

AUTHORS AND PREACHERS' QUOTES CONCERNING JOHN 17

1. **James Montgomery Rice** – "This section of the Gospel of John to which we come now ... is the purest and most extensive example in all the Bible of a direct, verbalized communication between two members of the Godhead and is expressed in the most comprehensible phrasing, syntaxes, and words ... This prayer contains the simplest of sentences, though the ideas are profound. It is proof that the difficulty we have in understanding God's truth is not in the complexity of the truth itself or in the language with which it is conveyed (as if it were logarithms [having to do with mathematics or German philosophy] but in our own ignorance, sin, and spiritual lethargy."
2. **Robert Murray McCheyne** – "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet, the distance makes no difference. He is praying for me." "Turn the Bible into prayer."
3. **Martin Luther** – "This is truly, beyond measure, a warm and hearty prayer. He opens the depths of His heart, both in reference to us and to His Father, and He pours them all out. It sounds too honest, so simple; it is so deep, so rich, so wide, no one can fathom it."
4. **John Brown** of Haddington, Scottish minister and author – "The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John, is, without doubt, the most remarkable portion of the most remarkable book in the world. The Scripture of truth, given by inspiration of God, contains many wonderful passages, but none more wonderful than this - none so wonderful. It is the utterance of the mind and heart of the God/Man, in the very crisis of His great undertaking, in the immediate prospect of completing, by the sacrifice of Himself, the work which had been given Him to do, and for the accomplishment of which He had become incarnate ... How 'full of grace,' how 'full of truth.' How condensed, and yet how clear the thoughts - how deep, yet how calm, the feelings which are here, so far as the capabilities of human language permit, worthily expressed! All is natural and simple in thought and expression - nothing intricate or elaborate, but there is a width in the conceptions that the human

understanding cannot measure - a depth which it cannot fathom. There is no bringing out of these plain words all that is seen and felt to be in them." [A Google search estimates over 150 million books published.]

5. **Dr. Warren Wiersbe** – "The greatest prayer ever prayed is recorded in John 17, and it takes about six minutes to reverently read aloud. There is not much in length, but there is certainly a great deal of depth and weight! According to Dr. Herbert Locker Sr., there are 650 definite prayers in the bible; but not one of them can match our Lord's high priestly prayer."
6. **Dr. Warren Wiersbe** – "John 17 is certainly 'the holy of holies' of the Gospel record, and we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility and 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 ransom for sinners!"
7. **John Piper** – "(John 17) is only about 650 words. It takes only 3 minutes and 30 seconds to read it aloud. But it will take all eternity for us to fully understand it!"
8. **Matthew Henry** – "It is the most remarkable prayer following the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on the earth."
9. **F. B. Meyer** – "The noblest and purest pearl of devotion in the New Testament."
10. **John MacArthur, Jr** – "This chapter is unparalleled in Scripture. It is unique among all the portions of Scripture because it is the prayer of our Lord, the Son of God, to the Father. It deserves careful attention. In all honesty, one could be lost for a lifetime in this chapter. Its truths are so far-reaching, so high, so wide, so deep, so elevated, that it's almost impossible to extract yourself from the chapter, or from any verse, or even any phrase. The words are simple enough and direct enough, but the truths are really beyond comprehension. The best we can do is touch the edges of these great realities that are in this chapter."

11. **J.C. Ryle** – “There are sentences, words, and expressions, in the twenty-six verses of this chapter, which no one probably has ever unfolded completely.” This chapter is “the most wonderful prayer that was ever prayed on earth.”

12. **Handly C.G. Moule** – “It is no light matter to attempt to deal as an expositor with the Seventeenth Chapter of St John. It is a Scripture which has well been called the Holy Place of the Bible; let him who would presume to comment upon it prepare himself by first, as it were, kneeling to worship at the threshold.” “So let us learn from our chapter at this - to pray. Because of the High Priestly Prayer let us pray - more simply, more gladly, speaking out our desires as to the living 'God, as to our Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

13. **Philip Melancthon** – During the last lecture before his death, he said about John 17, “There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in the earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than this prayer offered up by the Son of God himself.”

14. **George Newton** – “I must freely and ingeniously profess that I had never known so much of Christ and of his tender care and love for poor sinners. Had I not studied these emanating and effluxes of his precious soul, had I not seen his breast open in this chapter.”

15. **Johann Albrecht Bengel** – “This chapter is the easiest in the whole Scripture as regards the words, the deepest in meaning.”

