**Facilitator:**

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read John 3:22-36 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy’s sermon notes.

**Facilitator:** Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

**CONNECT Group study questions, John 3:22-36**

**March 15, 2015**

**Title: Climbing Down the Ladder of Success**

**Read to the group:** It’s pretty common to hear people in a variety of vocational fields speak of “climbing the ladder of success.” In fact, a quick Google search produces a myriad of opinions on how to climb the ladder, and the essential personal qualities one needs to be successful at it!

What you don’t find on Google, or in any professional journal, is the question of *whether* one should even try to climb up the proverbial ladder of success. Instead, in our culture, it is simply *assumed* that we should be investing all of our time and resources toward that end.

But as we heard Sunday morning, when Jesus is central, he changes everything.

**Question:** Have you ever had an experience similar to John the Baptist, where someone else experienced increasing fruitfulness while you experienced less? What was that like for you? How were you tempted to respond?

**Question**: John the Baptist models for us how to respond when, in the Lord’s sovereignty, the ministry of others flourishes more than our own. What enabled John to respond in a way that exalts Jesus and diminishes himself?

**Question:** Pastor Peppy mentioned that God’s economy is quite different than man’s natural way of thinking. For example, Instead of climbing up the ladder to success, you climb down. Can you think of other principles from Scripture where we learn that God’s ways are very different, or even the opposite of man’s? **Facilitator:** Some examples include: Regarding Greatness (Matthew 9:33-37); Leadership (Mark 10:42-45); Love (Matthew 5:43-48); Personal Strengths/Weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:5-10), etc.

**Question**: Pastor Peppy spoke of the dangers of pride and jealousy, and the utter importance of humility in life and ministry. Where else in the Bible do we encounter similar teachings or see examples of those truths lived out in the lives of biblical characters? **Facilitator:** Here are some texts: Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:10-16; 1 Peter 5:5-6. And some examples: Nebuchadenezzar (Daniel 4), Haman (Esther 5:9-14 & 6:7-10), and Herod (Acts 12:20-24), etc.

**Question:** Re-read the five points John the Baptist uses to prove the supremacy of Jesus Christ over himself (from vv. 31-36). How would a deeper understanding and trust of these truths re-shape the way we think about any situations of rivalry and competition in the church? What practical examples come to mind?

**Question:**  At the conclusion of the message, Pastor Peppy stated that “Genuine humility calls attention to Jesus Christ, not to self.” Where are some areas in your life, or ways in which you are tempted to call the attention to yourselves? How would those specific areas of your life look different if, in humility, you sought to call attention to Christ instead of self?

**Meditation and Prayer**: Let’s take some time to pray for two things:

(1) That God would continue to cultivate humility like John the Baptist in our lives and in our church; that our supreme desire would be to call attention to Jesus Christ, not to ourselves!

(2) That God would give us great joy in serving wherever He places us, and even joy is seeing the ministry of others around us bear fruit!