

It says right in the context, Don't be like the heathen who indulge in constant repetition. With meaningless repetition. But pray like this. Those words have been said over and over so fast you could not understand what they were saying, by people thru the ages, who thought they derived some merit from saying them that that way. They were a pattern to help us in making our prayers. But the Lord's prayer in the truest sense is John 17. Because this is the prayer that the Lord Himself prayed. In this prayer shortly before his death, he prayed about his life, about the purposes immediately ahead of him, but he spoke particularly about this disciples. I will merely take time to look at vv.13-20.

He said to his father, I am coming to you now but I say these things while I am still in the world so that they may have a full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect that you protect them from the evil world. They are not of the world even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is true." You notice that particular prayer Jesus made for his disciples. "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone, my prayer is also for those who will believe in me through their message.

Here we find that Jesus prayed that God would sanctify the disciples through his truth. He said, For them I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified." God keeps us in this world to do some work for Him, certainly. The work we do for God is important. But I believe even more important as the purpose for which God keeps us in this world is the prayer Jesus made "Sanctify them by the truth, your word is true."

I heard a man who is a professor in a large evangelical seminary make the statement in a message he gave that the student in that seminary to whom he had given more time, more effort to try to help than any other had the day after he graduated from seminary., had run off with another woman leaving his wife and child. Run off leaving behind great debts that he could not pay and proved himself to be an utter reprobate. He had gone thru seminary and this professor had spent a great amount of time trying to help him. He may have learned a great deal. He may have gotten good marks but the primary purpose of his being in this world was completely lost. He was not sanctified. We know not whether he was saved. We're not in position to judge that. But far more important than what you learn, far more important than anything you can do for Christ is the question, whether you are making progress in this regard: Sanctify them by the truth.

Now justification is instantaneous. You believe in Christ; you are justified. You are saved for all eternity. But sanctification is a process. It is a process that God desires should be carried thru with each one of us. That's why he leaves us in this world. He leaves us here-- a large part of the purpose of His leaving