

exploreGOD

"CAN I KNOW GOD PERSONALLY?"

JOHN 17:1-5

This Week's Core Competency

Personal God – I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life. Psalm 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

where does my help come from?

*My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

Recently, I had the privilege of entering a world-renowned, billion dollar, retractable-roof, sports-entertainment arena, not once, but twice within a span of three days. This sports complex shall remain nameless, but you can probably guess which Arlington stadium I was able to waltz into for free, twice in 72 hours. My first entrance was courtesy of a business luncheon held in one of the team pregame practice areas, complete with a stadium tour and a photo-op session on the 40 yard line. My second entrance, just a few days later, was through an impromptu invite to a Sunday game from a friend. I have to admit, going to the game after having been on the field of play just a few days previously made me feel like this place was as familiar as home. Because of my recent tour, I knew where the locker rooms were, where the owner's suite was, even where to find the best restrooms. My familiarity with the

***When you truly know God, you
have energy to serve him, boldness to
share him, and contentment in him.***

— J. I. Packer

place filled me with an inflated sense of belonging. I knew the place so well that in some small way it felt like I owned a piece of it.

Now, before you call the psyche ward about my delusions of grandeur, please be comforted to know that despite my insider knowledge of the place, I am well aware that my entrance and free access was dependent entirely upon my acquaintance with others. My value and net worth did nothing to effect my entrance. I did not get into the luncheon until I was identified by the hosting company as a legitimate invitee. I did not get into the Sunday game because I knew the location of the field-level service elevators. I had to show a ticket that my friend had given to me to get past the game-day security. My entrance on both occasions was based upon knowing someone. Or better stated, my entrances were based upon the right people knowing me.

Knowing God is immensely more important than knowing stadiums, stadium insiders or even stadium owners. Even if knowing everything about God were possible, it would not be enough to warrant access to Him and His blessings. Knowing God has to be more than mastery of biblical data and doctrinal creeds. Knowing God has to be personal if it is to be valid knowledge at all. Even more important than my grasp of His person is His knowledge and acceptance of me. To know and to be known by God is the ultimate goal. Jesus said this is eternal life (John 17:3). Jesus said He wants to give us this relationship. Such "knowing" is more glorious than even the most impressive of arenas.

day 1

ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

John 17:1-5

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – note what comes to mind as you read

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- *Draw an arrow from the word "looked" in the direction Jesus prayed.
- *Circle all the words identifying the first person of the Trinity.
- *Box all the words identifying the second person of the Trinity.
- *Draw a line connecting the word "hour" with "finishing."
- *Underline every occurrence of the word "glory" or "glorify."
- *Double underline every occurrence of the word "you" or "your."
- *In v. 3 draw an arrow from the word "you" to the word connected with it.
- *Draw a triangle over the first person pronouns in vv. 4-5.
- *Draw an arrow from each of these triangles to the name connected with each.
- *Double underline the central phrase to this entire passage.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What does the time and setting of Jesus' prayer in John 17 contribute to your understanding of this prayer (See John 13:2; 14:31; 17:1)?
2. What is "the hour" Jesus speaks of?
3. How is God to be glorified in this hour's fulfillment?
4. What is the role of Jesus as it relates to eternal life?
5. According to John 17:3, what is eternal life? Explain your answer.
6. What is the relationship between the only true God and Jesus Christ?
7. What does knowing God have to do with His glory?
8. According to John 17:1-5, who is Jesus and what work has he finished?
9. What kind of glory does Jesus desire?
10. How does knowing Jesus help you know God?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

John chapter 17 is one of the most unique chapters in all the Bible. Here we find the Son of God praying to God the Father, speaking about the glories of heaven and the fulfillment of eternal redemption. This chapter is so intimate and so much a revelation of the heart of God that you almost feel like you are standing in the "holy of holies."

This chapter has been a favorite of many prominent Christians including Martin Luther, John Knox, Charles Spurgeon and others. "None of the other 650 prayers recorded in the Bible come close to matching the excellencies of the one found in John 17. The Gospels record nineteen occasions on which Jesus prayed, but this is the only long prayer of Jesus we have and the only one which gives us the substance of what He prayed" (David Jeremiah, *Prayer: The Great Adventure*, 192).

The setting of the prayer is placed at the end of the Upper Room discourse (John 13-17). Many understand these words to be spoken in the Upper Room as a fitting conclusion to the many words of encouragement before His betrayal and arrest. Some, highlighting the mention of departure in John 14:31 and the vineyard imagery of John 15, place this prayer in or near the Garden of Gethsemane. "The prayer takes place at the end of Jesus' farewell meal, just before he is arrested. The content of the prayer hints at the Johannine understanding of Jesus' passion and resurrection as his return to his glory (17:1). This leads scholars to seek some kind of relationship between John 17 and the Synoptics, particularly with the prayer in Gethsemane" (M. P. Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17*, 9). Jesus' prayer in John 17 does not carry the agony found in other Gospels, but this prayer does stand as a transition between the conclusion of Jesus' teaching and the beginning of His passion. John records that after this prayer, Jesus departed into a garden and was arrested (John 18:1).

