

John the Baptist inspired the theme for this devotional journal with these words...

*He must become greater;
I must become less.*

-JOHN 3:30

Why did John the Baptist say that? Does it have anything to do with a mission trip? John was like a pop star in the first century. Crowds of people just wanted to get a glimpse of him and to hear his powerful preaching. He had charisma, popularity, fame and power. Throngs of people followed him to the Jordan River where he baptized them by the thousands. Some even said he might be the Savior of the world. But as popular as he was, John understood God's plan for his life and for the world well enough to know that he (John) was not the Savior of the world. His assignment from God was to prepare the way for Jesus, the true Savior of the world.

So on that day when Jesus (who was actually John's cousin) arrived at the river Jordan, John made it clear to the crowds that Jesus was truly the one everyone needed to listen to and follow. Apparently, John the Baptist wasn't into himself or focused on his plan for his own life. John stepped aside to let Jesus have the spotlight. He said in effect, "Life is not about me! It's not about my popularity or my power or my success! My life is all about **HIM**, Jesus, the Savior of the world. It's not about what I want. It's about what God wants! Not about building me up, but building **HIM** up! Not about who I am, but who **HE** is! My life is less about me and more about **HIM**!"

When I decided to be a Christian, I gave my life to Jesus and started following Him. He became the most important person in my life. In a real sense, I became less, so that HE could become more. It's not that I lost anything of great value, because I found everything that was of eternal value. I found new life! Jesus said, "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it." (Mark 8:35) It's hard to understand how losing your life becomes the way to find it, but it's so true that love, joy and peace were not diminished when I realized God's love for me and decided to love God in return. Less of me and more of **HIM** became the way in which I found true purpose and love in my own life.

Remember as you prepare for your mission that this trip is less about you, and more about serving **HIM** and others. It's about moving from being less self-centered to being more Christ-centered. And when that happens in your life I'm convinced that you will discover that less of you will mean more of **HIS** peace, more of **HIS** generosity, more of **HIS** kindness, more of **HIS** humility, more of **HIS** courage, and more of **HIS** unconditional love and grace.

May your mission trip be a life-changing journey as you become more and more like Jesus Christ. Have a great trip!

Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson, author

Introducing the Theme..... 1
 What's in this Journal? 2
 Getting the Most from this Journal 3

< 7 PRE-TRIP DAYS >
 Preparing-for-the-Trip Pages 8

< 10 ON-SITE MISSION DAYS >
 On-Site Journal Pages..... 22
 What's Your *me*<HIM Story? 42

< 7 POST-TRIP DAYS >
 Back Home Journal Pages 46
 Living the *me*<HIM Life..... 60
 Contact Info for New Friends 63

Author: Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson
 Publisher: TalkPoints, Box 25727, Woodbury, MN 55125
 To order visit www.missiontripjournals.com or www.talkpoints.com
 Email the publisher at talkpoints@aol.com
 651-731-7580
 Graphic Design: Mudville Design

Copyright © 2017 Franklin W. Nelson
 All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form without prior permission in writing by the publisher. Please contact "Permissions" at TalkPoints.

Scripture references are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Also available:



< More of His PEACE

< KEY VERSE >

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

—COLOSSIANS 3:15

< PEACE >

An inner/outer sense of well-being and calm that comes from being in a right relationship with God, the world, others and ourselves.

< QUESTION >

What was the source of Jesus Christ's peace? Do I have peace in my heart/life?

MORE REFLECTION *(Write responses on the me<HIM page.)*

1. When I think about going on this mission trip, I feel...
2. I'm looking forward to...
3. I need God to help me to...
4. I worry or feel anxious about...
5. I pray for peace, especially in my relationship with...

MORE OF GOD'S WORD *(Circle words and phrases that catch your eye and heart.)*

- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Matthew 5:9
- For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Romans 14:17,19
- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:18

More time? Read and take notes on Philippians 4:4-9.

MORE PRAYER Close your eyes, take some deep breaths and think about times when you have felt a deep calm and peace. Next, pray: *Dear God, your Word promises that peace comes from being in a right and loving relationship with you and others. Thank you for the inner peace you have given me about our mission trip. In the days ahead may I let go of anxiety that I might realize more of your peace. May there be less of my unrest and more of Christ's peace in my life and relationships. Please help me to be a peacemaker in the days ahead. Thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen.* Continue by writing your own prayer on the me<HIM page...*Dear God, thank you for... Forgive me for... Give me peace in my relationship with...I promise you that I will...In Jesus' name, Amen.*

MORE OF CHRIST'S PEACE IN MY ACTIONS

- Memorize the theme verse for this journal from John 3:30. Put the verse on your computer screen or handheld device. Write it on sticky notes and attach it to your mirror and refrigerator. Let this verse become your heart's desire as you prepare for mission: *He must become greater; I must become less.*
- Do some research to learn more about the place and the people where you will be serving during your mission trip.

< TODAY'S WEATHER > (circle one)



< MY MOOD TODAY > (circle one)



< RESPONSE SPACE >

(A place to write responses for page 8)

- 1) I feel...

- 2) Looking forward to...

- 3) Need God to help me to...

- 4) Feel anxious about...

- 5) Peace in my relationship with...

MY PRAYER: *Dear God...*

MY PLAN FOR MORE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:

< OPEN SPACE >

(A place for new insights, questions, drawings, challenges, hopes, discoveries, etc.)



*He must become greater;
I must become less.*

-JOHN 3:30

< More of His WELCOME

< KEY VERSE >

Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.

