

One of my favorite stories from the Bible is tucked away in the third chapter of the Gospel of John. Jesus has begun His ministry, and many people who are followers of John the Baptist are now turning away from John and turning to Jesus. When someone brings that to John's attention his reply is something like this: I'm thrilled with that! I already told you that I am not the Christ, but only the one who comes before him and points people to him. He must increase but I must decrease.

I love those words, "He must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30). I can think of a lot of things I would love to see happen in 2021, and this is certainly one of them!

In a general sense, think of what a better world it would be if each of us would have the attitude, "Other people must increase but I must decrease. I am not going to be so self-centered and self-focused this new year. Life is not all about me." Yes, it's important to have a healthy love for ourselves and to practice self-care. But there's a world full of people out there who need to be appreciated, valued, and loved.

"He must increase but I must decrease." These words apply even more directly in regards to our relationship with Christ. Christ must increase and I must decrease.

What might this look like? Well, I can start each day asking Him to show me His will for that day, and consciously throughout the day think more about how He would want me to act in certain situations. I could spend more time with Him in prayer and meditation, and less time in front of the TV or on my iPhone or computer. I could worry less about pleasing people and more on pleasing Christ.

I'm sure you can think of ways where you yourself can allow Christ to become more the central focus of your life. When Jesus increases in us His Spirit will control us more and more. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us the personality traits of people controlled by Christ. Their lives will be marked by "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Wow! Imagine how much more influence Jesus followers will have if they are marked by these personality and character traits!

"He must increase and I must decrease." I really want this to happen to me in 2021. I hope you long for this in your life too!

Wishing you God's very best in the New Year!

Pastor Harry