

The Life You've Always Wanted

John Ortberg

Chapter 1— We shall morph indeed—The Hope of Transformation

- 1. John Ortberg said (page 18) that the possibility of spiritual transformation can happen when we “turn aside”— to interrupt the daily routine to pay attention to the presence of God. What were the circumstances and the result of Moses “turning aside”?**

- 2. Describe a time when you slowed down to “turn aside” to see what God was doing. What were the circumstances and what impact did that have on your life?**

- 3. Romans 12:2 says that we should “be transformed by the renewing of our minds.” Colossians 3:5 says we are to “put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature.” Colossians 3:12 says we should clothe ourselves with certain things. What is one area of your life you want to see God transform this year (take off/negative or put on/positive)?**

- 4. John gives us a story about Mable (pages 22-26), an elderly woman who was bedridden for almost 25 years. Though blind and nearly deaf, she was a staggering example of the power of Jesus to transform. Tell about a person in your life who exemplifies the power of Jesus to bring beautiful and lasting change?**

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Chapter 2— Surprised by Change—The Goal of Spiritual Life

- 1. What does John Ortberg mean by “pseudo-transformation” and “boundary-marker spirituality” (pages 30 & 31)?**

- 2. Describe a time in your life when you, someone you knew, or a church you knew exhibited this “pseudo-transformation” and “boundary-marker spirituality. What were its damaging effects?**

- 3. According to pages 30 and 32, what are the true marks of a person that has genuine transformation? How can we tell if a person has experienced spiritual transformation?**

- 4. Pages 35 to 39 gives us five questions to help us know if we are settling for pseudo-transformation or not. Read over carefully the following warning signs Jesus gave us. Is there any one area that you feel you really need to work on?**
 - a. Am I spiritually “inauthentic”?**
 - b. Am I becoming judgmental or exclusive or proud?**
 - c. Am I becoming more approachable or less?**
 - d. Am I growing weary of pursuing spiritual growth?**
 - e. Am I measuring my spiritual life in superficial ways?**

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Chapter 3—Training vs. Trying—The Truth about Spiritual Disciplines

1. What makes something a discipline? What makes something a **spiritual** discipline?
Pages 47, 48

2. What are the five signs of wise spiritual training? pages 50-57
Fill in the sentences and explain what you understand each one means.
 - a. Wise training respects _____

 - b. Wise training respects _____

 - c. Wise training will take _____

 - d. Wise training respects _____

 - e. Wise training begins _____

3. Of all the spiritual disciplines, give one that you feel is very important to you, but yet find it difficult to do? Explain please. The spiritual disciplines are: meditation, prayer, fasting, study, Scripture memory, simplicity, solitude, silence, submission, service, confession, worship, and celebration.

4. Of all you have read in Chapter Three, what words, ideas, or paragraph especially spoke to you? Explain

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Chapter 4— A “Dee Dah Day”—The Practice of Celebration

1. Read the paragraph by Dallas Willard on page 66. The sentence following says, “We must arrange life so that sin no longer looks good.” On 1/22/1999 at a Willow Creek coach’s retreat Dallas Willard said “We need to get a place in our lives where we not only don’t miss sin and don’t find it attractive, but also find a joyful and attractive life style we would never trade for the old life. When we think “Sin looks good”, we are looking through the world’s perverted view. **What are some actions we can take to find a joyful and attractive life style and at the same time loosen ourselves from sin’s seduction and power?**
2. What is the most joyful event you have ever witnessed or which you have ever participated? What made it meaningful to you?
3. Philippians 4:4 says “Always be full of joy in the Lord.” NLT I Thessalonians 5:16 says, “Be joyful always.” Where would your closest friends say you are in terms of your joy-quotient? On a scale of 1 to 10, where do you feel you are on the joy spectrum, a joy-killer being 1 and a joy-carrier being 10? If you need to grow in your joy, what do you think you can do to be a better joy-carrier?
4. Of all you have read in Chapter 4, what words, ideas, or paragraph especially spoke to you? Explain

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Chapter 5—An Unhurried Life—The Practice of Slowing.

