

# LIGHT REFLECTIONS

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## He Must Increase

“Among those that are born of women,” the Savior said, “there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28). That is striking praise from the ultimate Source.

We don’t know all the reasons for this soaring commendation,<sup>1</sup> but for me the essence of John the Baptist’s greatness is captured in a single sentence from the Gospel of John. When the Baptist’s followers worried that the Savior’s growing acclaim was eclipsing that of their beloved teacher, John reminded them that the whole purpose of his ministry was to bear witness of One to come who was greater than he.

“He must increase,” John said simply, “but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

Like many of you, I’ve made a few resolutions for the new year. I’ve tried to keep them simple and few in number. I hope I achieve them all. But if I could have the wish of my heart, it would be to live more fully this year the precept of John the Baptist—to increase the Savior’s influence in my life, to lessen the force of my selfish preoccupations and concerns. He must increase; I must decrease.

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Not long after my appointment as AVP, I felt strongly prompted to take a certain course of action. As too often happens, I spent the next several weeks talking myself into doing something different. Just before moving forward with my own alternative course, I began during a Saturday morning temple session to experience what I can only describe as a stupor of thought. There followed an anguished weekend of spiritual wrestling and inward struggle. By Sunday evening, I felt sufficiently chastened and humbled to drop to my knees and offer something like the

following prayer: “What I want doesn’t matter. What others think doesn’t matter. I only want what You want.”

In response, I felt lovingly rebuked to the effect that the Lord had already told me what He wanted and that I was to move forward accordingly. Then came a very clear reminder from the Spirit: “This is not your school, and you are not simply to do in it whatever you see fit.” Duly chastened, I began the next day to implement the course of action I held felt prompted toward weeks earlier, the wisdom of which almost immediately became apparent and continues to be apparent.

I am grateful for the guidance that came on this occasion and perhaps even more grateful for the reminder and the warning. This is the Lord’s school; our students are God’s children. In the discharge of our BYU stewardships, we are accountable to Him and seek to be guided by Him. That is part of what President Reese has called “becoming BYU”—becoming the “Christ-centered, prophetically-directed,” and “fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past.” In that effort, He must increase; all of us must decrease.

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One way for the Savior’s influence to increase in our lives this year is through our collective study of the Book of Mormon in connection with *Come, Follow Me*. In our family, we hope to claim this promise from President Marion G. Romney:

*I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for*

*each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness.*<sup>2</sup>

I believe that the spirit of this great promise can also apply to our campus community. Perhaps we too can banish the spirit of contention and

cultivate faith, hope, and charity by filling our lives and illuminating our classrooms with the Christ-centered messages of the Book of Mormon. As we diligently study the Book of Mormon on our own, and as we share its messianic message with our students, we will more fully keep our “subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel.”<sup>3</sup> We will progress toward becoming the BYU of prophecy. We will help ensure that the Savior’s influence increases—in our lives and in the lives of our students.

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<sup>1</sup> The fullest and most persuasive explanation of which I am aware comes from the Prophet Joseph Smith. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), Chapter 6, “The Mission of John the Baptist.”

<sup>2</sup> Marion G. Romney, “The Book of Mormon,” General Conference, April 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity” in John S. Tanner (ed), *Envisioning BYU: Foundations and Dreams* (Brigham Young University, 2022) 173.