This prayer begins with a plea for God's glory. John 17:1-5 form an introduction to the rest of the prayer that places God high in heaven and full of greatness and glory. Five times Jesus references "glory" in these five verses. Glory is an attempt to speak of the majesty, power, grandeur, loftiness and incomprehensible nature of God. The term is used to describe Jesus and His Father in the past before the beginning of time (John 17:5). The term is verbalized to request that God in the present would glorify His Son so that the Son could glorify the Father in the future. All of this glory is to represent the final outcome of all of God's goodness and

worthiness for all time.

In the middle of all this glory stands the centerpiece of God's amazing character, work and accomplishment. God's glory, past, present and future all surround the work of redemption. The Son is given the authority over all men and offers eternal life. This eternal life is to personally know the only True God and the provider of this life, His Son Jesus Christ. Rising up through the center of all this eternal glory is the eternal life Jesus offers to those he rescues and redeems. "Glory is used 13 times in John for glory coming from God and 19 [times] for the glory associated with Jesus. Glory appears 4 times as a verb and one time as a noun in John 17:1-5. This chiasmic pattern helps to interpret glory from two different perspectives: the one where the Son is glorified (A -A'), the other the glorification of the Father (B -B'). This pattern indicates that the glory theme revolves around the eternal life (C) theme. Thus the glorification of the Father and of the Son has to be interpreted from the perspective of eternal life (C), which means that this perspective constitutes the main theological setting from which glory is to be interpreted (D G van der Merwe, "The glory-motif in John 17:1-5" *Verbum et Ecclesia*; Vol 23, No 1 (2002), 231). Both the Father and the Son are glorified because of the eternal life they provide and give to us.

The eternal life given (John 17:2-3) is described as knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ. God and His Son Jesus Christ are considered as equals. Knowing them both equals eternal life. This knowing of God and the provision of this knowing of God through the historical and personal expression of Jesus Christ is the central purpose and ultimate goal of all of life. This is also the central focus of all the glory Jesus describes in John 17:1-5. This knowing is more than just informational. Knowing God is personal and interactive. Jesus' own interaction with the Father is illustrative of the conversation and personal interaction that can be had with God. Jesus declared that we can know God personally. He has the authority to grant this to us and gives us this life of knowing God for eternity. God wants us to know Him. He has made this possible through Jesus. Do you know Him? Does He know you?

"The notion that knowledge of God is essential to life (salvation) is common to Hebrew and Hellenistic thought. In the Old Testament knowledge is characteristic of the Wisdom literature (e.g. Prov. 11.9, 'Through knowledge shall the righteous be delivered'); but the use of the word in the prophets is even more important. e.g. the prophecy of the good age in Hab.

2.14, 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,' and the significant negative statement of Hos. 4.6, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' ... In Judaism, knowledge of God comes primarily through the Law and the Law is life (see Jn 5.39). For the equivalence of Law and Knowledge see e.g. Song of Songs 1.24 where Hos. 4.6 ('Because [you have] rejected knowledge, I will also reject [you]') is paraphrased, '[you have] forgotten the Law of [your] God, therefore will I also forget [your] children.' . . . The following points suggested by this verse [John17:3] may be noted here. (a) Knowledge of God and Christ gives life; but the same result follows from believing (Jn. 20.31). Knowing and believing are not set over against one another but correlated. This suggests that John's conception of knowledge is close to that of the Old Testament. (b) Knowledge has also an objective, factual, side. Men must know the only true God (Jn.

8:32). This objectivity is partly Greek but owes something to the native Jewish conception that God reveals himself, and is known, in concrete historical events. (c) Knowledge of God cannot be severed from knowledge of his incarnate Son (Jn. 14.7; 20.31 and many other passages). This fact makes possible a unique fusion of the Greek and Hebrew conceptions of knowledge. Saving knowledge is rooted in knowledge of a historical person; it is therefore objective and at the same time, a personal relation" (C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 503-4).

Knowing God is possible because of the perfect work of Jesus Christ. The practice of communing with God is not easy, but God is seeking to gloriously shine with His goodness upon us when we depend upon Him. God is ready and prepared to know you. Are you making room in your life to actively know Him?

