

SPIRITUAL RESET:
#7 – BETTER TOGETHER
JOHN 17:20-23



John 17 is entirely Jesus' prayer to the Heavenly Father (only recorded in John). In this prayer, He knows He was about to experience the cross and asked that He may be glorified through the cross and He glorify the Father. Jesus also prays for protection from Satan and unity for His current and future disciples (us!). This prayer probably happened in the upper room after the Lord's Supper or on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

I. Better Together – Jesus' Prayer that We may be One

- ***Jesus' first priority – that we may be _____*** (vss. 20-21) – Out of all the concerns and issues that He could have prayed for, the first (and thus most important) was to be one. Why? He knows Satan uses disunity and conflict to hurt people, drive people away, and neutralize a church's witness. Jesus' disciples had often displayed a spirit of selfishness, competition, and disunity. It must have broken His heart. Being one has to be a priority for Christians. We're better together.
- ***What does it _____ to "be one?"*** – This unity is not uniformity of opinions but unity in identity and purpose. When we are one, we are not a collection of individuals but identify as one family of God in Jesus. We accept each other's roles and differences (race, class, personality and background), never allowing these differences to blind us to our common identity in Christ. It should never be "us" and "them" but "we." We use our differences to work in harmony as "one" to further the Kingdom of God and glorify Christ – better together.
- ***Jesus' prayer was (and is) that we " _____ " be one*** – Be one is a goal and hope He has, not a guaranteed reality. Jesus' prayer is that the Heavenly Father give us the guidance and power to be one – we can't do it alone. But we must make the choice. God guides, but we must decide. Will we be better together or will we say "no" to Jesus?

II. Better Together – Being One Just as the Father and Son are One (vs. 21, John 17:11)

- ***The Father and Son are one because they are in one _____*** – The cryptic statement that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father shows that their individual personal essences had merged through interrelationship. Though the trinity is 3 individual persons, they are united in such a way they act as one. Today, Christian relationships need to develop through love and understanding that they think and act as one. Paul shows the most clearly in I Corinthians 12:12-27 when he likens a church's relationships and functions to a human body. Each body part has a unique function but is dependent on the others to cooperate and function.
- ***The Father and Son are one in an intimate _____ relationship*** – The Heavenly Father expressed his love for the Son at His baptism (Matt. 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22) and the Son expressed His love for the Father (John 14:31). That love was so strong, they worked as a unity. With the Holy Spirit, they are one tri-unity.
- ***The Father and Son are one regarding differing _____*** – A vital part of their "be one" relationship was their understanding and accepting of each other's roles. While the Son was on earth, the Father had the "authority" role over the Son, whereas the Son's role was

to be sacrificial savior. We see this most clearly in Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (Matt. 26:39) For us to be better together – to be one – we need to understand and accept our different roles within the church in such areas as spiritual gifts, ministry and authority structures. If we don't, we can't "be one," and instead make the choice to say "no" to Jesus' prayer.

III. Better Together so that the World May Believe in Jesus (vs. 23)

- ***The world is impressed when Christians really love each other and live together in _____*** – Most of the time, people in a world filled with hate, hurt, divisions and conflict. Jesus offers the better way, of the gospel and the church that looks like God's kingdom of unity and love, rather than Satan's kingdom of division and hate. When people see the church being the church that truly reflects Christ, they will be attracted. They will believe the gospel is real and of God. It is not what we say we believe but how we live the gospel that is a powerful witness.
- ***When the world sees hatred and _____ in the church, they will reject the message of God*** – The world will reject the gospel as "a lie" and not truth. Also God will not bless and the Spirit will not move when Christians are "not one." When we are not one, we are not "better together" but worse together. We are a fraud.
- ***Complete unity is a progress over _____, not an immediate act*** (vs.23) – Jesus prays that we be brought to complete unity. This shows that God's guidance is necessary, as well as our choice and cooperation. It is always a work in progress where you gain but can also lose ground. It must be our constant focus and prayer to make Jesus' prayer a reality.

How to "be one" – better together

- ***No longer see "us" and "them" only "we"***
- ***Identify those you struggle with and work to become one of them through love, forgiveness, understanding and encouragement***
- ***Accept the different roles and functions of those in the church and support those in those roles***
- ***Realize our witness is being evaluated by the world by how we love, not what we say we believe***

Answers: I. One; mean; may. II. Another; agape, roles. III. Harmony; division; time.