

# John 3:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He must increase, but I must decrease.

## Analysis

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John the Baptist's famous declaration 'He must increase, but I must decrease' epitomizes humble ministry. The divine necessity 'must' indicates God's sovereign plan; the present tense suggests ongoing process. This is true discipleship—Christ exalted, self diminished. John models what every believer should pursue: making much of Jesus, little of ourselves. The contrasting verbs (increase/decrease) show the inverse relationship between Christ's glory and our pride.

## Historical Context

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John's disciples were concerned about Jesus gaining more followers (v. 26), but John rejoices. His response demonstrates secure identity in God's calling. Within months, Herod would imprison and execute John, literally fulfilling his 'decrease.' Yet John's faithful witness continues through Scripture.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. In what areas of your life does self need to decrease so Christ can increase?

2. How can you cultivate John's contentment with God's sovereign purposes for your life?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐκεῖνον δεῖ αὐξάνειν ἐμὲ δὲ ἐλαττοῦσθαι  
He must increase I but must decrease  
G1565 G1163 G837 G1691 G1161 G1642

## Additional Cross-References

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**Colossians 1:18** (Parallel theme): And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

**Isaiah 9:7** (Parallel theme): Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**1 Corinthians 3:5** (Parallel theme): Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

**Revelation 11:15** (Parallel theme): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.