



First Baptist Church of Mableton

40 DAYS OF  
PRAYER  
AND  
REFLECTION

(Day 6-10)

Originally produced for the Kentucky Baptist Convention  
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# Day 6- He Must Become Greater

Read John 3:30

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

Satan loves to see pastors, church leaders and congregations get busy with inconsequential issues. He loves to see them fall to sin, too! If there's one thing Satan wants to see, it's the church off its mission!

One tool he will use is pride. As Pr. 16:18 reads, “Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall.”

John 3:22–30 describes an argument between followers of John the Baptist and a Jewish religious leader, over purification.

John the Baptist came to prepare people for the One who is coming—Jesus (John 1:23; John 3:28). Over time, as Jesus becomes known, more people follow Him than the Baptist. This is not a problem, at all. There's nothing wrong with the Baptist's message, or his ministry. The reason he preached was to encourage others to follow the Messiah. So, when this actually starts to happen, he's happy.

In verse 29, he makes an analogy to the best man at a wedding. The best man feels joy when the groom gets attention, and a bride.  
[from [bibleref.com](http://bibleref.com)]

John knew that he came to prepare “the way” for Jesus. He came with a message of repentance before Jesus appeared. Now that His ministry is realized, John couldn't be any more thrilled to have played a part.

John the Baptist's heart was in the right place. He desired to see people focus on the Son of God and the Savior of the world. John wanted the watching world to remember Jesus' name, not his name.

Trouble comes when pastors, Christian leaders and Believers fail to follow John's example.

We take pride in the ministries of our church. We take pride in what our church has accomplished in its past. We list all the ministries our church offers. And, before long, our pride is no longer found “in Christ” but “in ourselves”. God longs for His Son to increase and for His servants to decrease.

Jesus increases when He becomes the “thread” of every sermon and Bible study, when He receives the glory and honor that are due Him, when His grace is embraced and given, and when He is followed with heartfelt devotion and surrender.

As you reflect on what you may be involved in within the ministry of our church, are you “decreasing” so that Jesus may “increase”? Is the spotlight more on you and what you are doing at FBCM or on the One who called you?

Is our church’s future predicated on honoring something someone did long ago, elevating that person’s legacy above following what Christ would have us become to effectively reach people today?

If Jesus is increasing, praise the Father.

If you’re increasing, take it to God in prayer. Ask Him to place your focus more on glorifying Christ and less on yourself.

# Day 7- Take a Soil Test

Read Matthew 13:1-9

“Still others fell on good ground and produced a crop:  
some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown.”  
Matthew 13:8 (HCSB)

Jesus addressed a large crowd of people, telling a parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning) to talk about a person's heart.

As the farmer scattered seed, it fell along the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil. Jesus desires for His followers to have hearts (soil) that yield a harvest.

What is the present condition of your heart?

In Jesus' parable, He talks about four kinds of soil (hearts):

- (1) A calloused heart. This person lacks spiritual and ministerial expectations, goes through the motions, and relates to God with a selfish agenda.
- (2) A shallow heart. This person is often immature in the faith and busy in ministry. It's possible to be a mile wide and an inch deep.
- (3) A distracted heart. This person battles the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.
- (4) A productive heart. This person lives his or her life to fulfill God's mission. In order to plant a garden, the ground (soil), must first be broken. If you desire to yield a spiritual harvest, brokenness is often what God uses.

Are you willing to be broken for God's glory?

What is currently breaking your heart and spirit?

What kind of soil are you?

Ask the Lord today to show you the real condition of your heart. If you have a calloused, shallow, or distracted heart, allow the Lord to change you. He wants you to have a productive heart, meaning a heart that loves Him, builds His church, and expands His kingdom. If Jesus is increasing, praise the Father. If you're increasing, repent and experience a new beginning.

# Day 8 - Ask, Seek, and Knock

Read Matthew 7:7-12

“Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7 (HCSB)

The Bible is clear that God answers the fervent prayers of His people according to His will, and we know it is His will for His church to be revitalized and healthy. Perhaps revival tarries because we give up on prayer too soon.

A small girl watched as her mother smeared cold cream on her face. She asked, “Mommy, why are you doing that?” “To make myself beautiful,” the mother replied. In a few moments, as the mother started wiping off the cream, the child asked, “Are you giving up already?”

We should never give up in prayer as we ask God to revitalize our churches. In fact, we should pray regularly and intensely until the answer comes. The verbs “ask, seek, and knock” are expressed in a form that denotes continuous action. Jesus is literally saying, “Ask, and keep on asking. Seek, and keep on seeking. Knock, and keep on knocking.”

Do you regularly pray with intensity for the revitalization of your church? If your church needs to be revitalized, whatever you do, do not quit praying until the answer comes. Ask, seek, and knock!

Begin your journey of ongoing, fervent prayer for your church’s revitalization today. God will answer in His time.

# Day 9 - Value His Name

1 Samuel 12:20-22 (HCSB)

“Samuel replied, “Don’t be afraid. Even though you have committed all this evil, don’t turn away from following the LORD. Instead, worship the LORD with all your heart. Don’t turn away to follow worthless things that can’t profit or deliver you; they are worthless. The LORD will not abandon His people, because of His great name and because He has determined to make you His own people.”

2020 has had an effect on everyone and every facet of life. It has affected the livelihoods of many people. There will be long-lasting effects on the companies and individuals impacted.

What would it be like if something of great value never changed? What if the American Dollar, your 401k, your real estate never lost its value? Or never “gained” in value?

In the end, those things have little value. Their value will not last. However, what we have in the Lord will never lose its value. It is “priceless”.

The value of something that is priceless remains priceless throughout all eternity. What we have with God in Christ is exactly that: priceless.

These verses in 1 Samuel remind us that even during times when we have sinned against the Lord, we must not turn away. The name of the Lord has tremendous value for us.

One of the ways we see that value is in the truth that He will never forsake us. Not that “we” have that much value; but because His name and reputation is that valuable.

Do you see the value of the name of the LORD? Does your life reflect how much value you have in the Lord?

Pray today that the value of God's name would be seen in your life so that a world may see His mark on your life. Pray that your church would reflect the value of the name of the LORD.

Pray that your church may resemble the value that comes not from its name, nor its history... but, rather, in the presence of the Lord.

# Day 10 - Bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Read Galatians 5:22-26

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

As followers of Jesus, we are to yield daily to the control of the Holy Spirit. Verse 25 encourages us to “live by the Spirit” and “follow the Spirit.” The tangible evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of our life is spiritual fruit.

Just as an apple is the outward evidence of the inner reality of an apple tree, so the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the outward evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives.

Jesus once cursed a fig tree [Mark 11:12-14; 20]. He cursed the tree because it was “fruitless”. It “looked” as if it was in bloom. It was full of leaves; yet, without fruit.

When the Holy Spirit is in control, our lives will be “fruitful”... characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith, gentleness and self control. God’s plan is to produce all of these qualities in us as we yield our lives to Him. When the Holy Spirit is NOT in control of our lives, our lives will be “fruitless”.

God wants our lives to yield produce that which only the Holy Spirit can bear.

If the person who knows you best, used the qualities in verses 22 and 23 as a checklist, what words would they choose to describe you?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the areas in your life that need to be yielded over to Him.