

# Session 6: John 17

by Joseph Carroll

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*The key to successful ministry and avoiding the flesh is to wait on the Lord, be submissive to His will, and be holy and righteous in our lives.*

**Duration:** 37:34

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "The Power of Prayer", "Dependence on the Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the importance of dependence on the Holy Spirit in ministry, warning that even our strengths can lead to self-reliance and failure if we do not remain submitted to God. He reflects on the life of Elijah, illustrating how his courage became a point of weakness when he succumbed to fear, and stresses the necessity of waiting on the Lord for guidance and empowerment. Carroll draws parallels between Elijah and Jesus, highlighting that true glory comes from submission to God's will and that believers must persist in prayer until they see God's promises fulfilled. He concludes with a call to live in obedience and to recognize the significance of the cross in our lives, as it leads to shared glory with Christ.

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## Transcript

This evening we are going to gather together a number of truths which have been on my heart and then I believe you will find we will finish on the right note. Last week we saw some very important lessons to learn from the experience of Elijah. I was convinced that our Lord wanted this message at that time.

We hurried over it rather quickly but this evening I want to bring to your attention again some of the very important lessons that we must learn from this great servant of God. You will very often hear that the devil will get you where you are weakest. This is sometimes true but the devil is more apt to get you where you are strongest because where you are strongest you are apt to become self-reliant.

That's a very important lesson to learn. As soon as you cease to depend upon your indwelling Lord at any point, at any moment, you are in the flesh. It might be theological flesh, can be intellectual flesh, but it's flesh.

And one of the greatest dangers a preacher with experience has is thinking that he can preach. Once he thinks he can preach he's in the flesh because it's centered in him. About 15 years ago I shared the platform for a series of meetings in the Orient, a conference of missionaries.

This man I believe was the most gifted, spiritually gifted man to my knowledge in the Christian world. He had many spiritual gifts. His knowledge of the Word of God was encyclopedic.

You could quote almost any passage in the New Testament, certainly in practically any in the Old, he'd tell you where it was. Fantastic memory. His message was as dead as this lectern.

And what had happened was obvious. He was right in the middle of it. He had the knowledge, he had the intellect, he had the experience, he had the gift, but he didn't have the fullness of the Spirit.

And I said to my dear wife, the dear brother has too much. It was sad. There was a time when that man was a tremendous powerful force for God, but in his later years this was not so.

And very often we think that because we've had a certain amount of experience we know the answer. Do we? As soon as you think you know the answer you're in the flesh. You're in the flesh.

And when you're in the flesh you're a menace to the work of the Lord. And you can go from the Spirit to the flesh in exactly one second. Watch your strong point.

God can use that knowledge, God can use that experience, God can empower those gifts that he gives you, but only if you are totally submitted to him and sensitive to what he says. Only then. It's one thing to have a gift, it's another thing to have the empowering of the Spirit to make the gift effective.

Your strongest point can be where you will fall. This was so with Elijah. What was his strong point? His courage.

He was a courageous man. Where did he fail? Fear. Fear.

Moses' strong point was what? You know his strong point. What was it? His meekness. What he took from that Israel.

I'd have quit long ago if I'd have been Moses. But what he took from Israel. Where did he fail? Anger.

One spasm of anger. That was it. The devil got him at his strongest.

His meekness was his strong point. And he failed there with anger. I was thinking this afternoon I wonder what kind of a man the Lord wants in Greenville.

I came to the conclusion the Lord in Greenville needs a man who can listen to endless, endless gossip and just shed it like a duck sheds water. I heard a preacher say who's born in the south knows the south quite well. He's convinced Greenville is the gossip center of the south.

What an indictment. I think he might be right but then I don't know the south so I cannot judge. You need much patience.

But usually you'll find in any center the enemy uses one thing to try and distress or disturb or unbalance the people of God. Your strongest point can become that area where the enemy will bring you low. Now because we have men who are strong and men who are gifted there is this tendency to fail to wait upon the Lord until the Lord gives you the message He wants you to preach.

There is a tendency to talk around the subject instead of saying thus saith the Lord. In other words a tendency not to continue to wait upon the Lord as a man has to in the early days of his ministry to receive

the empowering of the Spirit and the word of the Lord. That's the supreme danger.

I had rather a busy afternoon and I didn't get down to preparing for tonight until about six o'clock. When I told a young man I came to check on the equipment here at about five to six that I hadn't had a chance to prepare he looked quite surprised. And it's true all day.

Emergencies all day. When you cannot say to the Lord this has not been possible today he'll meet you. But if it is possible to do otherwise you must do it.

