

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

STUDENT LESSON

**HE MUST
INCREASE**

Open it

1. What is one of your favorite parts of Fall?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read John 3:22–36.

2. Where did Jesus and His disciples go and what were they doing there?
3. What were John the Baptist's disciples so concerned about when they talked to John?
4. What role does John the Baptist compare himself to? Why does this role make his response to Jesus' growing ministry make sense?
5. What are some of the reasons that John the Baptist gives that Jesus is greater than he is?
6. What are the two responses to Jesus that are talked about in this passage? What is the outcome of each of those responses?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: The Reason for Ministry

Read John 3:22–28.

I had a friend when I was in high school who was a cheerleader at our school. Cheerleading never really appealed to me. But obviously it appeals to some people. Out of curiosity, I asked my friend what she loved about being a cheerleader and her response was kind of strange... “I like being part of getting the crowd excited about the game and cheering loud for our team!” Simple, but kind of strange. The guys on the basketball team were concerned with winning the game and getting people to cheer for them. But the cheerleaders saw their job as getting people to cheer for other people. It's such a different... role!

Now, John the Baptist wasn't just a cheerleader for Jesus, but his role was kind of similar. He was never there to make himself great or to receive all the cheers and accolades for himself. NO! He knew his purpose was ultimately to point people to Jesus so that they would follow HIM!

In this passage, Jesus and His disciples are in the same area as John the Baptist and his disciples and John's disciples were a bit concerned that more people were going to Jesus to be baptized instead of coming to John. And John's response was clear—it was never about him. He didn't minister to get all the crowds. He didn't minister to be worshiped as the Christ. He came to fulfill his role, which was to prepare people to follow Jesus.

7. Our natural inclination is to view things like John's disciples did. Do you think that's true? Why or why not?

8. What could happen to a person, or even a church, who adopts the thinking of John's disciples and lives by it?

9. What are some ways you can keep your heart focused on the true reason for ministry? (Hint: Look at John's response to his disciples.)

Day 3 — Today's Theme: The "Best Man"

Read John 3:29–30.

When my younger brother got married, he asked me to be his best man. That was a pretty big deal to me. I wanted to plan a good bachelor party for him, make sure everything went smoothly for the wedding, and most importantly, make sure he didn't get cold feet! I'm proud to say that I think I did pretty good.

John compared his role and ministry to the "friend of the bridegroom" or, in other words, the "Best Man" of a wedding. What that would have meant is that his role was never to marry the bride. The focus of the whole wedding is never on him, but on the bride and groom. The JOY of the "Best Man" is seeing the wedding come together and go off without a hitch on the big day.

This is what John's saying: Jesus is the groom and the people who follow Him are the bride. The Apostle Paul will talk about this in Ephesians 5 also! John's joy is seeing the fulfillment of his ministry—that people are following Jesus! That's what he was called to do and that's what he did. He knew that if he fulfilled his role that Jesus would have to increase, and he would have to decrease.

10. Since Jesus is God and is already all-powerful, all-knowing, and full of glory, what does it mean for Him to increase?

11. Do you think John's statement in verse 30 is something we should live by too, or was it unique just to John the Baptist? Why?

12. What do you think it would actually look like for Jesus to increase and you to decrease?

Day 4 — Today's Theme: Expert Report

Read John 3:21–35

Imagine you're doing a speech for a class at school about your favorite hobby. While you're giving your speech in front of the class, the world expert in your hobby walks into the room. What would you do? What would you say? I imagine if that happened to me, I would probably just stop talking and tell people they needed to listen to the expert, and I'd invite that person to come up and I'd introduce him to the class. I mean, who am I to be leading when the world expert is right there?!

*“He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.”*¹ Jesus is supposed to increase and become greater because He already IS greater! Jesus' greatness is because by nature, He is greater than the created world. As a matter of fact, John tells us here that what Jesus talks about, He is testifying from His own witness. And the words that Jesus speaks, unlike John or Paul or Peter or any of the apostles, are the very words of God, the top dog, the supreme authority! In other words, Jesus is the world expert on the things of heaven!

13. What do you think verse 33 means?

14. What do you think it means to receive Jesus' testimony?

¹ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV), copyright 2001 by Crossway.

Day 5 — Today's Theme: A Matter of Life and Death

Read John 3:36

There are only two responses to Jesus. You can either believe in Him as Lord and Savior, or disbelieve. There is no middle ground on this decision. There is no “down the middle.” It’s one or the other. And your answer to the question of whether or not you will believe in Jesus is a matter of life and death.

John 3:36 outlines these two responses:

Believe in the Son — Eternal Life

Disobey the Son — Will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

What is your answer? What is your response to Jesus?

Some people will dismiss the seriousness of the decision that is placed before them, not believing that it will actually have any true effect on them. Some may not believe or may not agree that Jesus is the only solution. They’ll try to do enough good in life in the hope that it’ll eventually outweigh the bad they do, only to someday find that all the “good” they could muster wasn’t enough.

Yet some will believe in Him, that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, sent from heaven to save sinners. And by their faith alone, they’ll find eternal life in Jesus Christ!

15. What is eternal life?

Take time to honestly consider your response to Jesus. Do you believe in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? If you have not believed, what questions or concerns do you have about Jesus that are holding you back?