

Read: John 17:11b-19

Jesus Protects and Sanctifies Us

John 17:15-17

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sometimes the Bible uses big words that we don't use much in daily conversation. We might think the Bible's words are too difficult to understand or do not relate to our life today.

"Sanctify" is one of those words. It is used several times in our reading. "Sanctify" means "to set apart." Perhaps you remember a time when you left a toy or a piece of sport equipment outside, and stormy weather was coming. Your mom or dad encouraged you to bring that item inside. You loved that item, so you moved it to protect it. You "set it apart" from the other things left outdoors.

Jesus set apart his disciples because they were more precious to him than anything in the world. When Jesus prayed the words in our reading, he was about to die for his disciples and all people of all time. Jesus prayed that his disciples would understand everything that was about to happen, and that they would be protected by that knowledge. The disciples would see their friend suffer, die, rise, appear to them alive, and ascend into heaven—a confusing and emotional time for sure! And after that, the disciples would be witnesses of Jesus' saving work. Witnessing would not be easy, because many enemies would try to silence the truth.

Jesus wanted his disciples to be protected—not only from enemies, but also from the disciples' own doubts and fears. Jesus knew that Satan, the ultimate enemy of Jesus' work, would tempt the disciples to deny, doubt, and fear. So he asked his Father to "set them apart" and protect them. Here's how: *through the truth*. Jesus set us apart as holy by giving us his holiness. That truth—Jesus and his saving work would protect the disciples in moments of weakness or assault.

With so many influences trying to sway us and so many temptations raining down, we need the powerful truth to protect us, too. God's Word is where truth is revealed. It is the place we go for protection from the storms of life. Every time we read God's Word and are reminded of what Jesus did for us, God is protecting us from the rebellion, doubts, and fears in us and around us.

The next time you think, “The Bible is too difficult to understand!” remember Jesus praying for his followers, “Sanctify them by the truth; your Word is truth.” That’s Jesus praying for our protection and reminding us where truth is found.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Why did Jesus pray for his disciples?
- Where can we go for comforting words when we feel tempted or afraid?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Name two things Jesus disciples needed protection from.
- Say out loud your biggest temptation or fear. How does God protect you from it?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Name two ways that the Satan and the world try to lure us away from the truth in the Bible.
- Using Jesus’ example, what are some ways we can strengthen and encourage one another when storms or temptations come our way?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, when storms and temptations in life cause me to doubt, or lead me away from you, please protect me. Draw me into the shelter you provide in your Word. Amen.

Hymn: CW 203:1,2 – Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would seek to overthrow your Son
And to destroy what he has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, your pow’r make known,
For you are Lord of lords alone;
Defend your Christendom that we
May sing your praise eternally.