16. **Lesslie Newbigin** – “The prayer leads us into the very heart of the ministry and message of Jesus, and no exposition can hope to do more than suggest some aspects of its meaning.”

17. **Philip Schaff** – “The words are as clear and calm as a mirror, but the thoughts as deep and glowing as God's fathomless love to man: Hence all efforts to exhaust them are in vain.”

18. **Stephen Charnock** – “If any part of Scripture be magnified above another, this (John 17) seems to claim the pre-eminence.”

19. **Heinrich Ewald** – “A prayer such as the world never heard nor could hear. Sentence rushes upon sentence with wonderful power, yet the repose is never disturbed.”

20. **Anglican Bishop of Liverpool** – “He that reads the words spoken by one Person of the blessed Trinity to another Person, by the Son to the Father, must surely be prepared to find much that he cannot fully understand, much that he has no line to fathom.”

21. **Lesslie Newbigin** – “The simplicity of the vocabulary and Jesus' conversational style make it easy to remember.” “This chapter is the easiest in the whole Scripture as regards the words, the deepest in meaning.” “It is an easy prayer to take down, but its meaning is impossible to exhaust.”

22. **D.A. Carson** – “Themes are so intertwined in this prayer that it is sometimes difficult to draw out a coherent outline;”

23. **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** – He delivered over 3,600 sermons in his lifetime. During a 13-sermon series on John 17, Spurgeon, after examining the text and preparing his message, said, “I think I have never felt my own incompetence more fully than in trying to handle such subjects.”

24. **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** – “I am, however, comforted by this fact, that these subjects are so fruitful that even we who can only scratch the surface of them shall yet get a harvest from them.”

25. **Thomas Manton** – “Every verse is sweet, but this should not be read without some ravishment and leaping of heart.”

26. **Thomas Manton** – Some of the first words of a 26-sermon series on John 17: “I shall, in the following exercises, open to you Christ's solemn prayer recorded in this chapter – a subject worthy of our reverence and serious meditations. ... This was, as it were, His dying blaze. ... He now opens to us the bottom of His heart, and gives us a copy of His continual intercession. This prayer is a standing monument

of Christ's affection to the Church; it did not pass away with the external sound, or as soon as Christ ascended into heaven...it remains, though the words be over."

27. **Hofacher** – "To preach on our Gospel for today is no light task. Not that its words are difficult to understand. They are, on the contrary, exceedingly clear and simple. But that which these words express, the meaning they contain, is so deep that we can never thoroughly penetrate it with our thoughts and words."

28. **Ernest Luthard** – "Neither in the Scripture nor in the literature of any nation can there be found a composition which in simplicity and depth, in grandeur and fervor, may be compared to this prayer. It could not be invented, but could proceed only from such a person as the one which speaks here.

29. **William Kelly Major Works Commentary** - "Next follows a chapter which one may perhaps characterize truly as unequalled for depth and scope in all the Scriptures. Holiness, devotedness, truth, love, glory reign throughout. ... But all this may well fill our hearts with the sense of utter insufficiency to speak of such communications suitably."

30. **Martin Luther** – "It is truly a fervent and sincere prayer in which he [Jesus] opens and pours out His soul to us and His heavenly Father. Put I fear that we can not properly estimate and describe the power, the characteristic quality, and the virtue of this prayer; for however simple and unadorned, it is nevertheless impossible to fathom its profound significance, its wealth and its compass."

31. **John MacArthur, Jr** – "This chapter has been called the Holy of Holies of Scripture. It is the most elevated, the most glory-filled chapter in the Bible. It is, of course, the prayer above all prayers. But it is also the chapter above all chapters, because it alone is where we see the communion between the Son of God and the Father. Here, we are ushered into the throne room of God. Here, we eavesdrop on the communion, the eternal communion between the Son and the Father.

The veil is drawn back. We're admitted into the Holy of Holies. We approach the inner communion of the Trinity. The secret place of the Most High God is opened for us. Here, we need to remove our shoes and listen, and humble ourselves with reverent hearts because we are on the holiest of all ground."

32. **Andreas J. Kostenberger** – "Jesus' prayer in chapter 17 is unique to John's Gospel. It is by far the longest prayer of Jesus recorded in any Gospel. It comes at a strategic time in Jesus' ministry, sandwiched, as it were, between his final instructions to his closest followers and his passion. Jesus' parting prayer affords us a rare glimpse into his consciousness and perspective on imminent suffering. Once the prayer is ended, the final events of Jesus' life ensue in rapid succession: the arrest, the Jewish and Roman trials, the crucifixion, the burial, the empty tomb, and Jesus' resurrection appearances. But for one last time, Jesus pauses to take inventory, as it were, of his earthly ministry, giving his final account to the Father and, by praying, expressing his complete dependence on the Father even in this critical hour."

