

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS
The Gospel of John — Week 21

ICEBREAKER: What makes you stand to your feet and cheer?

OVERVIEW: Of all the men who ever lived, Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest (Mt 11:11). He was the forerunner of Christ, preparing the nation to meet Christ, and identifying Jesus as the Messiah. “He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him (Jn 1:7).” He was a fearless preacher, calling the Pharisees and Sadducees a “brood of vipers,” and rebuking King Herod for committing adultery (Mk 6:18). He was also a man of great humility, saying about Christ, “He must increase, but I must decrease (Jn 3:30).” What was the key to John’s greatness? The answer might be found in Christ’s testimony about John in John 5:35, “John was a burning and shining lamp.” In this discussion we will learn more about how to follow John’s example.

1. Read John 5:31-47. What insight, principle, or observation from this week-end’s message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday’s message?)
2. John 5:35 says, “John was a burning and shining lamp.” The word “burning” refers to his zeal for God. He was on fire for God. In your mind, what does it mean for a person to be on fire for God?
3. Read Romans 12:11. Have you lost some of your passion for God? Explain.
4. Read Revelation 2:4-5. How do we reignite our fire for God?

5. The puritan Thomas Watson described six marks of true zeal: 1) True zeal cannot bear an injury done to God. Zeal makes the blood rise when God’s honor is impeached. 2) True zeal will encounter the greatest difficulties. Zeal will charge through an army. 3) True zeal has knowledge to go before it, and sanctity to follow after it. Wisdom leads the van of zeal, and holiness brings up the rear. 4) True zeal loves truth when it is despised and opposed. 5) True zeal causes fervency in duty — in prayer, singing, church attendance, listening to sermons, charity, witnessing, tithing, etc. 6) True zeal is persevering. No waters can quench the flame of zeal; it is torrid in the frigid zone. **In which of these ways do you need to grow in zeal? Explain.**
6. Read Proverbs 19:2. Why is it important to add knowledge to zeal? How do we do this?
7. John 5:35 says John was a shining lamp. The word “shining” refers to his holiness. How important is holiness in the believer’s life? Explain.
8. One of the ways that we drift from holiness is by making small compromises here and there. Do you need to tighten up your holiness in any areas of your life? Explain.
9. John 5:35 says that John was a “lamp.” His focus was on leading people to God. How do you need to grow and improve as a witness for Christ?

The Last Word: “The disgrace of the church in the twentieth century is that more zeal is evident among Communists and cultists than among Christians.” —William MacDonald