

ENC OUN TERS

WITH JESUS.



WEEK 6 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

BREIEL BLVD. CHURCH OF GOD

ENCOUNTERS

WITH JESUS

The Gospel of John is the incredible story of the life of Jesus Christ. John reports Jesus saying that He came so that we could have life and have it to the full (see John 10:10). During this series, we will learn how to grab hold of and experience the life He came to offer from those who encountered Him personally. Each week, we will focus on a different encounter from John's Gospel as we journey through it together:

Week 1: Encounters With Jesus

Week 2: Encounters With Jesus - The Living Word (John 1)

Week 3: Encounters With Jesus - The Lamb of God (John 1)

Week 4: Encounters With Jesus - The Wedding at Cana (John 2)

Week 5: Encounters With Jesus - Nicodemus (John 3)

Week 6: Encounters With Jesus - John the Baptist (John 3)

Week 7: Encounters With Jesus - The Woman at the Well (John 4)

Week 8: Encounters With Jesus - The Healing at Bethsaida (John 5)

Week 9: Encounters With Jesus - The Bread of Life (John 6)

Week 10: Encounters With Jesus - The Festival (John 7)

Week 11: Encounters With Jesus - The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8)

Week 12: Encounters With Jesus - The Blind Man (John 9)

Through this series, we hope that you will have your own life-changing encounter with Jesus!

HOW TO USE THIS DEVO:

THIS IS A GUIDED DEVOTION:

Each day you will begin by reading the selected passages for that day. As the week goes on, we will bring out and consider different aspects of the passages we are studying that week. There are guided questions, activities, and prayer exercises. Please don't skip over these. They serve to add to devotional experience. Feel free to write on this devotional as much as you like.

CATCH-UP DAYS:

You will notice that each week only has five days of devotional content. Ideally, you will begin each week by listening to the message during the Sunday morning worship service and then you will begin your devotional time on Monday mornings. This helps you to personalize and apply what God is speaking to our church on Sundays. It also gives you the opportunity to have a couple of catch-up days if you fall behind.

MEMORY VERSES:

On the first page of each week, you will find a weekly memory verse. These verses are tied to the main content of that week's devotions. Hiding scripture in your heart by memorizing it is one of the most beneficial things you can do for your spiritual life. If you have never tried to memorize scripture before, this will be a great first step for you. We have included most verses in the NIV but please feel free to use whatever translation is most comfortable for you.

WEEK 6:

**HE MUST
BECOME
GREATER.**



MEMORY VERSE:

30 He must become greater; I must become less.

(John 3:30 | NIV)

day 1: Humility lowers so God can lift.

Today's Verse:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

(1 Peter 5:6 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

This week we are taking another look at an episode in the life of John the Baptist. The theme of our study for the next few days is going to be humility. George Hardin, a Christian author, defined humility as:

"The personal quality of being free from arrogance and pride and having an accurate estimate of one's worth."

Do you know someone like that in your life? The chances are good that you do. The humble people in our lives give off a sweet aroma that is difficult to describe but obvious when we come across it. Let's take an overview look at John the Baptist in the passage we are going to look at this week:

Scripture Exercise:

- Read John 3:22-36 in your Bible. In the box below, record any insights you may discover about the humility of John the Baptist.

Question to Journal Through:

- What stands out to you the most about John the Baptist's humility in this passage?
- Why do you think the humble people in our lives often leave a lasting impact on us?
- Would you consider yourself a humble person? Why or why not?

day 2:

Humility lowers your credit to lift your gratitude.

Today's Verse:

They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.

(John 3:26-27 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

As our passage unfolds, Jesus is starting to get credit for the thing John the Baptist is most famous for, baptizing people! John's disciples begin to get jealous of the gaining popularity of Jesus. They come to John to find out what he will do about Jesus encroaching on his territory. John responds with a powerful statement: "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven" (John 3:27 | NIV).

John recognized an essential biblical truth. In his letter to scattered churches, the Apostle James wrote:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.

(James 1:17 | NIV)

Friend, if you follow the threads of back far enough in your life, you will realize that every good thing in your life was a gift God has provided. Your marriage, your career, your family, and everything else that matters to you, is a gift that God has brought into your life. Sure, you may have worked hard with the cards life has dealt you, but God is the one who has gifted you with every sound card.

Learn to see that God has written a remarkable story in your life. Honor Him by giving Him the credit that only He deserves. Pray & thank God for loving you enough to pick up the pen & write an incredible story that only He could come up with.

It may sting a little bit. If you're like me, I know you love to take credit for your greatness. But I promise that following the thread back to God will lift gratitude in your heart, maybe to a higher level than you have ever known.