33. **R.C. Ryle** – "These verses begin one of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible. It is a chapter in which we see our Lord Jesus Christ addressing a long prayer to God the Father. It is wonderful as a specimen of the communion that was ever kept up between the Father and the Son, during the period of the Son's ministry on earth."

34. **Thomas Alexander (1857)** – "To unfold all the riches of grace, and truth, that here lie embedded is not in the power of any man."

35. **Maclaren Expositions of Holy Scriptures** – "We may well despair of doing justice to the deep thoughts of this prayer, which volumes would not exhaust. Who is worthy to speak or to write about such sacred words?"

36. **Arno C. Gaebelein** – "It is the Holy of Holies for we behold him, our great High Priest in the presence of the Father, and we hear Him utter His great prayer of intercession. It is the true Lord's prayer ... He

spent nights in prayer on mountain tops, in desert places, but we do not know what He prayed ... Here we have the words of the prayer He prayed. It has depths which the finite mind cannot fathom. No saint can comprehend the full meaning of this great prayer.”

37. **Barnes Commentary Notes** – “It is the longest prayer recorded in the New Testament. It was offered on the most tender and solemn occasion that has ever occurred in our world, and it is perhaps the most sublime composition to be found anywhere.”

38. **Sinclair B. Ferguson** – “This whole chapter is like a stethoscope through which we can hear the Savior’s heartbeat.”

39. **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** – “Some brethren pray by the yard; but true prayer is measured by weight, and not by length.”

40. **J. M. Neale** – “These great words are among the profoundest sayings of our Lord. They were spoken by the Son of God, not to Jews or Gentiles, not to human friends or foes, not to the disciples privately or the multitude openly, but directly to God the Father.”

41. **August Tholuck** – “If in any human speech divinity is manifest and sublimity is joined to condescending humility, it is in this prayer.”

42. **Sinclair Ferguson** – “As I began reading this superb book, I was constantly reminded of Martin Luther’s comment that ‘in Scripture, every little daisy is a meadow.’”

43. **D.A. Carson** – “(The Gospel of) John is simple enough for a child to read and complex enough to tax the mental powers of the greatest minds.”

44. **D.A. Carson** – “Traditionally, Christians have long referred to John 17 as the “High Priestly Prayer” offered up by Jesus just before his passion. This is something of a misnomer, primarily because the themes in John 17 are too broad to be restricted to this priestly category.”

45. **S.D. Gordon** – “The great people of the earth today are the

people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer, nor those who can explain prayer, but I mean those people who take time to pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. This something else is very important -- very important and pressing, but still less important and less pressing than prayer.”

46. **G. Campbell Morgan** – “I would ever be careful lest I should appear to differentiate between the value of one part of Holy Scripture and another, but no one will deny that when we come to this chapter, we are at the center of all sanctities.”

47. **Herbert Lockyer** – “The Holy of Holies in the New Testament. Here Christ is revealed as the mighty intercessor.”

48. **Kenneth T Elliott** – “The significance of Jesus’ prayer in John 17 as a model for believers transcends mere imitation; it offers a profound blueprint for cultivating a deeply intimate relationship with God and navigating the complexities of faith. This “high priestly prayer,” as it’s often termed, isn’t simply a historical record; it’s a living, breathing testament to the power of intercessory prayer, a masterclass in petition, and an unparalleled example of submitting one’s will to the Father’s.”

49. **Laura J Robinson** – John 17, the so-called High Priestly Prayer, transcends a mere supplication; it forms the theological bedrock upon which a profound understanding of Jesus’ ministry, his relationship with the Father, and the nature of the Christian faith itself rests. ... The prayer, far from being a private moment of devotion, unveils a Christological blueprint, revealing Jesus’ ultimate purpose and the dynamic interplay between his human experience and his divine authority.”

50. **H.R. Reynolds, St. John, The Pulpit Commentary** – [This prayer, chapter] surpasses all literature in its setting forth the identity of being and power and love in the twofold personality of the God-Man. We are brought by it to the mercy-seat, into the heaven of heavens, to the very heart of God; and we find there a presentation of the most mysterious

and incomprehensible love to the human race, embodied in the Person, enshrined in the words, of the only begotten Son.

