



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 29.0

May 15
2014

“I” Must Decrease

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

This was John the Baptist’s answer to his disciples who were concerned that Jesus was “appropriating” their ministry. From their perspective, it felt like Jesus was “stealing” the stage from John, and He was eclipsing them. When people came into the region, they didn’t see or hear John—they saw and heard Jesus. This bothered John’s disciples, because they wanted people to know them, just as the world’s prophets today preach that life is about “you.” We live in an extremely narcissistic age with catchphrases and mottos like, “Believe in yourself!” “Live your dream!” “Yes, we can!” “Trust yourself!” “Dream big!” “You are awesome!” “You can do anything!” Would you be discouraged if you were told, “NO YOU CAN’T, but so-in-so can”?

Would it bother you if you were being “upstaged”? It certainly bothers the world, but it didn’t bother John. John’s response was, “You’re absolutely right! - people are seeing Jesus instead of me, and that is exactly how it must be!”

What about us? Are our lives about us or about Jesus? When people listen to us, are they hearing Jesus, or are they hearing us? If we are Believers, Jesus must increase in us, and “we” must decrease “in us” until we are no longer the center of attention as a charismatic “somebody” or a magnetic “personality.”

What does this mean? Well, when we think about our lives, do we think, “I will __,” “I am __,” “I need to __,” or some other phrase where the emphasis is on the “I” of our life? Do we talk mostly about ourselves to other people, or do we talk about the Lord? Are we acting in our lives for our own “I” desires, or

are we acting for Jesus?

As a Believer, the emphasis on “I” must daily be decreasing, and the emphasis on Jesus must be increasing, until we are filled with His fullness. This is a part of our sanctification—*“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the **fullness of Christ**”* (Ephesians 4:13).

In this way, we emulate Jesus, for although He *“existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **but emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name”* (Philippians 2:6-9). Paul tells us here to have this same attitude (v5) - we are to **EMPTY OURSELVES**. This is all contrary to the world’s false prophets who say life is all about “you” - self-promotion and self-importance is essential to a successful life.

Jesus only promoted His Heavenly Father: *“the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner”* (John 5:19) - in like manner, *“if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds”* (Matthew 16:24-27). Even so, Amen.

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