

## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Victory in Jesus, Lion and the Lamb, More Like Jesus, Living Hope

## WELCOME

Share about your dream role in ministry or some worthy project or endeavor. How do you think will you be best able to contribute to the success of that cause?

## WORD

### LUKE 1:13-17

*<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. <sup>14</sup> You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

In the New Testament, we read about John the Baptist who lived such an EXTRAORDINARY life because he let Jesus increase in his life. Before his birth, an angel foretold how he will be great in the sight of the Lord (**Luke 1:15**), not in the sight of men—but in the sight of God. In fact, John's purpose in life was for Jesus to increase while he will decrease (**John 3:30**).

### GOD'S PLAN

God was at work in John's life even before he was born. This was made clear by the announcement of the angel to John's father, the righteous priest, Zechariah. He and his barren wife Elizabeth were promised a son in their old age. This amazing news seemed to good to be true for Zechariah, that he did not believe it. For a time, Zechariah suffered the consequence of his unbelief—he lost his ability to speak (**Luke 1:20, 22**)! But upon John's birth, his father affirmed God's plan for his son by naming him, "John" (**Luke 1:13, 63**). This was the name that God gave before John was born, and it means "God is gracious". John fulfilled God's gracious plan for his life to be a "forerunner" of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (**Luke 1:16-17**).

**The extraordinary life is a life of grace.** It is not something that we can achieve, but it is something that we can receive. John had the unique privilege of introducing Jesus, the Messiah, to the world (**Luke 1:76-79**). Today, we have the same privilege of making Jesus known to others. God has a wonderful plan for our lives — a plan he set into motion even before we were born. God was personally involved in putting us together in our mother's womb (**Psalms 139:13**). You are not an accident! God has a unique purpose for creating you so that others will experience the extraordinary work of Jesus in you and through you!

### GOD'S PREPARATION

The Lord prepares ordinary people for an extraordinary life according to his plan. This preparation period continues for a lifetime. For John, this included living in the wilderness (desert) for most of his life. This must have been uncomfortable for John, as seen in his diet of wild locusts and honey, and his clothing of camel's hair (**Matthew 3:4**). John not only lived in the wilderness, he ministered out of the wilderness. Even if it seems that our lives are a desert, God will enable us to bear fruitful witness for Jesus if we follow his wonderful but often uncomfortable plan for our lives.

When God wants to use us, he prepares us by humbling us. **Brokenness** is the number one requirement for ordinary people to be used by an extraordinary God. **Luke 11:1** tells us that John was a man of prayer. **Our prayer life is an indicator of our brokenness before God.** Prayer should be our first option, not the last, in any situation.

John was also a man who had **no pretenses (John 1:19-23)**. Humble, broken people have a right view of Jesus, and a right view of themselves — they are not insecure. John knew that his life and ministry was not about him, it was all about Jesus. Insecure people have an unhealthy competitive and envious spirit, always wanting to achieve more than others. But a life filled with God's grace is **not something that we can achieve, it is something that we can only receive (John 3:27)**.

### GOD'S PURPOSE

**A deep, authentic humility** is another characteristic of a broken person. John baptized Jesus, the sinless Son of God (**Luke 3:21-22**). Yet he acknowledges that Christ was infinitely superior than he (**John 1:26-30**). Jesus did not have any sin to confess and repent of; in his baptism, Christ identified himself with you and I, sinners he came to save. Baptism is the symbol of our identification with

## WORD (cont'd)

Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus lived a completely righteous life; his baptism was to show us that he was completely obedient to the will of the Father—even through his death on the cross. John baptizing Jesus was the ultimate purpose for his existence (**John 1:29-34**), to testify that **Jesus is the Son of God**. It was as if John was saying, "I live for this day!" that Jesus will be proclaimed for who he is to the world. **This was the reason for John's existence — to point people to Jesus**. This is our ultimate purpose as well!

Everything in our lives is meant to point others to Christ. If we are not living that kind of life, then we have missed the whole point of our existence. In **John 3:29**, we see how broken people **acknowledge that everything comes from God** and they give everything back to God. When God breaks us, we learn **to do all things for the glory of God** (**John 3:30**).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

*(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)*

1. In what ways can you identify with John the Baptist? How is his life similar or different from yours?
2. How has God been working in your life to humble you? How have you responded to His breaking process?
3. What will you do today to let Jesus increase in your life?

## WORKS

### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those you want to point to Christ this week. Make Jesus known to them in every opportunity that opens up to you in the next few days.

### OUR PRIZE

The extraordinary life has a reward, but **it is not what we can achieve but only receive — Jesus**. We cheer for athletes who refuse to stay down and give up when they encounter setbacks. When we keep running the race until the end, it will be heaven who will applaud our strong finish.

John had a faith crisis when he was in prison for speaking the truth to Herod (**Luke 3:19-20**). He wavered in his belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. You see, people expected a Messiah who will change outer circumstances, but Jesus came to change hearts. In his darkest hour, John receives a glowing commendation from Jesus (**Luke 7:24-27**). Yet Jesus considers the most ordinary one among us today as "greater" than John (**Luke 7:28**)! John only saw with eyes of faith that Jesus was the Savior of men, he did not live to see Jesus die on the cross and rise again. But we have the utmost privilege of knowing what Jesus did for us through the Scriptures. Because of Jesus, you can live an **EXTRAORDINARY** life when you **let Jesus increase in your life!**

### WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

#### I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

#### II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

#### III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

#### IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

#### V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends