



# LIKE HIM

A 90 DAY STUDY OF MARK

# I Surrender

February 18-24, 2024

---

## **90 DAY MEMORY STATEMENT**

**I am His child, deeply loved, totally forgiven, fully pleasing and complete in Christ.**

## **MAIN POINT**

Those who love Christ will seek to exalt Him in their lives and not to exalt themselves.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever coached a little league team or parented a little league player?  
What is the coach's job when he or she is helping children learn the game?  
Does the coach of a little league team get a trophy at the end of the year?

Do you know who was responsible for the "Just Do It" campaign? Do you know whose slogan that was? (Nike). Do you know who came up with the "Got Milk?" campaign?

**What do these comparisons have to do with your relationship with God?**

The coach's job in a children's sports league is to help the children learn the game, to enjoy it, and to help them improve. If he wanted to make a name for himself, it wouldn't be as a little league coach. The reason a children's coach doesn't receive a trophy is because the season isn't about the coach; it's about the kids. The same goes for advertising companies. You probably don't know who came up with the "Just Do It" campaign because the point was to promote Nike, not the company. We don't know who came up with the "Got Milk?" campaign because they wanted to get people to drink milk. It wasn't their jobs to advertise themselves. This was what John the Baptist did. His duty was to be "a voice of one crying out in the wilderness" and to "prepare the way for the Lord" ([Matthew 3:3](#)). John was not trying to exalt himself, he was exalting Christ. This is our duty as well. Our lives are not supposed to be about promoting ourselves; we are to live for the glory and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ [JOHN 3:22-25](#).**

**Why was John the Baptist baptizing people?**

**Why were Jesus and His disciples baptizing also?**

**Why was John thrown into prison?**

John the Baptist was baptizing people for repentance. He was making the path clear for the coming of the Messiah. The people then, like now, had lives cluttered with selfishness, with sin, and with pride. John told them to repent of it. He warned them that "Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees! Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" ([Matthew 3:10](#)). John was removing stumbling blocks of self-righteousness. He was clearing out their hearts of self-justification. He was preparing them for the salvation that comes by casting oneself on the mercy of Christ.

**What do you suppose the argument about purification was all about?**

**How are we purified before God today, and why is it necessary that this happen?**

Most likely, the quarrel about purification arose over how one is to be purified of uncleanness and sin. The religious leaders taught that one had to keep the law, and even laws about the law in order to be pure and undefiled before God. But John taught a different way to be clean: repent and look for the Messiah. The law could not and cannot make one clean before God. It only brings guilt. The only hope is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

**READ [JOHN 3:26-31](#).**

**Why do you think John's disciples told him about the crowds that Jesus was drawing?**

**How was John able to avoid jealousy and pride at Jesus' growing popularity at the expense of his own?**

John's disciples might have been jealous on John's behalf. They saw that Jesus and His disciples kept growing in popularity, and even some of those who used to follow John were now going over to follow Jesus. When others prosper it is easy to grow jealous of their success. John avoided this prideful trap by remembering who he was, who he wasn't, and that it is God who gives gifts to all. First, John remembered that he was the messenger sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. *Why would he be jealous or upset when the Messiah's ministry began to thrive?* Second, he remembered that he wasn't the Messiah. He was sent to point others to the Messiah. *Why would he be upset now that people were following the Messiah?* Instead of being jealous or upset, John was filled with joy because people were listening to Jesus and going to Him to be baptized.

**What does John's example teach you about your responsibility as a follower of Christ today?**

**What are some of the temptations that make *becoming less for Jesus to become more* particularly hard for you to do?**

Our duty as Christians is not to build our own little kingdoms and reputations. We are to point to Christ just as John the Baptist did. We want people to grow in their faith, and we should be happy when they do so even if we are not as popular as we think we ought to be.

**How did Jesus come "from above"?**

**Why would the truth that Jesus came from heaven give John great relief?**

**How does this truth change our lives and our witness today?**

Before the world was made, before God spoke and made light, before anything at all was created, God the Son existed. God the Son existed with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is eternal. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to teach us truth and to show us the path of righteousness. We are helpless sinners who can only hope to live by the grace of the Eternal God. This is why John the Baptist was relieved to see Jesus' ministry growing. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. In humility, he realized that everyone would be better off going to Jesus instead of himself. It is tempting for us as self-centered creatures to think we know better than God. We second guess His Word. We think we will be happier disobeying His commands. We think we will find more joy living for our glory instead of His.

But the reality is that we are all infinitely better off repenting and trusting in Christ. We will find more joy seeking His glory than our own.

