

# The Word Made Flesh

## He Must Increase

John 3:22–31

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### The Context

- Jesus and His disciples begin baptizing in Judea at the same time John the Baptist is baptizing nearby.
- A conflict arises when John's disciples complain that "everyone is going to Jesus," revealing jealousy, insecurity, and a desire for influence.
- Instead of rebuking them or feeding into the insecurity, John teaches them a foundational lesson in humility and kingdom-mindedness.

### Five Truths John Teaches His Disciples

#### 1. Everything Is a Gift from God

**"A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven."**

- John reminds them that any influence, fruitfulness, ministry, or crowd they had was given by God, not earned by merit or personality.
- This destroys the illusion of being "self-made" and cultivates humility and gratitude.
- When we see everything as a gift, entitlement dies and thankfulness grows.

#### 2. Know Who You Are Not

**"I am not the Christ."**

- John refuses to pretend to be more than he is; he is not the Messiah, not the Savior, and not the answer to everyone's problems.
- His humility stands in contrast to insecure leaders who need constant affirmation.
- Pastors and Christians alike flourish when they embrace their role and reject the temptation to be the hero.

## Zeal for His House

### 3. The Bride Belongs to the Bridegroom

**“The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.”**

- John refuses to place himself at the center of the people’s affection.
- The Bride—God’s people—belongs to Jesus alone.
- It is dangerous when leaders crave the attention, praise, or loyalty that belongs to Christ.
- Christian leaders must direct hearts toward Jesus, not themselves.

### 4. Joy Comes from Supporting Jesus, Not Replacing Him

**“The friend of the bridegroom... rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice.”**

- John embraces his supporting role with joy, not resentment.
- Jesus is the main character; John is the joyful friend helping the wedding happen.
- The church must resist elevating leaders as stars—everything is about Jesus, not personalities, platforms, or brands.

### 5. The Heart of Christian Maturity: He Must Increase

**“He must increase, but I must decrease.”**

- John’s joy is complete because Jesus’ ministry is growing, not his own.
- Our lives must reflect the same posture: Jesus exalted higher, ourselves lower.
- True discipleship moves us away from self-promotion and toward Christ-centered living.
- John concludes by reminding them: **Jesus comes from above and is above all.**