

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Free
of Me



Why Life Is Better When It's
NOT ABOUT YOU

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Introduction

Live your best life.”

Oprah may have popularized the sentiment a decade ago, but now it’s everywhere. Messages urging us to be our best *us* abound on every inspirational corner, from the Hallmark aisle to our Instagram feeds.

We live in a culture that’s simply all about *self*, becoming the best “me” I can be. There is, of course, much value in personal growth. But what the culture *doesn’t* focus on is the ultimate pursuit: becoming like Jesus.

This me-centered message can permeate every area of our lives—our friendships, families, self-image, even faith—and it has the opposite effect it’s meant to: it negatively impacts each part of our lives. The self-focused life robs our joy, shrinks our souls, and is the reason we never quite break free of insecurity.

I want to invite you to take part in a five-part video series and this corresponding workbook based on my book *Free of Me*. Through this series, we’ll explore a bigger, Jesus-centered vision—one that restores our freedom and inspires us to live for more. Let’s enter into this gloriously freeing revelation that life isn’t about me.

Lord, may this study reveal the things that cause self-focus in our lives, and equip us to set our eyes on you and others instead of on ourselves. May it help us seek to discover something bigger than “project me” and to experience freedom from the burden of self-focus and joy in the light of your higher purpose. Amen.

Session 1



Three Myths of Self-Focus

Are you looking for accolades? Are you looking for applause? Are you looking for approval? Are you looking for acceptance? Because those things will kill you. The Devil will make sure you get all of that. Especially early, and especially young, so that you then collapse when you're unapplauded, when you're unapproved, when you're unaccepted, and when you're unwanted.

Christine Caine

This is a story about a woman who didn't realize she had made her life all about her.

She was a woman so focused on her self-image that her relationships with God and others and her attitude toward herself suffered. She maintained perfect social media platforms, volunteered for every church event, and did everything she could to be the "perfect Christian woman." Over time, she became exhausted with trying to maintain the perfect image.

That woman was me. I thought my focus was on God. I was wrong.

If someone were to ask you, "Is your focus on God?" you'd want to answer, "Yes!" right? After all, you probably are deeply faithful and have

an active prayer life—interceding for yourself and your family but also, heartily, for your friends and the people in your circle. And you love God’s Word. You engage in a community of faith. You long to glorify Jesus. It’s all true, no doubt, but what happens when you see a mirror? Do you immediately look at your own reflection or beyond it?

Honestly, we are all more focused on ourselves than we might think. Our self-preoccupation affects everything—our relationships, our jobs, our self-image. We tend to make everything about us, but the reality is that following Christ is *not* about us.

In this first session, let’s open our hearts to the truth that we are more self-focused than we think, and certainly more than we want to be. I’ll introduce what I call the “mirror reflex”—our tendency to look at ourselves in a reflective surface no matter where we are, losing sight of our true purpose. And in this session, we’ll start the journey of what pastor Tim Keller calls “self-forgetfulness.” We’ll start the journey of being *free of me*.

Before watching video 1, read the introduction and chapters 1, 2, and 14 in *Free of Me*.

3. *For many of us, the problem is not that we think poorly about ourselves. The problem is that we can't stop thinking about ourselves. If the root of insecurity is low self-esteem and self-preoccupation, how do you manage insecurity and its causes? To what or whom do you turn, and what messages do you embrace?*

How can you replace those messages that lead to insecurity with ones of self-forgetfulness?