51. **B.W. Johnson, The Sunday School Helper** – “Here is holy ground; here is the gate of heaven. No such prayer was ever heard before or since. It could only be uttered by the Lord and Savior of men, the mighty Intercessor and Mediator, standing between heaven and earth before his wondering disciples. Even he could pray it only once, in the most momentous crisis of history, in full view of the approaching sacrifice for the sins of the world, which occurred only once, though its effect vibrates through the ages.”

52. **B.W. Johnson, The People's New Testament** – “This prayer, so solemn and so tender, would never have been recorded had it not been intended for our study and profit, but I approach it with a feeling that it is almost too sacred for the usual verbal and textual criticism. It is the overflow of the full soul of the Lord in devotion to the Father, a fitting close to the wonderful discourses beginning in Chapter 13.”

53. **Edward S.J. Malatesta** – The chapter contains at least forty-four themes, which “are woven together with such astonishing variety and subtle repetition and form such delicate combinations that it seems impossible to discern their precise pattern.”

54. **Jerry Parks** – “Many have called John 17 the greatest prayer ever prayed, and the most theologically profound chapter in all Scripture. In this prayer is pure simplicity. No less than 85% of the words which make up the prayer (NASV) are one-syllabled. ... It is like no other prayer in Scripture, or any prayer which has ever been uttered before on earth.”

55. **J.C. McPheeters** – “There comes an increasing realization of the sublime majesty, the profound depths, the soaring heights of Christ's valedictory prayer each time we read it. It is beyond the reach of the finite mind to fully grasp the significance of all the statements made in the prayer. The sweep of the prayer reaches from the eternity of the past, unto the eternity of the future.”

56. **R.C. Ryle** – “The wisest Christian will always confess that there are things here which [we] cannot fully explain.”

57. **R.C. Ryle** – “one of the most powerful chapters in the Bible – wonderful as a specimen of communication between the Father and Son, wonderful as a pattern of His present intercessory work as our great High Priest, wonderful too as an example of the sort of thing believers should mention in prayer.”

58. **Daniel D. Webster** – “We long to grasp the meaning of Jesus' longest prayer, to linger on the simple words, to meditate on their profound meaning, and to pray with Jesus, even as he prays for us.”

59. **Michael Cassidy** – “As we come to the prayer itself, we are inevitably going to feel very daunted, so that we tremble to paddle even in its shallows, let alone plumb its depths. But it's worth a try. For the treasures here are life-transforming personally and revolutionary for the church corporately if taken sufficiently seriously.”

60. **Dr. John Phillips** – “Like Moses at the burning bush, we would do well to remove the shoes from our feet. The place whereon we now stand is holy ground.” (in his work, ‘Exploring John’)

61. **Ivor Powell** – “This is one of the greatest passages of the Bible. If the gospel of John may be likened to a mountain range, this chapter represents one of its highest peaks. Here we see breathtaking views of eternal beauties that cannot be viewed from any other place. John leads us slowly to those lofty places from which we go back to the very beginning when Christ lived with His Father in the remote realms of eternal ages. We are hushed as we hear again the Saviour's words, ‘O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was ...,’ John points forward to that other eternity, when things as we now know them will have changed, when the smoke and the grime of Earth will belong to the past, when the glory of God shall fill the Earth as the waters cover the sea. We wonder what it means as we hear the Lord say again, ‘Father, I will that they

also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory" It all seems too good to be true. ... The seventeenth chapter of John's gospel is the lofty eminence from which these amazing wonders may be viewed ... There is no prayer equal to this prayed by the Lord."

62. **Saint Augustine** – "Writing of the Scriptures as a whole, 'Is a stream' wherein the lamb may wade, and the elephant swim."

63. **John Owen** – "But, alas! After our utmost efforts and most diligent inquiries, we must admit how little a portion of His glory we can understand! His glory is incomprehensible, and His praises are unutterable."

64. **E.M. Bounds** – "It is a great honor to stand before men on behalf of God, but an even greater honor to stand before God on behalf of men."

65. **E. M. Bounds** – "Praying is the best school in which to learn to pray, prayer the best dictionary to define the art and nature of praying."

66. **Hope MacDonald** – In her meaningful book, *Discovering How to Pray*, she said with equal intensity – "We can read all the books that have ever been written about prayer, but until we actually choose by an act of our will to pray, we will never learn."

67. **D.A. Carson** – "Effective prayer is the fruit of a relationship with God, not a technique for acquiring blessings."

68. **Henry Ward Beecher** – "It is not well for a man to pray cream and live skim milk."

69. **Katherine Caldwell** – "Doctrine alone has no power unless God's power is imparted from above. ... The Word and prayer must always go hand in hand (Acts 6:4)."

