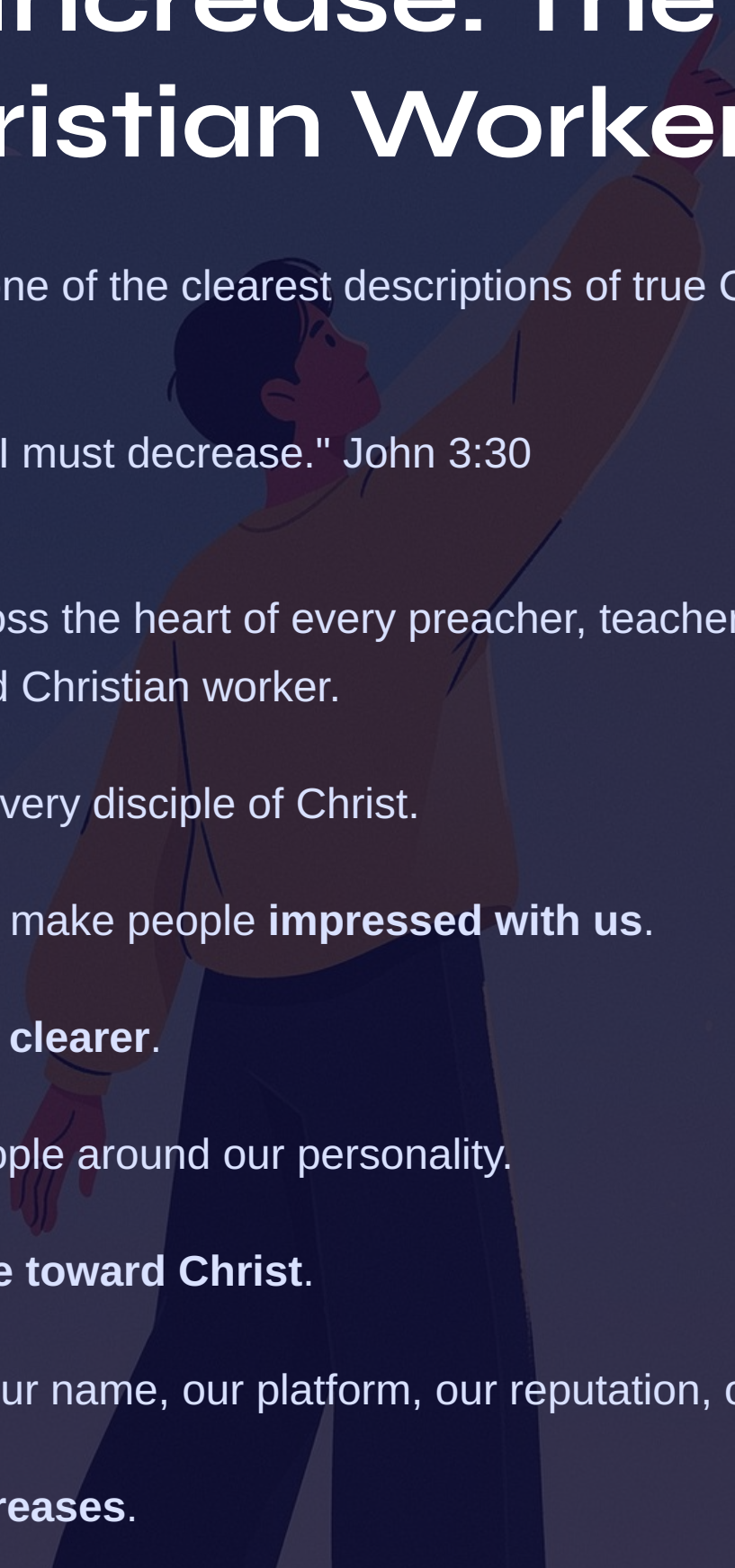


He Must Increase: The Attitude Every Christian Worker Needs

A stylized illustration of a person with dark hair, wearing a brown long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, pointing their right index finger upwards towards the top right corner of the slide. The background is a dark blue gradient with faint, abstract shapes.

John the Baptist gives us one of the clearest descriptions of true Christian ministry:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

That should be written across the heart of every preacher, teacher, worship leader, evangelist, pastor, content creator, and Christian worker.

