

Friends of the Bridegroom John 3:22-36

I. Embrace their identity and purpose

- Feelings of unworthiness
- Toxic love
- Discredits own opinions
- Withdraws from friendships
- Unhealthy control
- Inability to “rest”.
- Critical thought patterns
- Over sensitivity & self-focus
- People pleasing
- Declines spiritual disciplines with others
- Marked by immaturity

Isaiah 43:1 Page #725

Isaiah 61:1

Isaiah 62:1

1. My primary identity comes from God's choice of me & not my ability to be continually faithful.
2. Being God's chosen & His dearly loved should settle my self-worth issues.
3. My secondary identities will be lived out confidently with the saturation of who I am in Christ.

II. Recognizes their ministry role

1. Knows only has what is given by God
2. Understands he cannot become a “necessity” in anyone's life
3. Loves to hear the Bridegrooms voice for self & others
4. Handles applause/criticism properly

5. Knows ministry is about an abiding relationship with the Bridegroom

III. Pursues Christ-likeness

1. I must be born again.
2. I must lift Christ up.
3. I must die to self.

Questions for this week:

I. For Starters:

1. How do you handle it when people get recognition that you feel you deserve or that you believe they do not deserve? What does this show about your heart?
2. What makes someone's testimony believable?
3. What are the basics of having a good self worth and how are you passing on those basics to others?

II. Overview of Scripture

1. Read John 3:22-36 or read the whole chapter.
2. What was Jesus doing with His disciples and how does this explain why he was in such a rural area?
3. Read John 4:2. What does this clarify about the last part of 3:22?
4. What was John the Baptist also doing? Vs 23
5. After reading verses 25-26, put into your own words what is going on? How does this account speak of the genuineness of Scripture in describing actual events in Jesus' life?
6. Describe John's reaction to the news he received? Vs 27
7. What did John clearly want people to know and why? Vs 28
8. How did John describe His life, identity and ministry? Vs 29
9. What did John want most in life (in your own words) vs. 30?
10. In what way is Jesus described in verse 31? What does this say about Him being just a good man and one of many options to heaven?
11. What was Jesus' testimony? Vs 32
12. What characterized Jesus' ministry? Vs 34
13. Describe the two types of people who walk this earth? Vs 36

III. Growing deeper

1. Review Sunday's message with someone.

2. With our world's focus on self esteem and loving ones self, how would you describe the difference between a healthy and Biblical self worth and trying to have a good self esteem?
3. Read the following Psalms and discuss how these truths and actions could help you in having a healthy and Biblical self worth. Psalm 27:4, Psalm 34:8 and Psalm 37:4.
4. Read the below article by Oswald Chambers. Discuss why having a healthy and Biblical view of God and self is so important in ministry to others.

Decreasing for His Purpose 3 24 My Utmost For His Highest

He must increase, but I must decrease —John 3:30

If you become a necessity to someone else's life, you are out of God's will. As a servant, your primary responsibility is to be a "friend of the bridegroom" ([John 3:29](#)). When you see a person who is close to grasping the claims of Jesus Christ, you know that your influence has been used in the right direction. And when you begin to see that person in the middle of a difficult and painful struggle, don't try to prevent it, but pray that his difficulty will grow even ten times stronger, until no power on earth or in hell could hold him away from Jesus Christ. Over and over again, we try to be amateur providences in someone's life. We are indeed amateurs, coming in and actually preventing God's will and saying, "This person should not have to experience this difficulty." Instead of being friends of the Bridegroom, our sympathy gets in the way. One day that person will say to us, "You are a thief; you stole my desire to follow Jesus, and because of you I lost sight of Him."

Beware of rejoicing with someone over the wrong thing, but always look to rejoice over the right thing. ". . . the friend of the bridegroom . . . rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" ([John 3:29-30](#)). This was spoken with joy, not with sadness-at last they were to see the Bridegroom! And John said this was his joy. It represents a stepping aside, an absolute removal of the servant, never to be thought of again.

Listen intently with your entire being until you hear the Bridegroom's voice in the life of another person. And never give any thought to what devastation, difficulties, or sickness it will bring. Just rejoice with Godly excitement that His voice has been heard. You may often have to watch Jesus Christ wreck a life before He saves it (see [Matthew 10:34](#)).

5. Finish with prayer and give thanks for His death and resurrection!