to whom you can pour out your heart, and a person who can pour out their heart to you with confidence. Your lives are to be totally intertwined; you can ask him or her for any kind of support and they can do the same with you.

The level of communication and intimacy required between spouses is the reason that I compare the relationship between spouses to that that we are to develop with God. Jesus told the disciples, in **John 15:7-9**:

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

Prayer is designed to be the pouring out of our hearts to the God in whom we have total confidence. Jesus told the disciples, in **John 15:15-16**:

15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Jesus and God are one, and they want us to be their friends. I find it the most remarkable thing in the world that God wants me to be His friend. Of course, that has been true, even from the beginning. **Genesis 1:26-28, 31** records:

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”



31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

God made us in His image and gave us dominion over every other living thing on the earth so that we would have a similar responsibility as Him and He could commune with us. If we go back to the story of the first sin, we can see this to be true, as **Genesis 3:8-9** tells us:

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

The lection indicates that there is a common language between man and God. That the man and the woman recognized the sound of God walking in the garden implies that God did this with some regularity. The meeting in the garden does not seem to be the unique situation of Moses meeting God on Mount Sinai or Joshua meeting the Commander of the Army of the Lord on the Jericho plain.

The Biblical Law of Primary Reference tells us God’s first description of a situation in the Bible is His plan for that situation. Moses on Mount Sinai and Joshua on the Jericho plain were representatives of Israel meeting with God to bring God’s message to the nation. But it appears to me that God’s original plan was not to have representatives; it appears that God met with Adam and his wife personally on a periodic basis, possibly daily, and communed with them, not just to give them commandments or instructions about war, but to actually be friends with them. And the relationship between Jesus Christ, who was God with us, and His disciples, reinforces my thoughts on the issue.

So, in my opinion, God wants to be our friend. God wants to commune with each of us personally, on a daily basis, not just to give us instructions, but to both talk to us and listen to our inmost thoughts. A man that spoke with God in the same way as did Adam tells God, in **Psalms 139:23-24**:

**23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.**

David, the sweet singer of Israel, was a man after God’s own heart. David wrote the majority of the Psalms, eighty-two of which are actually the prayers and praises of a man who intimately communicated with God. David was not born into his exalted position as King of Israel, but was originally a shepherd boy, the youngest of his brothers, and not even a member of the Israelite army when he performed his heroic deed, slaying the giant Goliath. But while David was in solitude with God while keeping the sheep for his father out on the mountain, David got to know God and became strong in the Lord, so much so that the Lord used David to win the war for Israel against the Philistines and then to establish the greatest Kingdom in the history of the world.



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David's relationship with God was not unique. After the writer of the Hebrews talked about Moses and Joshua, he tells us, in **Hebrews 11:32-40**:
32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The fact of the matter is that the level of our relationship with God is dependent upon that which we decide to put into it. Our relationship with God is much like our relationship with anyone else that desires to have a relationship with us. If someone wants to be your friend, and makes overtures towards you, the amount of attention that you show them is up to you.

Before Jesus chose the twelve to be His disciples. **Luke 6:12-13** says:
12 Now it came to pass in those days that [Jesus] went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

Jesus' relationship with God was such that before He made this major decision, Jesus spent all night in consultation with God in prayer. God was Jesus' confidant and His counselor. When Jesus needed to make a decision, He spent an extended amount of time in prayer. Nothing can stop us from doing the same. In fact, God commands us, in **1Thessalonians 5:17**:

17 pray without ceasing,

The instructions about prayer go on to say, in **1Thessalonians 5:18-19**
18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit, of whom we have been speaking for the last two weeks, is analogous to the relationship that Adam had with God in the garden. We are not to quench the Spirit, meaning that we are not supposed to put out the fire of God that the Holy Spirit brings to our lives. The fire of the Holy Spirit gives us the understanding of the will of God, as **Acts 2:1-4** records:

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When we pray, we call upon God, the Holy Spirit to give us counsel, guidance, wisdom and power. We recognize the format of our relationship with God, that being, that God loves us, and craves interacting with us as we would with our adult children. God wants to both advise and empower us, while at the same time He recognizes that we have free will and can decide whether or not to listen to His advice and allow His power to flow through us to complete His will.

Jesus reinforces that point as He begins His last prayer with His disciples in our text, **John 17:1-5**:

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

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

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Jesus asked God to give Him glory, because although Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, cast out demons and cleansed lepers, gave sight to the blind and unstopped deaf ears, Jesus did not take credit for it. In **Matthew 6:1**, Jesus says:

1 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

And consistently, Jesus took no credit for the healings that He performed, preferring to point those healed to give glory to God for their good fortune, as **Mark 1:40-44** records:



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40 Now a leper came to [Jesus], imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “**I am willing; be cleansed.**”

42 As soon as [Jesus] had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

43 And [Jesus] strictly warned him and sent him away at once,

44 and said to him, “**See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.**”

Jesus did not want glory from men, but rather wanted to be glorified by God for doing God’s will, which required that Jesus do His charitable deeds in secret. Even while He was on earth as a man, Jesus’ did not have a primary relationship with any man, but rather, with God. Jesus knew that He was going to need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to get through the ordeal of the Cross, but He also knew that the result of the Crucifixion would be the Resurrection, which would restore Him to the glory that He had with God from the foundation of the world. Jesus volunteered to go to the Cross, but, in His human incarnation, like us, Jesus could do the will of God only when equipped with the power of God. Paul explains to us, in **Philippians 2:6-8**, that Jesus:

