

Life Group Topic #38
He must become greater, and I must become less

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Commercial advertising constantly entices us with new things we don't yet have, but surely must need. What new item on the market would you most want to acquire?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Following the "Lectio Divina" model that we experienced at Stillwood, read through **John 3:22-36** audibly twice as a group and then silently meditate on the passage for a few minutes. Let the group share the things the Lord impresses on them. Feel free to use the application questions below.

²² Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people. ²³ At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. ²⁴ (This was before John was thrown into prison.) ²⁵ A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew^[a] over ceremonial cleansing. ²⁶ So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

²⁷ John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' ²⁹ It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. ³⁰ He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

³¹ "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else."^[b] ³² He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! ³³ Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. ³⁴ For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. ³⁶ And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

Word Application Questions:

1. Can you recall a time when your own accomplishments were overlooked or eclipsed by something else that shifted the focus away from you? Tell how you reacted?
2. John made clear what his role was: I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him. (vs 28). Is there a parallel with our roles today? What is our part to prepare a way for Jesus to impact the lives of those we love?
3. Our culture highly values personal success and doing all we can to attain our personal success goals. John said, "I am filled with joy at his success." Where do you find joy?
4. John said, "He must become greater and I must become less." Do you see this reflected somehow in your life? What steps might you need to take to move in this direction?
5. What do we learn about the greatness of Jesus in vs. 31-36?
6. According to John the Baptist there are two kinds of people in the world. How does he describe them?
7. Do you tend to view people according to these terms? In what ways are you "preparing the way" for people to move from being under judgment to receiving eternal life?

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.