The Messages of the Passage

Jesus makes it possible for us to know God personally. Accept this amazing gift of eternal life from Jesus in order to thrive now and forevermore in the experience of His glory.

day **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **Hour** "At the very outset of his prayer, Jesus acknowledges that in God's sovereignty his time has come. The phrase 'the time has come' is used as a dramatic device throughout the Gospel ('not yet come': 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 'has come': 12:23; 13:1; cf. 13:31-32), building toward the climax of the 'glorification of the Son'—John's shorthand for the cluster of events comprising Jesus' crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation with God the Father" (Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*, 486).

v. 1 **Glorify** "There are three main components of meaning of the word 'glory', as it is used in the New Testament to refer to the glory of God or Christ. They are: (1) brightness or splendor; (2) great power and strength; (3) majesty and honor. ... another meaning, 'divine nature' or 'divinity' or 'God-likeness', as a possible meaning and translation of [glory] in many passages of the Fourth Gospel. These possible meanings then relate to God and Christ's position or status (majesty/honor); presence (brightness/splendor); divine action (power/strength) and nature (divinity)" (D G van der Merwe, "The glory-motif in John 17:1-5," *Verbum et Ecclesia*; Vol 23, No 1 (2002), 227).

v. 2 **Authority** "The Father had glorified the Son by giving Him the 'authority' to 'give eternal life' to 'all' individuals whom the Father had 'given' to the Son (cf. Matt. 28:18). The Father had given Him this authority before Creation (cf. Ps. 2). It was the basis for Jesus' request in verse 1" (Thomas Constable, Notes on John, 2015 ed., 283, www.soniclight.com).

v. 2 **Eternal life** "This life is spoken of as eternal, not so much as contrasted with temporal prolongation of life which was the reward of looking upon the serpent, but rather as having its origin in the higher, eternal world. 'Eternal' is qualitative and not merely a quantitative conception; it refers to the character, not merely the duration of life. This life is not a future promise, but a present profession of the believer, in virtue of that act of faith, which has put him in the realm of the 'eternal'" (Macgregor, 80).

v. 3 **Know** More than just awareness. Experiential and interactive. "This idea occurs nine times in the prayer [John 17]. The realm of the divine and of the Spirit is about knowing. It is about knowing relationally, in fellowship and about knowing intellectually with the mind. The latter speaks of knowledge that is certain and sure, about the cognitive and not just the speculative. The former speaks about interpersonal and relational knowing. So there is a knowing about facts and truth. Then there is knowing relationally. The knowing ... is thus both propositional and personal" (Michael Cassidy, *The Church Jesus Prayed For*, 41).

v. 3 **Sent** "to send on service, or with a commission" Same root as the word "apostle." Jesus, even though He is the Son of God, is given authority by the Father (17:2) and is sent or commissioned by the Father. Jesus is the perfect example of submission and humility. He is exalted with glory, yet he obediently follows the commissioning of His Father providing a great lesson in knowing God and His humility.

v. 4 **Finishing** This word is distinct grammatically from *teleo*, which means to complete. This word has the distinction of expressing "to make perfect." Jesus did not just finish or complete His redemptive work. He did so perfectly. He accomplished his work of salvation without any blemish or deficiency. We can take confidence that our access and opportunity with God is to His satisfaction because of the perfect work of Jesus Christ.

v. 5 **Presence** "together with yourself" The idea comes from two words that mean literally "with yourself." Jesus is praying that He would share once again the glory He had previously while in the presence of God the Father. Father and Son in relationship together experience glory, union and partnership—relationship is at the very core of God and His identity.

Family Time

There is a road near my house that I have traveled hundreds, maybe thousands, of times. It is on the route to my kid's elementary school and at least twice a day for many years I drove on this road. One day, I was running a little late to pick up my kids. On this day flashing blue lights appeared behind my car. At first I was confused and pulled over so the officer could pass. But, unfortunately, he pulled in behind me. Apparently this road I had traveled many times was a school zone. The sign was just before the spot I turn onto the road and I had never seen it before. To their credit, officers do not have mercy on people speeding in school zones so I got a ticket that had a rather large fine. I imagined going to judge and pleading my case. I didn't know! I'm a good person! But, the fact is I was guilty and deserved the punishment I got. What if the judge had shown me grace? What if he got off his bench, went to the cashier and paid the large fine himself. That's exactly what God did for us. While we were declared guilty in our sin, He chose to show us mercy and pay the fine for us. Can we know God personally? Yes, because He made a way.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read John 17:1-5

1. Who is speaking in this passage?
2. What did Jesus say He would do to those who are His?
3. How does Jesus say we receive eternal life?

What Do You Think

Jesus knew that God's plan for Him was to come to the earth and die on the cross to make a way for us to be friends with God. Sometimes we are called to do hard things for Him too. Have you ever had to do something for God that took courage? If yes, explain.

What R U Going To Do

Throughout our exploreGod for Kids series we have been memorizing Psalm 145:1-5. What is something new you have learned about God that you praise Him for? Tell someone about it this week!

Core Comp

Personal God - I believe God cares about everything in my life.

Memory Verse

Psalm 145:1-5 - *I will extol you, my God the King. I will praise your name forever and ever. Everyday I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed Scrolls _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.