70. **R. A. Torrey** – Every real revival in the Church has been the child of prayer. There have been revivals without much preaching; there have

been revivals with absolutely no organization, but there has never been a mighty revival without mighty praying.

71. **Jay Yousling** – "One might mistakenly or arrogantly believe that they can understand the seventeenth chapter of John – a 'cosmic project milestone review' between the first and second persons of the Trinity – through a casual and quick effort. This assumption would be incorrect. It is like entering the Mall of America at Christmas just to buy a pair of socks; the sheer scale of the environment makes a 'quick trip' unthinkable. With the multitude of stores, the roller coaster, the tempting food court, the LEGO Store, and much more, the possibilities are endless, fascinating, and profitable. To hear God pray is to step into an infinite expanse where a quick visit is near impossible, and the rewards are eternal. To take this one step further, it may only be understood by praying as Jesus prayed."

72. **Google Gemini AI** – "John 17 is the Holy of Holies of the New Testament—an inexhaustible stream where the language is simple enough for a child to wade, yet the truths are so deep that the greatest minds must swim, revealing the very heartbeat of the Son as He prepares to give His life for the world."

73. **Google Gemini AI** – "To read John 17 is to stand on the threshold of the divine and eavesdrop on an eternal conversation between the Father and the Son. Described as the most remarkable portion of the "most remarkable book in the world," this prayer serves as a "dying blaze" of Christ's affection, bridging the gap between His final instructions and His ultimate sacrifice. Despite its radical simplicity—composed largely of basic, one-syllable words—it contains a theological bedrock that spans from the eternity of the past to the glory of the future. It acts as a stethoscope held to the Savior's heart, inviting us into the inner sanctum of the Trinity where we see the perfect intersection of holiness, truth, and fathomless love. Approaching this chapter requires us to "remove our shoes," for to witness God speaking to God is to encounter a reality that no human lifetime is long enough to fully fathom."

74. **Microsoft Copilot** – "John 17 is the Son's intimate unveiling of heaven—simple in words, infinite in meaning, a perpetual model of intercession and communion."

75. **Microsoft Copilot** – John 17 stands apart as the most sacred and profound prayer in Scripture. Commentators emphasize its startling simplicity of language paired with unfathomable theological depth, its unique portrayal of communion between the Son and the Father, and its role as both Christ's final intercession and a blueprint for believers' prayer life. Readers are invited to approach the chapter with humility and reverence, for its themes—holiness, unity, love, and glory—are inexhaustible and transformative for personal devotion and the life of the church.

76. **Claude AI** – John 17 stands as the most remarkable prayer in Scripture—the "Holy of Holies" where we eavesdrop on the eternal communion between Father and Son. Its paradox is striking: the words are breathtakingly simple and clear, yet the truths are so profound that all eternity will not exhaust their meaning. This is Christ's dying blaze before the cross, opening the depths of His heart for His disciples and all future believers in language so pure and sublime that no voice in heaven or earth has ever surpassed it. Scholars across centuries unite in one confession: we can only touch the edges of these great realities, yet even scratching the surface yields an inexhaustible harvest for reverent hearts.

77. **Claude AI** – John 17 stands as the most remarkable prayer in all of Scripture—a sacred text that theologians and preachers across centuries have approached with profound reverence and acknowledged inadequacy. Described variously as "the Holy of Holies of Scripture," "the purest pearl of devotion in the New Testament," and "the most wonderful prayer that was ever prayed on earth," this chapter presents a unique window into the eternal communion between the Father and the Son. Its paradox lies in its accessibility and depth: the words are remarkably simple, clear, and conversational—taking only three to six minutes to read aloud—yet the truths contained within are so

profound, rich, and far-reaching that they defy complete human comprehension. As Spurgeon confessed after preparing thirteen sermons on this passage, no expositor has ever felt adequate to the task, and as Piper observed, it will take all eternity to fully understand these 650 words. The prayer represents Christ's dying blaze, His final intercession before the cross, where He opens the depths of His heart concerning His disciples and all future believers. Scholars from Luther to MacArthur have marveled that this chapter allows us to eavesdrop on divine conversation, to enter the throne room of God, and to witness the Son's love for the Church made manifest in the simplest yet most sublime language ever uttered. It remains a standing monument to Christ's affection, a holy place demanding that we remove our shoes, kneel at its threshold, and approach with humble, reverent hearts—knowing that while we can only scratch the surface and touch the edges of its great realities, even that harvest proves inexhaustibly fruitful for those who dare to study these emanations of Christ's precious soul.