

**Lesson 18**  
**John 17:1-26**  
**THE PRAYER OF THE OVERCOMER**

**Memory verse:** “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17 NIV)

Chapter 17 is part of Jesus' private ministry and has many connections with the preceding Upper Room Discourse. In the Old Testament, prayers often accompanied important farewell discourses (cf. Gen. 49; Deut. 32 - 33). The main theme is Jesus' desire for the Father's glory and the disciples' welfare. However, many of the other themes that have run through this Gospel reach a new climax here, too.

Most scholars who have sought to harmonize the accounts in the four gospels have the Lord Jesus praying the prayer of John 17 in the Upper Room after He had finished His instructions to the disciples. Then He and the disciples sang the traditional Passover psalms, left the Upper Room, and headed for the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus had been accustomed to meet with them and pray (see Matthew 26:30–46 and Mark 14:26–42).

Whether He prayed it in the Upper Room or en-route to the garden, this much is sure: it is the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture. John 17 is certainly the “Holy of Holies” of the gospel record, and we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility and worship. To think that we are privileged to listen in as God the Son converses with His Father just as He is about to give His life as a ransom for sinners!

No matter what events occurred later that evening, this prayer makes it clear that Jesus was and is the Over-comer. He was not a “victim”; He was and is the Victor! “Be of good cheer,” He had encouraged His disciples; “I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The word world is used nineteen times in this prayer, so it is easy to see the connection between the prayer and John 16:33. If you and I will understand and apply the truths revealed in this profound prayer, it will enable us to be over-comers too.

The progression of thought in this prayer is not difficult to discover. Jesus first prayed for Himself and told the Father that His work on earth had been finished (John 17:1–5). Then He prayed for His disciples, that the Father would keep them and sanctify them (John 17:6–19). He closed His prayer by praying for you and me and the whole church, that we might be unified in Him and one day share His glory (John 17:20–26).

Why did Jesus pray this prayer? Certainly He was preparing Himself for the sufferings that lay ahead. As He contemplated the glory that the Father promised Him, He would receive new strength for His sacrifice (Heb. 12:1–3). But He also had His disciples in mind (John 17:13). What an encouragement this prayer should have been to them! He prayed about their security, their joy, their unity, and their future glory! He also prayed it for us today so that we would know all that He has done for us and given to us and all that He will do for us when we get to heaven.

In this prayer, our Lord declares four wonderful privileges we have as His children, privileges that help to make us over-comers.

Scripture Reading: John 17: 1-26

To learn in this lesson: 1) Believers share His Life 2) Believers know His Name and have His Word 3) Believers share His Glory

**Discussion Questions:**

1) In the beginning of Jesus' prayer (verses 1 to 5), show how it reveals that believers can share His Life.

2) Why is it such a privilege for believers to know Jesus by His Name and His Word (in verses 6 to 19)?

3) What should believers practice when they are so privileged to have a share of the Lord Jesus Christ's glory (verses 20 to 26)?