

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 30

### CONVERSATION STARTER

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This week's reading features Jesus' prayer to the Father on behalf of all of his disciples. Following his example, take a moment to pray for one another, sharing any joys or concerns as you feel comfortable.

### "FATHER, KEEP THEM IN YOUR NAME"

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In John 17:10, Jesus prays, "Holy Father, keep them in your name."

In the ancient world, servants were often tattooed with the name of their owners. It was both a mark of who owned them but also a way of signifying whose protection they were under. If something bad were to happen to the servant, it would reflect on their owner; in other words, the owner had a responsibility toward their servants to protect and care for them.

In the Old Testament Book of Numbers, God promises to put His name on all of Israel and bless them in return ([Num. 6:23-27](#)). By putting His own name on His people, God is essentially binding His reputation to them. When they break the covenant or fail to represent God well, the Israelites are said to have profaned the name of God ([Lev. 22:31-32](#)). Then when God rescued the people from the consequences of their own rebellious or idolatrous choices, it was for the sake of His name that God acted ([Ezekiel 20:9](#)).

Now, just before his arrest, Jesus prays that God would keep the disciples in His name. He's asking God to continue claiming the disciples as His, protecting and caring for them.

At the same time, Jesus is reminding all those listening that they bear the name of God with them; they represent God. Everything they do will either reveal God's true nature to the world or profane it. While he was with them, Jesus taught the disciples what it meant to bear the name of God well. Now he prays they will continue to bear the name well as he returns to the Father.

Take a few moments to discuss this idea with your group. How have you seen the name of God profaned today? And what does it practically look like for us to carry the name of God well in every aspect of our lives?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Read John 17:10-18. What do you think it means to be *in the world* but not *of the world*? How are we called to be distinct from the world, even as we live and work and play in the midst of the world?
3. In his prayer, Jesus calls for unity between himself, God the Father, and all believers. Where do you see promising signs of unity with the Church at large?
4. Are there ways we as a church ought to be more intentional about reaching out across denominational lines or making space for diversity of thought within the Church?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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For the next few weeks, we'll follow along with the Lenten Companion Guide as our weekly practice. Each week, we'll encourage you to either give something up or take on something new in hopes of simplifying our lives, standing in solidarity with those who are suffering, and becoming people who love God and love others well.

### **Week Five: No Negative Talk**

Just as gratitude has the power to change how we see and perceive the world, so does engaging regularly in negative talk. This week, cut out all forms of negative talk—complaining, cursing, gossiping, and cutting remarks—both toward others and yourself. At the end of the week, reflect on your experience: *What did you learn about your tendency toward negative talk? Did you notice a difference in your outlook and positivity by cutting negative talk out of your conversations and self-reflection?*