the me I want to be
participant’s guide
» becoming God’s best version of you
five sessions

john ortberg
with scott rubin
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Session ONE

Discovering the Spirit

»
Discovering the Spirit

Your flourishing is never just about you. It is a “so that” kind of condition. God designed you to flourish “so that” you could be part of his redemptive project in ways that you otherwise could not. He wants you to flourish “so that” people can be encouraged, gardens can be planted, music can be written, sick people can be helped, or companies can thrive in ways they otherwise would not. When you fail to become the person God designed, all the rest of us miss out on the gift you were made to give.

*The Me I Want to Be*, ch. 2

**DVD Teaching Notes**

*As you watch the session one video teaching segment, featuring John Ortberg, take notes below on anything that stands out to you. An outline has been provided to help you follow along.*

Flourishing means becoming “you-ier” — restored, not exchanged; living up to your full potential!
SESSION ONE

“Counterfeit” versions of me that I sometimes choose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “me” I pretend to be</th>
<th>I try to convince people I am important while secretly fearing I am not.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The “me” I think I should be</td>
<td>I have a need to try to be someone I’m not, often motivated by comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” other people want me to be</td>
<td>I don’t feel free to be myself; I follow others’ agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” I’m afraid God wants</td>
<td>I lack trust in God’s love and plan; I equate spiritual maturity with trying hard to follow the Bible’s rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” that fails to be</td>
<td>I’m missing mental and emotional vitality, and my soul is weary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the best version of me is . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “me” I’m meant to be</th>
<th>I am fully alive inside . . . and growing!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
DVD Group Discussion

1. Of the five versions of counterfeit “me’s” noted in the chart on page 10, which one do you think you most gravitate toward? Why? What circumstances in your life affect this tendency?

2. God is highly concerned about you reaching your full potential — and he doesn’t get discouraged in the process. John Ortberg says that we cannot follow God if we don’t trust he really has our best interests at heart. Can you relate to this thought? Why or why not?

3. Where have you seen F.T.T. (failure to thrive) in the world? How about in your own life?
4. If someone were to ask you how your spiritual life is going, what factors would you consider in your response? How would you go about assessing yourself?

In *The Me I Want to Be*, Ortberg says that a wise man suggested answering this spiritual life assessment by responding to two questions:

- Am I growing more easily discouraged these days?
- Am I growing more easily irritated these days?

How would you answer these questions today? And from your answers, how would you gauge your spiritual life?

5. If flourishing is being full of joy, peace, and curiosity and possessing an openness to learning and a desire to lean into challenges, then the opposite—languishing—would mean lacking mental and emotional vitality and being uneasy, full of discontent, and self-focused. On a continuum, where would you place yourself between flourishing and languishing most of the time?
DISCOVERING THE SPIRIT

Have you ever thought of yourself as too young, too old, or too ______________________ (fill in the blank) to flourish? Is there any shift you need to make in your own perspective?

Group Bible Exploration

1. Have you ever undertaken a home improvement or restoration project? What was the end result? (Very briefly share your responses.)

In restoring or fixing something, we can experience its full effectiveness and its full magnificence.

Read together 2 Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Becoming a new creation doesn't mean becoming completely different but, as Ortberg explains, being “restored to [our] intended beauty.” What holds you back from leaning into becoming all God intended you to be? How does your hesitation in that area affect those around you?
SESSION ONE

2. Read together Psalm 92:12–13:

| The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. |

God is interested in your individual restoration and growth. If you were an acorn, God would not want or expect you to become a rosebush . . . he designed acorns to become oak trees. Flourishing is becoming more of what God made you to be.

Is there something you’re trying to be that God did not design you for? Have you given up (consciously or not) on some God-given dreams? What experiences, thoughts, or reasons have contributed to that?

3. Joy is a gift that God gives us when we are flourishing . . . and in step with the Holy Spirit. Read together 1 Peter 1:8:

| Though you have not seen him [Jesus], you love him . . . and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. |

14
Have you ever experienced this kind of “inexpressible and glorious joy” that Peter describes? How would others describe your joy factor? What would be their evidence?

4. Rest is another factor in becoming who God made you to be. Rest is important enough that even God rested when he created the world. And Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:29 that he desires us to find rest. Read together his words:

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

What are some ways you receive rest, rejuvenation, and vitality from God that allow you to flourish? How would your calendar from the last few weeks or months reflect your engagement in these practices?
SESSION ONE

5. Imagine that you are wandering in the desert and desperately need water. What words would you use to describe your feelings upon finding it?

Read together Psalm 42:1:

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

Why do you think the psalmist chose this picture to illustrate his longing for God?
Tell about a time when you experienced this desperate, need-God-to-survive kind of desire. What would it take for you to experience a deep longing for God as a regular part of your life?

In Closing

As you wrap up your group study, close in prayer. Ask God to help each member of your group to identify the “me” they sometimes struggle with . . . and to take steps to flourish and become the “me” God intended. Pray for God’s promptings this week to be strong in each person’s life—and that they’d have the courage to follow them.

Before your next meeting, complete the “On Your Own Between Sessions” section that begins on page 18. Consider starting the next group meeting by sharing together what you learned from this individual exercise.
On Your Own Between Sessions

Look back at the “counterfeit me” chart on page 10. On a piece of paper or in a journal, make a chart (see the example below) listing the “counterfeit me” options. During the next few days, keep that chart with you and periodically monitor your “me-ness” by checkmarking the appropriate “counterfeit me” when you notice it in different situations. Jot notes about the circumstances that might have influenced the “me” you were being. After a few days, observe any patterns that emerge.

**EXAMPLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Counterfeit Me” Options</th>
<th>How Often</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The “me” I pretend to be</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>I keep doing this when I am around one particular coworker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Why does my neighbor make me feel like I need to pretend?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” I think I should be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” other people want me to be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” I’m afraid God wants</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td>I lack trust when it comes to following God’s promptings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “me” that fails to be</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>I am so tired—the baby woke up three times last night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With God’s help, reflect on this list and your tendencies and patterns. Do you see the gap between the counterfeit you that you sometimes choose and the you God made you to be? How often are you tempted to pretend that gap doesn’t exist—that you are spiritually more mature or “in the flow of the Spirit” than you really are?

In The Message paraphrase of the Bible, Paul writes, “Rule-keeping does not naturally evolve into living by faith, but only perpetuates itself in more and more rule-keeping” (Galatians 3:12). Closing the gap doesn’t come from following the rules . . . or trying harder to be good. The gap—moving from the counterfeit you to the you that you want to be—can only be filled through God’s grace, and by living in the flow of the Spirit. What would it look like if you were to give grace to yourself when you aren’t flourishing and being the me you want to be?

As you reflect on this exercise, list three specific ways you can grow in battling the counterfeits and becoming the “me you were meant to be.”

1.

2.

3.

Recommended Reading

In preparation for session two, you may want to read chapters 7 – 10 of the book The Me I Want to Be, by John Ortberg. To review what you studied in session one, you also may want to read chapters 1 – 6.