

Getting Over Yourself: Trading Believe-in-Yourself Religion for Christ-Centered Christianity

By Dean Inserra

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Summary

The contemporary message of the world exhorts us to believe that we are promised and entitled the biggest and best life can possibly offer. As we in missions know, this cuts right across the grain of the necessary missionary posture of self-denial and sacrifice. In this book, Dean Inserra calls believers to reject the hollow calls of personal prosperity, self-focus and self-absorption. The book helps believers learn how to identify this insidious, popular prosperity theology in churches, and examines

its devastating effects on Christians in general. Inserra helps one to learn how to combat prosperity thinking with gospel truth that leads to the abundant life Jesus desires for His people.

Best illustration

"My use of the term 'me-centered' refers to the focus of the theological teaching. Think of the solar system. Humans once believed the earth was at the center of the universe with the sun and stars orbiting around it. We now understand that is not true in the slightest. (At least I hope everyone reading this understands that.) The primary error of the new prosperity theology is that it places the individual in the center of every situation and places God in orbit as a sort of powerful yet controllable satellite." Kindle location 422

Best Idea

"It is impossible to deny oneself until you get over yourself. There is something so much better that God has for His people, and winning in this world is not what He has in mind." Kindle location 301

Best Take Away

"This new teaching (which I'll call 'pop-Christianity' or 'new prosperity theology') is not centered on overnight rags-to-riches stories or immediate physical healing, but rather on the idea that God is 'in my corner' waiting to give me my 'breakthrough.' The new

prosperity gospel comes with the message of 'God-sized dreams' and a 'vision' that God has for your life, which includes finding your 'destiny' and 'reaching your true potential.'" Kindle location 266

Our Recommendation

The book is a good reality check for us to see how much we may have, consciously or unconsciously, bought into selfish "me first" and "me foremost" thinking. If this is not your problem/struggle, it could be a good read for your believing supporters.

Best Quotes

"The 'Jesus' of some American Christians has changed. For many, He's no longer the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, or the Word present at creation and who now reigns over all, or the unique Son of God, co-eternal with the Father. Instead He has become a personal life coach, sent to help us be winners rather than losers in this world." Kindle location 251

"To many professing Christians, Jesus has become a success guru who dispenses positive thoughts to help them get the next big promotion. The victories this Jesus gives do not involve overcoming sin, but rather come through the lens of the American Dream: success, empowerment, motivation, and personal fulfillment." Kindle location 254

"The American church has largely fallen prey to the idea that God being 'for our good' means God is for our worldly good." Kindle location 277

"The 'for you' message is an unofficial theology that functions as if God's reason for existence is ... you." Kindle location 288

"This is the Disney-fication of the Bible: When you believe in Jesus, He makes all your dreams come true. Yes, Jesus saves you from your sins, but He's also like the genie from Aladdin." Kindle location 374

"It is not my plans that need to be actualized but God's Word in my life." Kindle location 383

"In new prosperity gatherings, conviction is usually not tied to realizing one's sin, but rather to realizing you're not being as proactive in pursuing self-care, positive thinking, or ambition as those on stage." Kindle location 436

"Me-centered Christianity is very expressive, but we must take great care as to the content of the worship, because quite possibly, the worst judgment on this side of heaven is to be under the delusion that you are worshipping God, when in reality you are only worshipping a god you created." Kindle location 442

"One cannot be an effective disciple of Jesus Christ and be self-consumed or fixated on earthly things." Kindle location 552

"One of my biggest concerns with the new prosperity gospel is that it suggests we should want the same things after our Christian conversion that we desired before we

knew Christ. These are usually not the visible 'big sins' but the more subtle sins of self-satisfaction, self-focus, self-absorption, etc." Kindle location 553

"But there seems to be an epidemic in my community of people walking away from their marriages, not because they failed to learn the other's love language or didn't balance each other out on their Enneagram, but because the thought of being married to an average man or woman, with average jobs, living in an average house, in an average city, seemed like an unfulfilling and less-than-sufficient life." Kindle location 728

"If you are pursuing contentment as a Christian, it should mean you are after gospel contentment found in Jesus Christ. Paul makes clear this is non-circumstantial. Paul knows that in Christ he has everything he needs." Kindle location 764

"I believe the wishy-washy self-help sermons of so many congregations have given rise to a generation of (what I like to call) 'atheological' congregants. Unlike an atheist, who holds to the non-existence of God, an atheological person believes in God but doesn't know much doctrine or see that as a problem." Kindle location 810

"And herein lies a great concern regarding the success of new prosperity gospel churches. What you win them with, you win them to. The message matters. The emphasis matters. The focus matters. We must not be selling real estate in pits of sand and giving our congregants building materials. We must point them to the rock." Kindle location 983

"I want to win people with a message that would still apply if my church was in a third world country, meeting in secret with nothing more than a single, shared Bible: the message of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and ascended. Because what you win them with, you win them to." Kindle location 1057

"In popular American Christianity, it is common to believe that the whole Bible is about us. We either read ourselves into Bible stories that might be exclusively descriptive of a historic event that has already taken place, or we take a verse completely out of context to claim it as a promise for something unrelated to the original meaning. This method, employed by new prosperity preachers, has been referred to by critics as 'narcigesis.' (The technical term for interpreting meaning from Scripture is 'exegesis.')" Kindle location 1064

"It is difficult to get over yourself when your primary focus is on God's promises of prosperity more than the promise of Christ. Narcigesis comes alive through the preaching of isolated texts to derive a completely new meaning out of a Bible story to fit your circumstances." Kindle location 1083

"The new prosperity gospel positions us as the primary actors and securers of our blessing if we 'activate' our faith in victory. Yet we know the Bible clarifies that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2) and that God is carrying on to completion the good work He started in us (Phil. 1:6)." Kindle location 1205

"Pop-Christianity breeds a desire for God based on what blessings He could give, more than delighting in God Himself. He is the means to a desired end." Kindle location 1257

“Be content to suffer, to die, and to be forgotten.” –NIKOLAUS ZINZENDORF Kindle location 1331

“In an authenticity-driven church, ‘brokenness’ is preferred over ‘sin.’ As a result, the magnitude of our status as sinners is underplayed, and the restorative state of our redemption is not fully realized. The reality is, as a Christian you aren’t a broken mess anymore—you have been washed, renewed, and made righteous.” Kindle location 1588

“Jesus is focused on our hearts. No amount of religious behavior could fool God or hide from Him our real motives. So it’s in our best interest to evaluate our motives ourselves as well. ‘Unholy ambition must be broken, or it will break us.’” Kindle location 1746

“For the unbeliever, this world is the best life will ever be. For the Christian, this world is the worst life will ever be. Jesus had His worst moment to ensure that the best actually is to come for His people.” Kindle location 1768