Question to Journal Through:

- Do you believe that every good thing in your life is a gift from God? Why or why not?
- How does recognizing God's good gifts in our lives serve to humble us?
- How does walking in that humility help to elevate your daily gratitude?

day 3:

Humility lowers your ego to lift your joy.

Today's Verse:

"The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete."

(John 3:29 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

One of the fantastic things about John the Baptist's humility is that he had almost zero personal ego. The passage you read to start this devo might have been a tad confusing to you. Here is what John is trying to get his disciples to see.

He says, in effect, "I'm not the groom, I'm the groomsman! I'm just here to prepare the way for the Bride (Christ's church) to be united with the Bridegroom (Christ) through His life, death & resurrection. Celebrating Jesus is my purpose, and pursuing it gives me great joy! As a matter of fact, my joy is now complete because the Bridegroom's plot to marry His Bride forever is now underway, and I got to play a small part of it!"

I want you to understand something. You don't have to be ashamed of what you are not. Comparison is a deadly game. Some have called comparison the thief of joy. John knew deep and lasting joy because he had emancipated himself from the need to compare himself with others.

Humble people aren't afraid to acknowledge their shortcomings and weaknesses. They lower their ego and are okay with confessing, "I'm **NOT** okay! I don't have it all together! I need help! I don't know the answer." Has humility lowered your ego to where you can say that?

Humble people are also secure in who they **ARE**! We can compare our marriages to other marriages, our families to other families, and our jobs to others' jobs. But, this is always a losing game. We don't **REALLY** know what's going on in another person's story. When we focus so much on what we don't have, we lose sight of how great what we have actually is. No one can live your story better than you!

With that being said, laser-focus on your story! Invest in your marriage, work hard at your job, praise God for your family, and love them with all your might! Lower your ego in humility so that God can lift joy in your heart as you live your story the way you were intended to!

Questions to Journal Through:

- When do you find it most tempting to compare yourself to others? Does it ever produce joy?
- How can you laser-focus onto your story and live with humility?

day 4:

Humility lowers your importance to lift your impact.

Today's Verse:

He must become greater; I must become less.

(John 3:30 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

John understood something fundamental about himself. He knew that he was always meant to be the opening act, not the headliner. He recognized that it was now time for Jesus to take center stage. As that happened, John the Baptist would gladly move to the background.

Believe it or not, this willingness to play second fiddle is actually what made John so impactful! He didn't try to compete with Jesus for the spotlight but pointed people to Him. As John's importance lowered, his impact in history lifted! The same is true for you and me, although that's not the story we're often told.

Our culture tells us to increase our importance to lift our impact. We are encouraged to, "Speak my truth." To, "Look within myself to find the power to become great." We are sold the bill of goods that becoming the best version of myself should be our goal.

However, this Scripture points us in a different direction. It does not call us to speak your truth, but to speak the words of **THE** truth embodied - Jesus. It reminds us that instead of looking within for power, we point outside of ourselves to the One who is before all things and holds all things together (see Colossians 1:17). The end goal of our lives is not to become the best version of ourselves, but the best image of Jesus Christ.

Humility lowers so God can lift. It lowers our credit to lift our gratitude, lowers our ego to lift our joy, & lowers our importance to lift our impact. After John the Baptist's words in John 3:30, the author of the Gospel of John comments on the majesty of Jesus. In his words, we learn about another treasure humility gives us. When humility lowers us, we can lift our gaze to see Christ's greatness. More on that tomorrow.

Questions to Journal Through:

- Why are John the Baptist's words in John 3:30 so significant?
- How is it counter-cultural for Christians to believe that they will elevate their impact by lowering their importance?
- Have you found this to be true in your own life? How so?

day 5:

Seeing Christ's greatness.

Today's Verse:

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

(John 3:31-36 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

The end of Jesus' encounter with John the Baptist fittingly contains a beautiful picture of the greatness of Christ. John (the author, not the Baptist) wants you to see how incomparably great Jesus is to any other person.

- In the box below, write down some of the any thing you learn about Jesus from the passage above:

He reminds us that Jesus was lowered from heaven to earth for us. He came to tell us of the way of His indestructible, indescribable, unstoppable kingdom. He didn't wait for us to climb the ladder up to Him, He descended the ladder down to us!

He has sent an immeasurable amount of His Spirit to fill your life forever. The Spirit lowers our need for credit and elevates our experience of gratitude. He puts our ego on the bottom shelf to magnify our joy. He helps us stop fighting for importance so that we can accomplish a real impact.

This Jesus is the One who is now lifted above all as God's True King. He was lowered to the position of a sinner to take your wrongs and mine on His shoulders so that we could be forgiven forever by our Father & have eternal life.