



Connection Group Questions  
August 1, 2021  
Series: Words To Live By

***“He must increase, but I must decrease.”***  
***~ John 3:30***

### **Opening**

This week we'll dive deep into the life and ministry of Jesus' cousin John. Sometimes he's called John the Baptist or John the Witness. Share what, if anything, you know about John from this list of highlights:

- His life was the fulfillment of a prophecies given 750 years earlier by Isaiah and Malachi.
- He was the first true prophet from God in 430 years.
- His birth was a miracle, born to a barren woman and a man well past the age of parenting.
- His birth was the answer to a life of prayer and was announced by an angel.
- His father was struck mute for a moment of doubt when he spoke with the angel Gabriel. He did not speak again until he wrote that his son would be named John.
- He was most likely raised by a “Nazarite vow,” which meant he never drank alcohol, never touched a dead body and never got a hair cut.
- He spent 30 years preparing for ministry, and 6 months doing ministry.
- He grew up in obscurity, and when he started his job, he went out into the desert.
- He ate locust and honey.
- He dressed in camel hair and leather belts.
- He preached and people went out of their way to come to him, even if he called them a “Brood of vipers.”
- He baptized with water for repentance from sin, but promised one was come who would baptize us with fire and the Holy Spirit.
- He baptized Jesus (not the other way around).
- He mixed preaching and politics, and got thrown into prison.
- He ended up being beheaded and having his head delivered, to a dinner party, on a platter, to a stripper, who also happened to be the kings step-daughter and niece. (The raw, unedited truth of the bible is far more interesting, and far stranger, than anything I could make up!)

***How does your life compare?***

### **Digging Deeper**

Read John 3:22-36

We broke down Johns ministry into three parts:

***His Mission: Prepare the way.***

***His Message: Repent and bear fruit.***

***He Motto: He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30)***

### **His Mission**

Read John 1:19-36

John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus.

***How can our lives serve to prepare the way for Jesus? Think about practical things you can do to make the way for Jesus.***

### **His Message**

Read Matthew 3:1-12

***What is repentance? Is repentance a once-in-a-lifetime act, or an ongoing discipline of the Christian life?***

***John says to produce fruit in accordance with repentance. Discuss what this means. What are you doing to produce fruit? What fruit are you producing?***

### **His Motto**

***"He must increase, but I must decrease." ~ John 3:30***

***This is a simple statement, but profound. Take some time to reflect and discuss what this actually means and looks like. How do you decrease yourself? How does that increase Jesus?***

### **Some thoughts on Johns life and example from my Study Bible:**

1. No matter how impossible something seems from man's standpoint, it is not impossible with God.
2. Never doubt God. This lesson is from Zachariah's life.
3. Speak the truth. Share the gospel accurately and straightforwardly.
4. Understand that a simple life of devotion to the Lord is joyful. We should be content with whatever we have. We don't need things to make us happy. We need a strong relationship to the Lord.
5. Examine your life to see if we have fruit or not.

Finally, Humility. Whatever ministry you do for the Lord or however you are using (and hopefully you are using) your gifts and talents for Him, make sure you are doing it for Him and not for yourself. Do not become prideful. Sheep belong to the true shepherd. We are only caretakers. Do not crave attention or respect from men. Even if no one notices you or thanks you, keep right on working wholeheartedly for the Lord. Let us have the same attitude as John and let Him increase in our lives and us decrease. This requires unselfishness.