

- **Main Passage:** John 1:19-27
 - **Purpose:** To understand that God values humility in the hearts of men.
 - **Session Snapshot:** True humility is a sign of a mature Christian. False humility is another form of pride. In this session, men will explore how to truly be a humble servant of Jesus by how they act and how they live.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 3 of their video series on John the Baptist and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **What comes to mind when you hear the word "humility?" Why is it important for men to show humility?**
- **Can you think of an occupation that embodies humility?**
- **In C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, Lewis states that the first step to humility is to admit that you are proud. He says, "If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited." What can we men who are trying to live lives of humility take from Lewis' quote?**
- **What is meant by "false humility?" How is false humility just another form of pride?**
- **Describe what true humility looks like.**

- Using Rick's evaluation of James 4:6 as a guide, what do proud people do and what do humble people do?
- How does the world view humility? How is the world's view of humility different from God's view?
- What do you think of this quote by Rick's wife, Sherri? "If a man lacks humility, don't ever trust him."

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- As we explore what it means to show humility, let's spend a few minutes dissecting this passage so we can more fully understand what is required of us.

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look into John 1:19-27. As Rick explained in the video, John the Baptist gives us a great example of showing humility as a follower of Jesus. Keep in mind that John was held in the highest esteem by many during this time. He had quite a following of his own, and some people even thought he was the Messiah. And yet, he knew his role and deflected any praise that people tried to give him and turned them toward Jesus.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read **John 1:19-27**. When you've finished, ask:

- **What do you remember from a previous Bible study or sermon about why it was so undignified to touch someone's feet during this time?**
 - *Answer:* People walked most places, and their livestock, horses, and donkeys walked along those same dusty roads. These animals defecated on these roads, people threw out their dirty water on these roads, and because they were made of dirt, they were always dusty. This made people's feet filthy. It was the lowest servant's job to remove people's sandals—a job nobody wanted to do.
- **What is the significance of John saying he is not worthy of untying the straps of Jesus' sandals?**
 - *Answer:* John said that he wasn't worthy of being the lowest servant compared to Jesus. John elevated Jesus and lowered himself.
- **Why is it important to understand John's proclamation in verse 27 in light of the conversation happening in vs. 19-26?**

- *Answer:* The Jewish priests and Levites were trying to find out who John was. They asked him if he was the Messiah, the one for whom they'd been expecting. They asked him if he was Elijah, one of the most respected prophets in history whom many thought would return since he never died but was taken by God. They asked if he was the Prophet. (Many scholars think this was referring to the Prophet that Moses mentions in Deut. 18:15, who many believe was the same as the coming Messiah, Jesus.) All of these men were held in high esteem, and John denies being any of them.
- **What does John's response teach us about his understanding of humility?**
 - Answers will vary. John knew that people held him in high regard, but he also knew how great Jesus was. And compared to Jesus' greatness, John understood his lowliness.
- **John's role was to point people to Jesus, not himself. How is our role the same as John's?**
 - Answers will vary. While there will only be one John the Baptist, all believers are called to elevate the name of Jesus over ourselves.
- **In this passage, how did John identify himself?**
 - *Answer:* He used God's word in verse 23: "John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, 'I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" He viewed himself and his role in relation to Jesus in verse 27: "He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."
- **Have someone read Matthew 5:16. How does this verse give an example of the same humility found in John the Baptist?**
 - Answers will vary. This verse says that when people see your good works, they will praise your Father in Heaven. It doesn't say to let your light shine so people will see your good works and praise you.
- **Have someone read Micah 6:8? How does this verse give us an example of the same humility found in John the Baptist?**
 - Answers will vary. This verse says, "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." The Hebrew word for "humbly" here could also be translated as "lowly." This picture of walking humbly or walking lowly with God is the image of a person following God in such a way that this individual is not "seen," but only God is "seen." It is an image of actively trying to stay out of the spotlight so that people watching only notice God.

Ask if there are any questions. If there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **When you think of how John deflected praise and elevated Jesus, how can we as men do the same in our everyday life?**
- **John found his identity in two things: the truths he found in God's Word and his role in relation to Jesus. How do you view yourself using those two identifiers? What should your response to an identity found in God's Word and the person of Jesus Christ be?**
- **Identify three areas of your life where you struggle relinquishing praise. Is it your children? Is it your job? Is it your abilities? Is it your bank account?**

- How can you use these three areas to point people to Jesus instead of to yourself?

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.