

God's Will

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

John 17:15-16

John 17:15-16, *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

Our Lord has offered several petitions for His disciples leading up to verses 15 & 16:

1. ‘*Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given.*’ -Our Lord is concerned with the state of the disciples rather than His own life.
2. ‘*...that they may be one, even as we are one.*’ – He prays for their unity.
3. He asks the Father to keep them, because the world hates them, “*I have given them your word; and the world has hated them.*”

We are strangers and pilgrims, and the world hates true believers in Christ. Disciples are no greater than the Master, **John 13:16**, *Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.* He was hated, and so were His disciples, **Matthew 10:22**, *And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. Matthew 10:25, It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.*

Ultimately, God is praying for our spiritual victory over Satan. What Jesus is praying for us to be “kept” from: **Ephesians 2:1–3**, *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.* Kept from the clutches of the Evil One.

I. Remain in the World (17:15a)

- A. Why doesn't God make us immediately perfect and sinless when we become Christians? Why are you not made holy and entirely sanctified? Why are we left to struggle?
- B. Since Christ dealt with sin upon the cross and in His resurrection, why are we not automatically delivered from all consequences of sin? (Sickness, disease, illness, etc.)
- C. These questions have been asked a lot! Why are we left to suffer and endure? Why wouldn't He just take us out?
 1. **Moses (Numbers 11:14-15)** Moses is overwhelmed by the burden of leading Israel through the wilderness as the people complain about food.
 2. **Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)** After the victory over the prophets of Baal, Elijah flees from Jezebel. Exhausted and discouraged, he collapses under a broom tree.
 3. **Jonah (Jonah 4:3, 8)** Jonah is angry that God showed mercy to Nineveh. In his bitterness, he asks to die—twice.

II. Keep them from Evil (17:15b)

- A. Why are we Kept?
 1. To proclaim the gospel (**Matthew 5:13-16**)
 2. To be perfected
 - a) **1 John 3:1–3**, *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*
 - b) **2 Corinthians 12:7–10**, *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so*

that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

III. Light for our Path

A. What is the Will of God for a Christian?

1. **Romans 12:2**, *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - a) Conformed – to be behaviorally or socially similar to. Becoming shaped or molded to a certain pattern
 - b) Transformed – to be or become changed in outward appearance or expression as manifesting a change in nature or essence.
 - c) Discern – to judge to be right or commendable.
2. **1 Thessalonians 4:3**, *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;*
 - a) Sanctification is the lifelong process of becoming more like Christ as the Holy Spirit transforms a believer's desires, attitudes, and actions.
3. **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18**, *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
4. **Ephesians 5:17**, *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*
5. **Matthew 6:10**, *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

B. How do I not love the world? **1 John 2:15**, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1. Your heart cannot be emptied.
 - a) You cannot uproot a sinful "love" by condemning it or exerting willpower.
 - b) The only way to dislodge love for the world is to replace it with a greater, stronger love. More beautiful, more desirable. (Love for God).
 - c) The issue in our heart is not "lovelessness." It is the direction of our love.
 - (1) We do not stop loving the world by trying harder; we stop loving the world by treasuring Christ more.
2. Joy in God is the superior affection that drives out lesser loves.
 - a) We are created for pleasure – pleasure in God.
 - b) When we experience the beauty, worth, peace, freedom, and satisfaction of Christ: The world's attractions lose their power because we have found something infinitely better.
 - c) Christian obedience flows from delight, not duty!
3. Doing God's will flows from what we love most, not what we fear most.
 - a) We obey what we love.
 - b) We pursue what we delight in
 - c) Our will follows our worship.
 - d) Therefore, obedience is not primarily a battle of behavior but a battle of affection.
4. Eternal perspective makes Christ the Supreme Treasure!
 - a) **1 John 2:16**, *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 1 John 2:17, And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*
 - b) The power of our love for Christ is strongest when we see:
 - (1) The emptiness of living a worldly life.
 - (2) The superior, eternal worth of Christ.
 - (3) The eternal joy promised to us by doing God's will.