

HE MUST INCREASE

TEXT: John 3:22-36

In this passage, followers of John the Baptist become distraught at the increasing popularity of Jesus compared to the diminishing influence of their own ministry. John responds by reminding his disciples that it's all about the exaltation of Jesus. He not only accepts the increasing popularity of Jesus, he humbly delights in it. In doing so, he shows us a foundational truth for Christian living: When Christ gets the glory, we get the joy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **HEAD:** Questions aimed at our minds to help us *understand* God's word.
 - Describe the attitude of John's disciples (v.25-26). Is it positive or negative? Imagine yourself in their situation. How would you respond?
 - How does John the Baptist respond (v.27-30)? Why does this kind of response seem counter-intuitive?

2. **HEART:** Questions aimed at our affections to help us *love* God.
 - John's disciples had sound doctrine. After all, their master was John the Baptist whose purpose was to point to Christ. Their issue was not a "head" issue, but a "heart" issue. What does this teach us about the human heart? (See also Jer. 17:9, Lk. 6:45)
 - John the Baptist not only willingly decreases, but he also takes joy in the increase of Christ (29). How does true humility bring us joy? Consider some of the reasons for joy given in v.31-36.

3. **HANDS:** Questions aimed at our hands to help us *live for* God (Personally, Communally, and Missionally).
 - Verse 30 is not a suggestion. John says, "He *must* increase, but I *must* decrease." What are some practical ways you can cultivate humility (your decrease) and worship (Christ's increase) in your life?

- Verse 36 is a concise and sobering summary of the gospel. How should we respond to a verse like this?

DIG DEEPER

- Fresh, Robust, Liberating Joy (Article/ Prayer)
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scotty-smith/fresh-robust-liberating-joy/>
- Righteousness and Life (Article)
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/righteousness-and-life/>