Elijah constantly waited upon the Lord received the word from the Lord and was able to say thus saith the Lord. That was the secret of his power. Why was it the secret of his power? Because the Holy Spirit will only empower you to fulfill the will of God as the Spirit of God reveals it to you.

The Holy Spirit does not empower you to fulfill your good plan. The Holy Spirit empowers you to do what he has told you to do. So that from whence came Elijah's courage? From the Spirit of God.

From the Spirit of God. In the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles you have men who a few days previously were cowards transformed into lions. What was the difference between those who hid and those who stood well knowing what they said could mean being stoned to death? The Holy Spirit.

So you have an Elijah as bold as a lion and then you have an Elijah who is a weakling and a coward. What is the difference? When Jezebel threatened him he did not wait upon the Lord to get the Lord's answer to Jezebel. That's where he failed.

Ultimately that's where he failed. The Lord had an answer to Jezebel and that Elijah never did get it till the day he died. And that's that.

God's ultimate answer to Jezebel. In that situation you see. In that situation.

I don't care what situation you may find yourself in. God has an answer to it. If you'll wait upon him and get the word of the Lord from him.

What is his answer to this? But the attack of the enemy through the woman came suddenly and the objective of the enemy was to make him afraid. The devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist.

Whom resist. Don't give ground to fear. I once knew a very wonderful man of God who'd been in Africa many years.

Mr Bailey. And he had many lion stories. But one he used to tell was he was seated by a river one night.

It was a dark night and he heard a little rustling through the long grass and he saw a lion. Fortunately he was on the right side of the lion. He was downwind from the lion.

The lion didn't smell his presence. It was this lion stalking through the long grass. And then by the river he saw this animal drinking.

And the lion got within springing distance and let out a terrific roar. And he said he saw the animal frozen with fear. And at that moment the lion leapt and got him.

Just a few seconds was all over. Now why does he roar? Because he knows when he roars that animal will be transfixed with fear. Frozen with fear.

That's when he can grab him. Never give ground to fear. If you do the devil will get you.

If you're not careful you'll run away. Never give ground to fear. Whom resists steadfast in the faith.

What is the key? Never say anything unless the Lord tells you to say it. We'd lose all or much of our, we'd lose all the gossip if we lived by this principle. It all goes.

In fact I'm thinking very much of after each telephone call asking the sister, but did your Lord tell you to tell me this? Why not? After all I don't have time and I'm sure you don't have time to listen to anything else. These are the last days. We have to redeem the time and that's a command.

Redeem the time, the days of evil. Jesus is coming. He failed to wait upon the Lord and to receive the word from the Lord.

And because of that there was no empowering of the spirit for him to go to the place where God had to meet him and it was necessary for God to say, what doest thou hear Elijah? What are you doing here? In other words I didn't tell you to come here. And I want to say again that you should be able to say every day of your life that what you are doing God told you to do. That this is what God wants me to do today.

When Wesley was once asked by a man, if you knew the Lord was coming tomorrow what would you do? He said exactly as I have planned. So I'm not exaggerating when I say you should be able to say the Lord told me to do this today. You should be able to say that.

So let's finish on a better note with Elijah. On Mount Carmel, on Mount Carmel the issue was clear. He put the issue clear clearly to the people.

And this the preacher must always do and a preacher who's in the spirit will always do it. The issues will be clear. No confusion.

No sitting on both sides of the fence. This is right, this is wrong. You must decide.

And in the power of the spirit he put the issue clearly to them because the spirit of God had told him what the basic problem was. The basic problem was a people who profess to believe in Jehovah but who worship Baal. Baal the God of rain, Baal the God of fire, Baal the God of materialism, Baal the God of security.

That all they needed for their security was all wrapped up in Baal. So whilst professing to serve Jehovah and follow Jehovah they're worshiping Baal on the side. Just in case Jehovah fails Baal will see us through.

And so he said if the Lord be God follow him and if Baal follow him. That's the message for our day. Don't say you're a church member in this church and you've been baptized and all the rest of it and six days a week or maybe six and a half days a week serve the devil and say you are following Jehovah.

That's Baal worship and that's resistance. The only way you can prove that you believe in Jesus Christ is to follow him. That's the issue.

Whether or not a man is following Jesus Christ, living by the principles which our Lord has clearly laid down in his word which are the principles which one must live by if we are followers of him. The issue is who are you following not who you say you believe in. And so he put the issue clearly.

