

I MUST DECREASE

John 3:30-31 ... "He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease. He [Christ] who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth [man] is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."

Today's verse is the response of John the Baptist in answering questions from his followers about Jesus. It is John's admission that he was just a man, a messenger instructed by God to tell the Jews that Jesus was coming from heaven, and that upon Jesus' arrival and the beginning of his ministry, John's role would diminish. If you are a pastor or priest, this also applies to you, as it does to me. Our role is to introduce people to Christ, and then step out of the way so that God's Holy Spirit can take over the job of changing and improving believers. We still have a job to do by educating, teaching and encouraging spiritual growth, and we are still responsible for growing the church by teaching believers to share their faith with the unsaved. However, it is not our job to change people.

When I write or teach on spiritual subjects, I rely upon: 1) God's Word, 2) my experience in serving him, and 3) and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. My knowledge is limited and my wisdom is distributed by God in small increments. I cannot read your mind or search the depths of your heart. I cannot predict the future, judge you, or reveal God's specific plan for your life. Those are all attributes of the Holy Spirit. I can only teach what I know and illustrate God's general plan for all of us, while the Holy Spirit knows all.

If you find Christ through what I write or teach, hallelujah. If you grow in your faith through these devotionals, praise the Lord. If you acquire the desire and the boldness to share your faith with others because of what you have learned here, God will be blessed and I will be satisfied. But my job is only to point you in the right direction, to encourage you to live in the fullness of Christ, and to motivate you to confess your sins and allow the Holy Spirit to begin transforming you according to God's will and plan. As Christ becomes more influential in your life and you become more submissive to him, and more obedient to his instruction, he increases and I decrease. As Jesus becomes your Lord and Savior, my role as a teacher or messenger must decrease and I will then celebrate your transformation with you, not as a teacher, but as an equal brother.

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