In fact, it should describe every disciple of Christ.

The goal of ministry isn't to make people **impressed with us**.

The goal is to make **Jesus clearer**.

The goal isn't to gather people around our personality.

The goal is to **point people toward Christ**.

The goal isn't to increase our name, our platform, our reputation, or our following.

The goal is that **Jesus increases**.

John Was Willing to Lose His Audience

John's disciples came to him concerned because people were leaving John and going to Jesus.

"Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan... behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." John 3:26

They were basically saying, "John, people are leaving us. They're following Him now."

That could have produced **jealousy**.

John had preached to crowds. People had travelled into the wilderness to hear him. He had disciples of his own. His ministry was growing.

Then Jesus appeared, and the attention began moving away from John.

How did John respond?

He didn't panic. He didn't compete. He didn't attack Jesus. He didn't try to hold onto people.

He said:

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

John understood something every Christian worker must understand.

The **people** never belonged to him. The **ministry** never belonged to him. The **message** never belonged to him.

His entire purpose was to **prepare the way for Jesus**.

Ministry Is About Christ, Not Us

Paul carried the same attitude.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Corinthians 4:5

That is **real ministry**.

"We preach not ourselves."

That doesn't mean we never share personal stories. It doesn't mean we hide our personality or pretend we have no experiences.

It means we aren't the **centre of the message**.

What should point to Jesus

- Our testimony should point to Jesus.
- Our teaching should reveal Jesus.
- Our service should honour Jesus.
- Our lives should make people want to know Jesus.

The subtle self-focus that creeps in

- How many people follow me?
- How many views did I get?
- Why wasn't I invited?
- Why did they recognise someone else?
- Why is their ministry growing faster?
- Why didn't anyone thank me?

A preacher can mention Christ constantly and still quietly make the whole ministry about himself.

That is exactly where John's words must confront us:

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

Apollos Accepted Correction

Apollos was described as **eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, and fervent in spirit.**

"And a certain Jew named Apollos... an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures." Acts 18:24

Yet his understanding was incomplete.

Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained the way of God more perfectly.

"They took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Acts 18:26

Apollos could have become defensive. He could have said, "Don't you know who I am? I'm the preacher here."

Instead, he **received instruction.**

That is **humility.**

A humble preacher can be corrected. A humble teacher can keep learning. A humble Christian worker doesn't need to pretend they know everything.

Christ increases when our need to appear right decreases.

Paul Refused to Build a Personality Cult

The Corinthian church began dividing itself around different ministers.

Some said: "I am of Paul." Others said: "I am of Apollos."

Paul answered:

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" 1 Corinthians 3:5

Paul refused to let people turn Christian workers into **spiritual celebrities**.

He said:

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." 1 Corinthians 3:6

Paul planted. Apollos watered. But **God gave the increase**.

That keeps all of us humble.

We may preach. We may write. We may teach. We may encourage. We may serve.

But **only God can produce spiritual life**.

We are servants

not the Saviour.

**We are
messengers**

not the message.

We are witnesses

not the One people are
meant to worship.

Barnabas Was Willing to Make Room for Paul

Barnabas is another beautiful example.

When Saul first tried to join the disciples, the believers were afraid of him. Barnabas stepped forward and brought him to the apostles.

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles." Acts 9:27

Later, when the church at Antioch was growing, Barnabas went looking for Saul.

"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul." Acts 11:25

Barnabas brought Paul into the work.

Think about that. Barnabas made room for a man whose ministry would eventually become **more prominent than his own**.

There is no record of Barnabas becoming jealous. He didn't hold Paul back. He didn't fear being overshadowed. He recognised the **grace of God upon another person** and helped that person move forward.

That is the spirit of "He must increase, but I must decrease."

- A humble Christian worker doesn't need to be the most gifted person in the room.
- A humble leader isn't threatened when someone else succeeds.
- A humble preacher can celebrate another preacher.
- A humble ministry can recommend another ministry.
- A humble disciple can rejoice when Christ is being glorified, even when someone else receives the attention.

Jesus Warned Against Doing Ministry to Be Seen

Jesus said:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." Matthew 6:1

He also warned about people who prayed publicly because they loved to be noticed.

