

**Week Four - John: Born to Become Less**  
**John 3:23-36**

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read Luke 1:5-25. What kind of moral character did Zechariah and Elizabeth have?
2. What kind of man was their son going to be, according to the angel? (See verses 14-17.)
3. This was a pretty miraculous circumstance! Why do you think God would have such a splashy birth story for John the Baptist? Why not just let him be born in a normal way to parents of a normal age?
4. How were Zechariah and Elizabeth's reactions to this announcement different than if they'd been a normal parenting age?
5. How does this birth story set up the life of John the Baptist as different from most people?
6. How do you think you would react to God doing something extraordinary in your life that hadn't been a part of your plan?
7. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to open your eyes this Christmas week to the miraculous (but unplanned by you!) ways that he wants to move in your life.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Start by reading Luke 1:57-66. What decision caused consternation for the family?
9. Do an internet search for the meaning of the name John. What does it mean?
10. Not naming a baby after an immediate family member was a shocking break from cultural norms. Why might God have asked Zechariah and Elizabeth to do this? What might he have been trying to communicate with this name?
11. This moment caused a stir in the whole community (verse 66). What was God preparing these people to expect from John?
12. Believe it or not, you are a part of the community that God is blessing through John's birth. Why do you think his birth matters, even to you today, 2,000 years later?

13. It's hard to break with tradition or our culture's ways of doing things. What is one way you think you could be countercultural for the sake of revealing something about God to your community?
14. Close your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you live in ways that unsettle people from their comfort zones for the sake of revealing God's power.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Has there ever been a time where you wanted to rescue someone from a situation? Maybe spare a child from a consequence? Help a friend who was stuck in a rut? What was that time?
16. Zechariah spoke a prophetic poem over his son, John. Read about it in Luke 1:67-80. Did your parents ever speak words of encouragement over you? What were they?
17. What did Zechariah say would be John's future role?
18. How exactly would John "prepare a way for the Lord"?
19. In your own faith journey, how did other people prepare for you to receive the truth and love of Jesus Christ?
20. What are ways that you can try to "prepare the way" for others to know about Jesus?
21. Close your FIFTEEN by asking God to use you the same way he used John: to pave the way for Jesus to enter into people's lives.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. Have you ever felt jealous of someone else's success? Who and why?
23. Read about a moment of professional comparison in John 3:23-26. What problem were John's disciples complaining about?
24. How would you handle it if someone in your field were stealing your clients or putting your work to shame?
25. Now read John 3:27-30. How did John react?

26. What priorities did John clearly have?
27. How can the good news of Jesus reshape your own priorities in this season?
28. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that God would help you keep your priorities for yourself in line with his priorities for you. (If you have time, meditatively pray the “beatitudes” in Matthew 5:3-12.)
- Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**
29. Have you ever known someone who voluntarily turned leadership over to someone else? Why would anyone do such a thing?
30. Read John 3:27-30. How did John see himself in comparison to Jesus?
31. Nobody would deny John’s assessment. But now check out something fascinating: read Philippians 2:6-8. Where did Jesus position himself in the hierarchy?
32. What could Jesus possibly accomplish by doing this? (Read Galatians 4:4-5 for help with this.)
33. How does it make you feel that Jesus became lower than the angels — the most despised of humans (a criminal) — for the sake of rescuing you?
34. Close out your final FIFTEEN this Christmas week by thanking God for the birth of his Son, and ask him to help you take delight in the value he has of you!