

Week 5 Discussion Questions

Text: John 3:22-36

Icebreaker: Who is someone in your life that you look up to in your faith? In what ways has their faith inspired or encouraged your own?

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out from the text or sermon?
2. John the Baptist is referred to as "Rabbi" by his disciples in this text. To be a Rabbi in the ancient world was a high honor. John the Baptist is a man of prominent place with significant authority. His disciples expect that John would be threatened by the presence of a competing Rabbi down the river. Why is John not threatened by Jesus' presence?
John understands who Jesus is and he understands his own role in light of who Jesus is. John knows that he is meant to point to Jesus, not compete with Him. John knows everything he has in ministry was always meant for the purpose he has now, to guide others to the long-awaited Messiah.
3. "Always the bridesmaid, never the bride" is a phrase usually associated with shame, sadness, and longing as the forever bridesmaid yearns for a turn to be the bride. How does John describe his role as the friend of the bridegroom?
John responds in Joy, excited to point others toward Jesus. In this case, there is no expectation, longing, or jealousy on John's part at Jesus' ministry overtaking his own. John embraces his role with joy and humility, recognizing he is not the center of the story.
4. How would you describe your own attitude concerning sharing what Christ has done in your life with others?
Some might be excited to share their faith with others, recognizing the joy they have experienced in Christ that they cannot help but share. Others might be overwhelmed, scared, indifferent at sharing their faith. Identifying where we are is an important first step to building confidence in sharing our faith with others.
5. How you think the broader culture would define living a successful life in our world today.
Job Title, Degree, Salary, Size of your House, Brand of your Car, Hours you Work, Weeks of Vacation, Investment Portfolio, 401K, Age of Retirement, # of Kids (Lots?)

None?), # of Followers/likes, Busy over Lazy, Work over Rest, Rush over Slow, Go, Go, Go.

6. What character traits does the broader culture seem to value in a person according to that definition of success?

Driven, Smart, Energetic, Strategic, Growth Mindset, Charismatic, Results-oriented, Busy, Confident, Ambitious, etc.

7. What does John mean by the phrase "He must increase, but I must decrease" and in what way does applying it to your own life shape how you define success?

Whatever I do in my life should amplify the life of Christ over my own. My reputation matters not in comparison with Christ's. At the end of the day I want to measure success in my own life on whether Christ was glorified and made known to those around me. Is it my name they remember or Christ's?

8. John 3:36 has two parallel statements which identifies *belief* with *obedience*. What does it mean that John uses these words synonymously and how does one impact the other?

Faith in Christ is not simply an intellectual ascent of an idea, but to believe in Christ is to recognize who he is and what he has done. In accomplishing your salvation, Jesus has called you from death to life, to live a certain way. To believe in Christ is to obey his commands and follow him.