If the Lord be God follow him, if Baal follow him. And then the great demonstration of God's power. And there always will be a demonstration of God's power when the truth is free.

Some will accept it, some will rebuke it and some will refuse it. When the Lord Jesus preached some of the people went away saying never man spake like this man and the rest of them went away plotting to kill him. And I believe it's still the same today.

When the word of God is preached by a man of God some will go away saying that's the word of the Lord. Some will go away saying have me get rid of it. And then following the great victory and I believe this was the point that the Lord brought to us primarily last week.

He prayed until he saw a demonstration of God's power. He had God's promise that if he showed himself unto Abraham he would send rain. He didn't say when but he said he would send it.

He had a promise and God keeps his word. And as soon as the victory was won on Carmel he began to pray. And he didn't stop praying until he saw the demonstration of God's power in answer to his prayer.

I believe this to be the greatest weakness in the church of Jesus Christ today. People will often say well I've prayed now I'm going to accept by faith what I've prayed for. Or some people will say well if you keep on praying and praying and praying uh maybe it's just an evidence of unbelief.

Moses stood before God 40 days and 40 nights and he would not stop until he had the assurance that God had heard him. Daniel prayed for three weeks with fasting until the angel appeared and told him he'd been heard. Elijah prayed until he saw that cloud the size of man's hand.

George Mueller prayed for two men for 50 odd years every day. And when on his deathbed somebody said to him Mr. Mueller these men you've been praying for they're not saved. He said no but they will be.

The point is this when the Spirit of God lays a burden upon our heart and he gives us a promise we must never stop praying until that promise is fulfilled. That's the important lesson to learn here from Elijah. And you will find this is consistent right through the scripture.

For example Epiphra always praying fervently for you that you might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Paul commended him for that. This man always praying fervently always never giving up always praying that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Would that we had three or four Epiphra's here. We see a change. Well why not just rest and claim the promise Epiphra and quit praying.

He knew the Lord and he had the fullness of the Spirit. And it was the Spirit of God within him urging him to pray that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. That's the key to a successful ministry.

The main lesson I believe at this point we have to learn is that we do not give up until we see the answer to prayer. And in the character of this man he was a righteous man which means of course much more than an imputed righteousness. The man who has power with God whether we like it or not is a holy man.

He is a holy man. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord who shall stand in his holy place he that hath clean hands and a pure heart who hath not lifted up his soul under vanity or sworn deceitfully he shall receive the blessing of the Lord lifting up holy hands without wrath and without doubting. And it was that verse that caused Murray Machen to pray Lord make me as holy as it is possible for you to make a redeemed sinner.

It is the man who's walking with the Lord in holiness living for the Lord in his glory who has power in prayer and the same is true of any sister in the Lord. He was a righteous man man of like passions but a righteous man. Daniel the great intercessor was a man who purposed in his heart he would not be defiled even when he was young.

And there's not one word of censure against Daniel in the scriptures not a word not a word. Moses was the meekest of men the character of these men. What is God after? He's after character.

He wants to make us like his son and conform us to his image. And as a man is conformed to the image of Christ walking in the spirit so that man has tremendous power with God in prayer. It's the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much.

Now with that little introduction let's turn again to John 17. John 17. These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said father the hour is come glorify thy son that thy son may son also may glorify thee.

Then in verse 5 and now her father glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which i had with thee before the world was. We can take those tremendous lessons we have to learn from Elijah and we can see that in the life of our Lord this was also true of him. One of the strong points with any man of God is that when he needs a word from the Lord he does not confer with flesh and blood.

The apostle Paul tells us that when he pleased God to reveal his son in him he conferred not with flesh and blood. Our Lord lived a perfect life and if we study his life we will see that there are certain principles that governed his life and one of course was that he never did anything unless the father told him to do it. He never said anything unless the father told him to say it.

He was completely submissive to the will of his father. That's why not one of his words can fall to the ground and we find this primarily in the apostle Paul above all others I believe in the new testament. This strong servant of the Lord knowing what it was to walk with his Lord and to know his Lord and to receive his directions from his Lord and this was true of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly he always had the initiative he never lost the initiative. Elijah lost the initiative when he didn't wait upon the Lord to see the Lord's answer to Jesus. He was always on the offensive never on the defensive and when anybody tried to put him on the defensive he immediately asked them a question or put them on the defensive in such a way that they were defeated.