## **APPLICATION**

**Are there any areas of your life where you might be at odds with God? Pray that God will help you repent of them this week so you might live better for the kingdom. If you are unaware of any, pray that God might reveal things you do not know about.**

**How might you “decrease to self” this week and allow Christ to increase in you? Are there any ministries you might help or contribute to in order to put this into practice?**

**Is there anyone whose success you have been jealous of?  
How could you work this week to get that kind of pride under control?**

## **PRAYER**

Close in a time of group prayer. Ask the Lord to help us all have the humility to decrease and work to see Christ increase. Pray that the Lord will help us see who we are and be content with what God has given us. Close by asking the Lord God to help us exalt Jesus above all other things.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **[JOHN 3:22-31](#)**

**3:22-23.** An argument was about to break out between two ministry teams regarding the popularity of one of the leaders. Jealousy seemed to be the motive and in the context of the times we can certainly understand the event. Remember, in the New Testament we still find adherence to John’s baptism twenty years after Jesus’ resurrection. Two different baptismal groups, headed by two different leaders, baptizing in two different cities—both claiming messianic connections. Two things seem important in the text: (1) John’s ongoing baptism was hardly competitive because he still proclaimed Jesus and presumably attracted even more people to the Lamb, and (2) although verse 23 talks about Jesus baptizing, we learn in John 4:2 that he supervised the activity and the disciples themselves did the baptizing.

**3:24-26.** Why did not John tell us more about the Baptist’s imprisonment as the Synoptists did ([Matthew 14:1-12](#); [Mark 6:14, 29](#); [Luke 3:19-20](#))? That event simply did not fit his purpose. John the apostle dealt with John the Baptist only insofar as the latter served the introduction and explanation of Jesus Christ. John and Jesus both understood this perfectly. Writing as we have seen with the benefit of lengthy hindsight, the apostle John could put the whole thing in perspective for his readers.

But the argument was real. According to the Dead Sea Scrolls, people at the time were interested in the finer points of ceremonial purification. John the Baptist hardly observed the finer points of anything. Petty bickering over church ritual has been a blind spot in the behavior of Christians since the days of Jesus. The very one who wrote these words, while still in his younger days, said to the one of whom he wrote, “Master ... we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us” ([Luke 9:49](#)). Jesus replied to John the apostle, “Do not stop him ... for whoever is not against you is for you” ([Luke 9:50](#)). This competition was encouraged neither by Jesus nor John. We would do

well to notice that envy or jealousy over someone else's popularity, especially in ministry, can never advance God's kingdom but only deteriorate our spiritual lives.

**3:27-28.** What kept this popular prophet so humble? We see in this passage his awareness of God's sovereignty, of his own unworthiness, and of the preeminence of Christ in the world. This response by John almost becomes a standard Christian principle: man can receive only what is given him from heaven. The principle certainly applies to John, whose disciples seemed to have wanted his status elevated. It applies to Jesus, about whom many still had questions, but whose greatness John constantly affirms. And it applies to us, who dare not exercise authority or leadership in ministry beyond what God has gifted us and called us to do. The word heaven in this context refers back to God, since throughout this Gospel John saw everything as coming from the hand of the Father.

**3:29-30.** The bride/bridegroom theme introduces the church, although this Gospel says little about that important New Testament theme. The bride (the church), including the disciples who were then following John, belonged to the bridegroom (Christ). John described himself as the friend of the bridegroom, delighted to see him claim his own. Surely John 3:30 is one of the great verses of the Bible: He must become greater; I must become less.

This wedding scene builds on Old Testament imagery of Jehovah as the husband of Israel ([Isaiah 54:5](#); [62:4](#); [Jeremiah 2:2](#); [3:20](#); [Ezekiel 16:8](#); [Hosea 2:19](#)). Now in the new covenant, the Messiah becomes the bridegroom of the church. This important theme radiates through the New Testament ([2 Corinthians 11:2](#); [Ephesians 5:32](#)), culminating in [Revelation 19:7-8](#). So the bride and bridegroom imagery is well established in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As the friend of the bridegroom, John emphasized his delight and joy rather than jealousy over Jesus' arrival and instant popularity. It is said of the pioneer missionary, William Carey, that when he was close to death he turned to a friend and said, "When I am gone, don't talk about William Carey; talk about William Carey's Savior. I desire that Christ alone might be magnified."

**3:31.** All human beings, including John the Baptist, are from the earth and belong to the earth. But twice John told us that Jesus, who had his origin in heaven, is above all.