

"And This Is Life Eternal..."

John 17:3

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Introduction: We often refer to Matthew 6:9-13 as “The Lord’s Prayer.” However, John 17 could be more accurately called “The Lord’s Prayer” or “The Lord’s High-Priestly Prayer.” There is difference of opinion as to when Christ offered this prayer – whether in the upper room or while headed to the Garden. Yet “this much is sure: It is the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth & the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture. John 17 is certainly the ‘holy of holies’ of the Gospel record, & we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility & 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!” (Wiersbe). We need to consider the context of Christ’s prayer in John 17 by remembering His words just before, “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). We see 3 truths recorded there: The promise of tranquility, the promise of tribulation, & the promise of triumph. Christ is the Overcomer, the Victor, & He promise believers that they can be overcomers as well. Consider with me the progression of thought found in this chapter. Christ first prays for Himself – His Glorification; then he prays for the disciples’ Sanctification; & then we hear His prayer of Unification. In the first part of this high-priestly prayer, we have the very words of Christ Himself. Hear Him say, “*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, & Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*” This verse (John 17:3) contains one of the clearest definitions of eternal life to be found anywhere in the Bible. Note here that eternal life is more than a quantity of days (unending), it is a quality of life (present possession). Consider with me in this text that life eternal is knowledge of the exclusiveness of God, the explicitness of God, & the expressiveness of God.

I. Eternal life is knowledge of the **exclusiveness** of God > “*only*”

A. The **explanation** (2 presuppositions of theology) – see Deuteronomy 6:4

1. The **reality** of God - God exists & created this world

- a. Genesis 1:1, “*In the beginning God created the heaven & the earth.*” (& cf. John 1:1)
- b. Isaiah 44:6-8, “*Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, & his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, & I am the last; beside Me there is no God...*”

2. The **revelation** of God - God has revealed Himself in His Word

- a. II Samuel 23:2, “*The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, & His word was in my tongue*” (& cf. Acts 1:16 with Matthew 4:4).
- b. II Peter 1:21, “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (& cf. I Corinthians 2:9-13).

B. The **expectation** (2 propositions of theology) – see Deuteronomy 6:5

1. God is worthy of & deserves **obeisance** (our worship)

- a. The exhortations to worship > Matthew 4:10 & John 4:23-24
- b. The examples of worship > Genesis 22:5 (first mention) & Revelation 5:14

2. God is worthy of & deserves **obedience** (our walk)

- a. The declaration of our loyalty & love > Joshua 23:8 & 11
- b. The demonstration by our livelihood & labor > Proverbs 3:9 & Psalm 100:2

II. Eternal life is knowledge of the **explicitness** of God > “*true*”

A. He is **recognized** as the Truth (the Witness of God)

1. Deuteronomy 32:3-4, “*...a God of truth & without iniquity...*” (Rom. 3:4 & Titus 1:2)
2. Jeremiah 10:10, “*But the Lord is the true God...*” (Exodus 34:6)

B. He is revealed in the Truth (the Word of God)

1. John 17:17, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."
 - a. "Sanctify" - used in II Peter 1:18 of the "holy mount" on which Scofield notes, "Set apart for the use of God, or rendered sacred by the Divine presence."
 - b. Speaks of Divine purpose & Divine presence – therefore, we should do what God wants & hate what God hates. See II Timothy 2:19 & Psalm 97:10..
2. Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us & to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."
 - a. "This verse sets the limits & purpose of God's revelation: some things He chooses to keep to Himself, but what He has revealed (through the law, in this instance) is the business of His children to obey" (Ryrie).
 - b. Compare John 7:17 - Those committed to the will of God are assured guidance in that will & affirmation of His truth. (see John 16:13 & I John 2:20, 27).

III. Eternal life is knowledge of the expressiveness of God > "Jesus Christ"

A. The sending of the Son - John 3:16

1. The love of God is **manifested** (shown) to us > I John 4:9, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."
2. The love of God is **ministered** (supplied) for us > I John 4:10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, & sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
3. The love of God is **magnified** (spoken) by us > I John 4:14, "And we have seen & do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

B. The saving by the Son - Acts 4:12

1. The **promise** of salvation > Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, & let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (& cf. Isaiah 53:5-6).
2. The **provision** of salvation > John 1:29, "...Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (& cf. Luke 19:10).
3. The **procurement** of salvation > John 10:9, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, & shall go in & out, & find pasture" (& cf. Romans 10:9-13).

Conclusion: Do you know God this evening? That means more than just knowing that there is a God. James 2:19 says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, & tremble." It means to not only acknowledge the **reality** of God (that He exists & created this world), but to also acknowledge the **revelation** of God (that He revealed Himself in His Word). These 2 pre-suppositions are followed logically by 2 propositions: There is to be obeisance before God (one's worship) & there is to be obedience to God (one's walk). To really know God also means a recognition of Him as the Truth & a realization of the revelation of Him in the Truth (His Word). And such a revelation of God in the truth of His Word leads to the knowledge of His expressiveness in His Son. Life eternal is possible because of the sending of God's Son & it is made personal through the saving by God's Son. Salvation is not only promised, but it is provided & therefore can be procured. Consider the parallel verse to our text, found in I John 5:20, "And we know that the Son of God is come, & hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, & we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, & eternal life." Do you have life eternal today? Do you know the meaning of God's exclusiveness (the "only" God), God's explicitness (the only "true" God), & God's expressiveness ("Jesus Christ")? Hear again Christ in His High-Priestly Prayer!