"They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." Matthew 6:5

The problem wasn't giving. The problem wasn't praying. The problem was the **desire to be seen**.

We can do the right activity with the wrong motive.

The right activity

- We can preach
- We can serve
- We can give
- We can post Christian content

With the wrong motive

- because we want praise.
- because we want recognition.
- because we want people to notice our generosity.
- because we want to build our own name.

That doesn't mean every preacher with a large audience is proud. It doesn't mean every Christian creator with a platform is seeking glory.

The question is deeper: **Who are we trying to increase? Christ or ourselves?**

Humility Doesn't Mean Pretending We Have No Gifts

Humility isn't denying what God has given us.

Paul knew he had been called to preach. He knew God had given him grace. He worked incredibly hard.

Yet he said:

"But by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Corinthians 15:10

That is **balance**.

Paul didn't say, "I am nothing, I can't do anything, and I have no calling."

He said everything he was came from **grace**.

Humility doesn't mean burying our gifts.

It means using our gifts without acting as though we created them.

It means working hard while giving **God the glory**.

It means accepting responsibility without demanding applause.

It means speaking boldly about Christ without becoming impressed with ourselves.

Jesus Gave Us the Pattern

Jesus said:

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Matthew 20:27

The world teaches

Greatness means being served.

"Build your name."

"Make sure people notice you."

"How many people work for you?"

Jesus teaches

Greatness means **serving**.

"Deny yourself."

"And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:4

"How many people are you willing to serve?"



Questions Every Christian Worker Should Ask

When **Christ increases and we decrease**, we begin asking different questions.

Not, "Did people admire me?" - But, "**Did they see Jesus more clearly?**"

Not, "Did they remember my name?" - But, "**Did they hear the truth?**"

Not, "Did I receive the credit?" - But, "**Was God glorified?**"

Not, "Is my ministry bigger than theirs?" - But, "**Is Christ being preached?**"

Not, "How can I protect my position?" - But, "**How can I help others fulfil their calling?**"

Not, "What will make me look important?" - But, "**What will serve the people God has placed before me?**"

The Greatest Danger in Ministry

The greatest danger isn't always **failure**.

Sometimes it is **success**.

Success can make us think the ministry depends upon us. People begin praising us. They quote us. They ask for our advice. They recognise us. Before long, we can start believing our own publicity.

That is why John's words remain so important:

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

The larger the platform, the greater the need for **humility**.

The more people listen to us, the more carefully we must point them toward Christ.

The more God uses us, the more we must remember that the **power belongs to Him**.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Corinthians 4:7

We are the **earthen vessel**. Christ is the **treasure**.

Nobody walks into a museum to admire the cardboard box holding the diamond. The value is in what the vessel carries.

This Is for Every Disciple

This attitude isn't only for preachers. **Every disciple is called to decrease so Christ may increase.**

What decreases in us

- Our pride decreases.
- Our need to be right decreases.
- Our hunger for praise decreases.
- Our jealousy decreases.
- Our stubbornness decreases.
- Our desire to control everything decreases.

What increases in Christ

- Christ's humility increases.
- Christ's love increases.
- Christ's patience increases.
- Christ's forgiveness increases.
- Christ's truth increases.
- Christ's rule increases.

Paul described it like this:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Galatians 2:20

Notice that Paul still lived. His personality wasn't erased. His calling wasn't destroyed. His gifts weren't removed.

But **Christ became the ruling centre of his life.**

That is **Christian humility.**

We don't disappear. We stop making ourselves the **main character.**

The Final Test

Here is the question every Christian worker and every disciple must face:



Would we still serve if **nobody praised us**?



Would we still preach if **someone else received the recognition**?



Would we still give if **nobody knew**?



Would we still help if **our name was never mentioned**?



Would we rejoice if another ministry grew while ours remained small?



Would we be satisfied if people **forgot us but remembered Jesus**?

John was.

That is why his statement remains one of the greatest ministry attitudes in Scripture:

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

May Jesus become greater in our message, greater in our motives, greater in our service, greater in our decisions, and greater in the eyes of the people we influence.

And may we become increasingly content to be the **voice pointing toward Him**.