6 being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Prayer created the relationship with God that gave Jesus the power to do the work that saved us. But, in order for Jesus’ work to be effective and in order for us to be saved, we have to respond, in faith, to the salvific work of Jesus Christ. To facilitate a response to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ by mankind, Jesus needs us to publicize His glorification that occurred after He was resurrected. And Jesus prayed to God to give us the power to do that, in **John 17:6-8**:

6 “**I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.**

7 **Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.**

8 **For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.**



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Jesus prayed for His disciples, because they are being charged with carrying His History to the world. The disciples needed the Holy Spirit to empower them and to keep them on track, so Jesus prayed, in **John 17:9-13**:
9 “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.

10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

There is nothing that the Church needs more than the power of God surrounding it like a hedge of protection. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, the church will fall to the wiles of the devil, as the devil is going to attack the church, just as he attacked Jesus, with all of his power.

Even from Genesis, the devil has contradicted God, and He will continue to do so during the Church age. The salvation of mankind depended on the disciples being so devoted to Jesus Christ that they would continue to spread the gospel despite their fears of that which the devil was going to incite unbelievers to do to them. So Jesus kept the disciples with Him through and after His Passion so that they would understand the need for them to be devoted to the Gospel, because without the preaching of the Gospel, mankind would be lost. So Jesus prayed for the disciples, in **John 17:14-19**:

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

It is of the utmost importance that we recognize that Jesus is praying for those whose orientation is not on the things of the world, but the ministry of Jesus Christ. Understand, as **Matthew 5:45** tells us:

45 [God] makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

There is a general, natural blessing that everyone, good, evil, just or unjust, receives. The vast majority of children are born healthy, even those born



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to pagans and unbelievers. In our country, the vast majority of the people are gainfully employed, whether they believe in God or not. God bestows the blessing of a reasonable portion of health and strength on the majority of mankind, whether they believe in Jesus Christ or not.

Believers in Jesus Christ, however, are specifically prayed for by Jesus, and have access to these specific blessings for which Jesus prayed, and the qualification for receiving the special blessing is that the believers' focus has to be on eternal life in heaven with Jesus Christ rather than on life in this world.

A person focused on heaven can still hold a job, be married, and do all of the things that people focused life on this world do to survive and support themselves. Jesus was a carpenter, Peter had a wife, and Paul supported himself by being a tentmaker. But their focus was on heaven rather than on their earthly occupations. And that is to be true, even for us, even in our time, as Jesus prays, in **John 17:20-23**, which says:

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

A person that is one with Christ will be focused on heaven. If we are one with Christ, we will recognize that obtaining eternal life through Jesus Christ is the most important concern that anyone can have, and we will introduce Christ to the people in our concentric circle of contact that do not know the Lord in the pardon of their sins. The paradigm by which we should live, according to Jesus' prayer, is that of which Moses spoke, in **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**:

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Moses, in Deuteronomy, was talking about teaching the tenets of the Old Testament laws of God, but the words that we should teach to our children and talk of constantly during our lives are about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And, Deuteronomy says, we don't have to be in a church setting to



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talk about the Lord. I found out this week that one of the stipulations in the probation that Michael Vick was put under by the NFL commissioner in order to be reinstated into the NFL is that he had to faithfully attend the Philadelphia Eagles players Bible Study. We can make the discussion of Jesus Christ part of every setting in which we come into contact, not just church. And doing so is one way that we become one with the Lord. A minority of the Lord's preaching and miracles were done within the confines of the Temple or a synagogue. The Lord's first miracle was done at a wedding. Jesus found most of his disciples while they were fishing, which is not traditionally considered a holy occupation. Jesus preached and did miracles in the synagogues, but also as He walked down the road, as he visited the city gates which were public gathering places, and as He visited people's houses. After all, you generally can't always find the tax collectors and sinners in church.

But Jesus is praying that we who are one with Him will spread the Gospel of the love of God everywhere we go to everyone with whom we come into contact because His sacrifice on the Cross is able to make everyone eligible for salvation. **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

And Jesus completes His prayer by praying the salvation of the church, in **John 17:24-26**:

24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

The prayer of Jesus is that we will learn and tell others that God loves us, and has a wonderful plan for our lives. The "b" portion of **2Peter 3:9** tells us that:

9 The Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Out on a hill called Calvary, the Lord Jesus Christ did His part to insure that all have the chance to live eternally and not to perish, to come to repentance, and to go to heaven when we inevitably die, as, **Hebrews 9:27-28** tells us:

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for



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salvation.

Jesus, in this, His final prayer with His disciples, prays for them and for us that we will come to understand and believe the reason for His mission to planet Earth, and that we will join with Him and develop the relationship with God that will allow us to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and focus on the mission to make sure that everyone on the earth learns that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

As we go down from this place, let us resolve to pray the prayer of Jesus Christ, and to develop the relationship with God that He has made available for us through His sacrifice. Let us develop the level of intimacy, communication and friendship with God that He is offering us through the facility of prayer, as we become one with the Lord and accept His agenda for our lives as our own. Let us be friends with God as was David and one with the Lord as were the disciples, as we develop lives of prayer and yield to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as He empowers us to lead men and women to a relationship with the Lord.

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