When you have the word of the Lord and you obey it you always have the initiative and you are always on the offensive. You never need apologize and you never need falter and you must never give up. But I want you to notice especially here that the Lord in the first verse asks the father to glorify the son that the son also may glorify him and then in verse five glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Now here we have the glory of our Lord presented in two very distinct ways his acquired glory and his essential glory. In verse one we are introduced to his acquired glory. In verse five it is his essential glory which he had with the father before the world was.

In verse one we are introduced to that glory which became his because of his coming into the world. For example the glory of saviorhood is an acquired glory. He never would have acquired that glory without the cross.

His glory as the head of the church is an acquired glory. His glory as the king of kings and lord of who will reign over Israel and all the peoples of this earth is an acquired glory. And we will see that in a moment in revelation five.

His essential glory is that which was always his. His acquired glory is that which is his because of what he achieved by his suffering and his death and his resurrection from the dead. We need to differentiate between his acquired glory and his essential glory because Jesus Christ remains alone there is none other like him.

Now what do I mean by that? Jesus Christ is both God and man and he's the only one who is God and man. We will never be deity. Let's underline that.

Jesus Christ is unique as God his essential glory as man his acquired glory. You know when I study this in my study it takes quite an effort of will not to prostrate myself on the floor and worship Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ will always be manifest as man and God throughout all eternity.

Very God, very man. The amazing thing is that we will share his acquired glory. If so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together.

In revelation chapter five I want you to notice in verse nine or in verse eight and when he had taken the book the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints and they sung a new song saying now they are worshipping who thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof for thou was slain and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and has made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth they are worshipping the lamb of God the man Christ Jesus God's lamb God and man but why are they worshipping him because he was slain because he shed his blood because he redeemed them this is his acquired

glory and they worship him and all heavens worship worship all heaven worships him as the lamb of God and I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands what do they praise him for they praise him for his death they praise him for his shed blood they praise him for his redemption and then I want you to notice which all has to do with his acquired glory and then I want you to notice this tremendous outpouring of praise which of course is the supreme moment of the vision here in this scene in heaven the praise of this one who still has the marks of his sacrifice I said a few weeks ago and I want to say again don't you be deceived by a superficial

so-called deeper life teaching which says we've left the cross behind we must go on to the resurrection you never will leave the cross behind and our Lord in his infinite wisdom knowing this tells us to what partake of that supper why we might show forth the Lord's death till he comes you don't leave the cross

behind my friend you will see the marks of the cross and the price of your redemption throughout all eternity and you will praise the one who paid that price for your redemption there was a time you might think well how can I praise him I don't see how I can praise him for all eternity oh yes you will there was one occasion when with a number of people who were truly in the spirit of God praying together when I began to praise the Lord and I could not stop couldn't stop just could

not stop and I want to show you when you get to heaven and see the glory of the Lamb of God you couldn't do anything else if you tried and I also want to say this the nearer you get to him here the more you will praise him here sometimes my dear wife comes to me and says but what about this I say sweetie let's just rejoice in the Lord and worship him and let him take care of that and I want to tell you this he takes care of it and sometimes she says that to me too two-way street and praying Hyde one of the great missionaries of all time whenever he felt he was losing his touch with the Lord would go aside and wait upon the Lord and the Lord would show him without fail it was a lack of praise that he wasn't praising him enough and that he was too burdened and too overtaken with the

problems and that he must praise him what are they doing in heaven they are praising the one who was slain and who was redeemed as to God to our God out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation can we sum it all up the Son of God was glorified because of his submission to the will of the Father as one star differeth from another in glory so all believers will not have the same position of honor in heaven they that be wise shall shine as the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever one star differs from another in glory the only way to the crown is by the cross no crown no cross no cross no crown what a wonderful thing it is to know that every day we can take up the cross to follow our Lord and if we are faithful day by day being able to say

Lord you told me to do this today that's why I'm doing it and I'm doing it for your sake and for your glory and not for my self-satisfaction there will come a day when wonder of wonders we will share something of the acquired glory of the man Christ Jesus now shall we pray holy father we thank thee that Jesus Christ is all but ultimately he is everything oh lord we pray tonight that thou wilt save us from our littleness and give us that grace which we all need to be totally committed and totally absorbed with Jesus Christ we realize that we have a fearsome enemy and that we don't have any more power tonight than we had the first day that we became christians because thy spirit is power oh lord keep us watchful keep us dependent keep us low at thy feet keep us obedient keep us prayerful

keep us strong in the spirit able to receive the word of the lord from the lord and the power of the lord to obey we thank thee dear lord for the glorious prospect of seeing thee very soon we pray that we shall not be ashamed at thy coming this we pray in thy precious name amen

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