

7. Do you know what God's will is for your life? Have you readily embraced your assignment?
8. Can we ever come to a place where we are content in doing God's will? Describe some ways that is happening in your life and why His will is increasingly important to you.
9. Sometimes it is easier and seems more plausible to believe what humanity says about Jesus Christ (which includes skepticism and unbelief) rather than believing what God says about Jesus. With so much evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ, why are so many people prone to unbelief? Why do the words of mere men become more significant than the words of a holy and perfect God? (Bulletin question)
10. When truth is proclaimed, belief should follow. What actions accompany belief?
11. In what ways can we follow the example of both John the Baptist and the Apostle John in directing others to Jesus?
12. Read verses 31-35 aloud. Ask the group to listen carefully to the passage once again, and respond to words or phrases that help them focus on the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Have them share their thoughts. Does this lead your group to be in awe of who Christ is? If so, take time to worship him.

## John 3:22-36

**Lesson 5**  
For October 19, 2008

Dr. Jerry Nelson

### LEADER'S GUIDE

For discussion following the sermon on October 19, 2008

### The Baptist's Testimony

If someone were to listen in on all your conversations in a given day, what would they discover about what's on your heart? For a variety of reasons, there is usually someone or something that dominates our thinking and ultimately makes its way into our conversations. It could be an overbearing employer, your newborn child, the last ball game, political candidates, a physical ailment or the love of your life. What's on our heart eventually comes out in our speech. So is the case with John the Baptist and John, the author of the Gospel of John. In this passage we will discover:

#### Key Points

- What is on the heart of John the Baptist (his calling and mission)
- What is on the heart of the Apostle John (the supremacy of Jesus Christ)
- What we should hear on the heart of every believer (response)

John the Baptist spent his entire life with one primary calling and a mission: direct people to the Messiah. He had heard the stories of his birth. He believed and acted upon that call with everything he had. If you were to listen in on his preaching and his conversations, you would no doubt hear his love for doing that which God called him to do: prepare the way. The fruit of his labor would mean that his ministry would eventually diminish. Many of his disciples would leave and so would his followers. For some, that would bring resentment. For John the Baptist, however, it brought great joy.

The Apostle John had a calling and a mission: help people believe in Jesus Christ. This call dominated his life: "John, testify to the things that you see and hear. Help people understand that Jesus is 'above all,' and that there is no higher authority, influence, or

power than Christ. Nothing or no one is superior to him. Remind them that John the Baptist, and the prophets before him, also came to testify about the coming Messiah, and that likewise, Jesus has come from heaven to earth to testify to the things that he has seen and heard in heaven. John, your mission is to write about the miracles, the conflicts, the conversations, and the things of heaven that you see. Reveal Jesus as the Son of God!”

As Christ-followers, what thoughts tend to dominate our speech, our actions, and our very lives? Are we prone to talk more about what is wrong with others or our circumstances, or do we tend to promote ourselves by talking about our vacations, accomplishments, or the next new gadget that we have acquired? When we meet Jesus personally, when we behold his glory and are in awe of who he is, life takes on new meaning. Our *hearts* are transformed, and our lives are *being* transformed. And while the aforementioned blessings can be enjoyed and received with thanksgiving, they begin to pale in comparison to our true love for God and our increasing desire to do his will. The apostle John reminds us that the consequences before us are clear: God’s great love or his eternal wrath; Eternal life or spiritual death; Belief or unbelief; Genuine faith or defiant disobedience; Life for yourself or life for the sake of the Gospel. What hangs in the balance is truly a matter of life and death, for both you and those around you.

### **Leader’s Guide**

#### Personal Preparation

Think back over your day. Where did you “dwell”? For sure your feet were planted somewhere, but what did you catch yourself thinking about? What dominated your thoughts? Life as we know it is very complex. There are pressures everywhere, from jobs to families to health concerns. Hopefully your thoughts either eventually or frequently centered on engaging God, and/or helping others engage him as well. That is the very practical outworking of this week’s lesson.

#### Group Preparation

The Apostle John was able to testify to what he saw. If we “saw” Jesus today, we would be telling everyone about this event, for undoubtedly we would have experienced, ever so briefly, the glory of God. Because part of this lesson centers on the

supremacy of Christ, you may want to spend some of your group time being reminded of his deity through a special song or affirmations from God’s Word.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. John the Baptist knew that his life was not to be lived for himself. What current cultural philosophy suggests that life truly is “all about me”?
2. John the Baptist might be labeled today as either a fanatic or emotionally unstable. Can you be too zealous for God? What would that look like? According to the Scriptures, what does a “balanced” life mean? Is the thought of a balanced life, and the measures that we take to obtain it, simply a cultural idea, or is it biblical?
3. Do you know someone who just can’t stop talking about God? What is your response to them?
4. We find conflict in the passage between the disciples of John the Baptist and Jesus. In our day, it might be somewhat like engaging in a large ministry only to watch it slowly dwindle away. Can we be covetous about someone else’s ministry size and influence? What does that indicate about us?
5. John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ. He not only knew his calling and mission, he was delighted when the crowds turned from him and toward Jesus. Are you delighted with your ministry place in life? Do you engage in ministry God has given you with joy? What do you find most fulfilling?
6. The Apostle Paul said “to live is Christ.” What does that look like?