—MARK 9:37

< WELCOME >

To receive or accept someone openly and with happiness or joy.

< QUESTION >

Will I be able to offer to the new people I meet the welcome Jesus wants me to offer?

MORE REFLECTION (Write responses on the me<HIM page.)

1. (During the past 24 hours) Something I saw... tasted... touched... heard... smelled... felt... experienced... An emotional high point... An emotional challenge...
2. A person who helps me feel welcome is _____ because he/she almost always...
3. I find it challenging to welcome and accept people who...
4. If I'm to be more like Jesus during this trip, I'll need to be willing to welcome others by...

MORE OF GOD'S WORD (Circle words and phrases that catch your eye and heart.)

- (Job said) "but no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler . . ." Job 31:32
- Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28
- Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14
- Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35
- Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6
- So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him. Philippians 2:29

More time? Read and take notes on John 4:4-24.

MORE PRAYER Take some deep breaths, close your eyes and picture Jesus welcoming you with open arms. Henri Nouwen wrote: "Hospitality means the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place." *Dear God, meeting new people (strangers) can sometimes feel uncomfortable, so I hold back and stay with the people I already know. Teach me to welcome each new person and see them, not as a stranger, but as a new friend. I want to listen to their stories and care about them. Forgive me for the times I avoid others. May this trip be less about me and more about the welcome Christ wants me to give to others. In his name, Amen.* Next, write your own prayer for welcome, hospitality, and guidance on the me<HIM page.

MORE OF CHRIST'S WELCOME IN MY ACTIONS

- Most of us like to spend time with people we know. In the coming 24 hours step out of your comfort zone and spend some time with at least one person you don't know very well. Walk with him/her or share a meal together. Make an effort to welcome others as Jesus would welcome them.
- Think of a person on this trip you may have been avoiding. Name one thing you could do to show friendship and love to that person

< TODAY'S WEATHER > (circle one)



< MY MOOD TODAY > (circle one)



< RESPONSE SPACE >

(A place to write responses for page 22)

- 1) I saw...
- I tasted...
- I touched...
- I heard...
- I smelled...
- I felt...
- I experienced...
- High point...
- Challenge...
- 2) A person who welcomed me:
- _____
- How?
- 3) Hard to accept people who...
- 4) I need to be willing to...

MY PRAYER: *Dear God...*

MY PLAN FOR MORE OF CHRIST'S WELCOME:

< OPEN SPACE >

(A place for new insights, questions, drawings, challenges, hopes, discoveries, etc.)



*He must become greater;
I must become less.*

-JOHN 3:30

When you're back home, family, friends and others might ask, "*How was your trip?*" It is important for you to take the time to prepare for your response to that question by thinking through your answers to the questions on the next three pages. After you have filled in the first pages, the "*Escalator Speech*" on page 45 gives you a space to summarize highlights of your mission experience, so you can tell it to someone in less than 30 seconds (the time it takes to get from one floor to the next on an escalator).

I'D DESCRIBE MY
EXPERIENCE WITH THREE
WORDS...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I'M VERY THANKFUL
TO GOD FOR...

I THINK I/WE MADE
A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE
BY...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

IF I COULD CHANGE
3 THINGS ABOUT THE
TRIP, THEY WOULD BE...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I ENJOYED GETTING TO
KNOW (LIST SOME OF
THE PEOPLE YOU MET)...

< More of His GENEROSITY

< KEY VERSE >

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

-2 CORINTHIANS 9:11

< GENEROSITY >

The freedom to give and give some more to others without holding back. Greed is the opposite of generosity.

< QUESTION >

On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate yourself in your willingness to give to others? # _____

MORE REFLECTION (Write responses on the me<HIM page.)

1. (During the past 24 hours) Something I felt... experienced... A high point... A low point...
2. I think of _____ as a generous person. She/he shows generosity to me and to others by...
3. Here's an example of generosity from our mission trip...
4. During the mission trip I was generous to _____ when I...
5. My prayer is that God will help me to...

MORE OF GOD'S WORD (Circle words and phrases that catch your eye and heart.)

- The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor. Proverbs 22:9
- Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18
- If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. Romans 12:20
- A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25
- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

More time? Read and take notes on 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

MORE PRAYER Take some deep breaths, close your eyes and think of the many ways God has been generous to you. Dear God, I thank you for all I've learned about you, myself and others during our mission trip. Continue to teach me to be more like Jesus in the generous and free way I give myself to others. Thank you for Jesus who was generous with his life, his love and his compassion. Please give me more of his freedom to live my life for the good of others. May I be less selfish and self-centered and more like Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen. Next, write your own prayer for generosity on the me<HIM page.

MORE OF CHRIST'S GENEROSITY IN MY ACTIONS

- Be generous with someone today by surprising them with a gift. Who will it be and what will you give?
- The Bible teaches us that generosity involves selfless giving. The guideline in the Bible for giving is 10% of our income. I want to set aside \$_____ to give to the Lord's work each week.

< TODAY'S WEATHER > (circle one)



< MY MOOD TODAY > (circle one)



< RESPONSE SPACE >

(A place to write responses for page 46)

1) I felt...

I experienced...

High point...

Low point...

2) _____ shows generosity by...

3) Example of generosity...

4) I was generous to...

5) Please, God, help me to...

MY PRAYER: *Dear God...*

MY PLAN FOR MORE OF CHRIST'S GENEROSITY:

< OPEN SPACE >

(A place for new insights, questions, drawings, challenges, hopes, discoveries, etc.)



*He must become greater;
I must become less.*

-JOHN 3:30