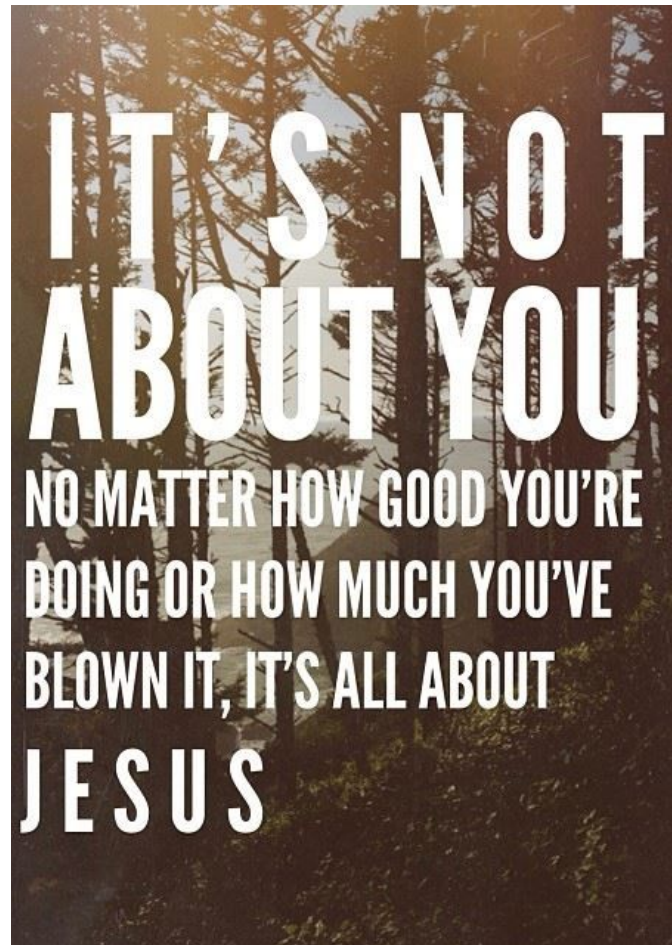


"What you want is what you get." "The customer is always right." "Have it your way." We can barely get out of bed in the morning without being barraged by marketing and advertisements. They all use different approaches, but they have the same goal in mind: your business and your support. To make sure they get your loyalty by catering to you. They want to make you feel special, wanted and important. We are surrounded with voices loudly declaring that they exist to serve us, to meet our needs, to improve our lives. While these big companies and businesses make you feel like they are all about you, the church definitively falls into that category. Here's the hard Truth: There's no 'I' in church. Took me awhile to realize that, the younger me thought everything was all about me. But with church there is no "I."

Not in the spelling. Not in the mission. Not in the purpose. Church doesn't exist to make you or me happy, or meet our needs, or satisfy our desires. If that is how church operates, it's failing to understand why it is here. It is so easy for us to try and put "I" in church without us realizing. We judge the quality of a church by how WE feel about it. I liked the music. I liked the message. I liked the style. We will bring our views, our wants, our goals into the church. Often, people come to church with an agenda, with an expectation that the church, like every other institution we encounter, exists to meet our needs, when it doesn't. The church does not exist to satisfy our desires. The church is not here to make us

feel comfortable. I treated church as something that pandered to my needs and I missed the point that church is about Jesus. It exists for Jesus. You see, it was my impression for so long that church was social club for my entertainment and enjoyment. I had to come to terms with what the real purpose of church was. I needed to see church as God's boot camp for His followers.

Now, of course the church is a place where many of our needs and desires can be met. The danger for us is that we make it all about us, and we miss the reality of what church is. Church is a community of the people of God working together to shape the gospel with the world around us.



When we come to church with a self-centered focus, we are not making God our focus. Just consider how we pray. Most of our prayers are not seeking God's direction, seeking His transformation, desiring to know and submit to Him. Most of our prayers sound like a kid sitting on Santa's lap listing off, all the things they want for Christmas. Our prayers have become: Jesus give me this, Jesus give me that. My friends we need a change of heart and we can start to do that during the Advent season. I wonder if we take the Gospel for granted almost to the point where we don't value it.

We show up to worship, when it's convenient. Engage in community, if we feel like it. Read the Bible, if we have time. We serve, when there's nothing better to do. The Christian life is not about us, it's about letting go of ourselves so we can know, follow, serve, and love Jesus effectively. We are to be devoted to Christ. Jesus doesn't need us. He graciously offers us the opportunity to be a part of what He is doing. In His goodness and love God allows us to participate in His redemptive work in the world. He lets us be a part of His transformative work.