- 1. John Ortberg writes, “Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. Hurry can destroy our souls. Hurry can keep us from living well.” How have you experienced the destructive power of hurry in your life? Please describe.**
- 2. List and describe some symptoms of hurry sickness. Pages 79-83**
- 3. What are two practices we can do to cure hurry sickness? pages 83-90**
- 4. Read Luke 10:38-42 about Jesus visiting Mary and Martha in Bethany. Who had hurry sickness in this passage? Describe Martha’s actions including both the good and bad. Talk about what Mary did and Jesus commendation of her.**
- 5. If you were to take this exhortation with all seriousness, “to be spiritually healthy, you must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life,” what is one thing you would need to change in your life so you could slow down?**

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Chapter 6—Interrupting Heaven: The Practice of Prayer

- 1. Describe a time you prayed and saw clear and definite results. How did this answered prayer spur you on to pray more passionately?**

- 2. Do you have a daily prayer time? Regular time & place?
What pattern do you follow in your prayer time?
Do you have a list of names and requests written down that you can refer to as you pray?
What are one or two changes you should make to your prayer time to make it better?**

- 3. James 5:16b says, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” Look at two examples of intercessory prayers and note what made them powerful and effective.**
 - 1. Nehemiah 1:4-11**

 - 2. Acts 12:5-17**

- 4. Read the following verses about prayer. List the element mentioned in the verse that would make your prayers more powerful and effective.**
 - 1. Matthew 7:7, 8**

 - 2. Matthew 21:22**

 - 3. I John 5:14, 15**

 - 4. John 15:7**

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Chapter 7—Appropriate Smallness, The Practice of Servanthood

- 1. What are three ways pride can show up in our lives?
Pages 109-110**
- 2. What is humility according to pages 112 and Romans 12:3?**
- 3. In pages 118-126, John mentions five ministries to help us to live a life of servanthood. Please list and explain. Of the five ministries mentioned, which one do you find most Challenging? Why?**
- 4. Why does Paul say in I Corinthians 4:7 we should not boast about our differing characteristics and abilities?**

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Chapter 8—Life Beyond Regret: The Practice of Confession

- 1. What are two things that happen when we practice confession? Page 130**

- 2. How have you experienced the liberating power of confession? Describe a time when you hurt someone through a sinful choice, humbly confessed, and saw God bring healing and restoration.**

- 3. James 5:16 say, “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” Has there been a time in your life when you have confessed a sin to another person(not the person you sinned against) and had them to pray for you? If so, describe the experience without giving the details about the sin.**

- 4. If there a particular sin in your life that you have privately confessed to God but are still unable to feel forgiveness from God or unable to forget the sin you have committed? If so, are you willing to go to a trusted friend and put into practice what James 5:16 instructs?**

- 5. Psalms 139:23, 24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive say in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Do you make self-examination and confession a daily part of your Daily Connection Time?**

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Chapter 9—The Guided Life: Receiving Guidance from the Holy Spirit

- 1. How can we discern whether God is speaking to us or whether what you are hearing is coming from a source other than God? What are ways that God speaks to us today? Psalm 119:105**

- 2. Tell about a time when God was speaking to you and trying to get your attention, but it took a long time for you to tune in and realize God was seeking to move you. What finally got your attention and helped you recognize that God was speaking to you?**

- 3. On pages 153-155 John Ortberg tells the story of how God spoke to him on a number of occasions through a dear woman named Lorraine. Tell about a time you heard God speak to you through the words of another person. How did you respond to this leading or prompting?**

- 4. What are some of the things that get in the way of you being attentive to God? What practices, habits, or disciplines could you learn or practice to be more able to hear God?**

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Chapter 10—A life of Freedom: The Practice of Secrecy

1. *True spiritual maturity sets us free from the bondage of approval addiction. It sets us free from the need to congratulate ourselves when we've gotten something right.*

Approval addiction means we are motivated to impress others, to seek their applause and approval. It is the opposite of living as Jesus would live in our place. Acts done to impress others are a form of pride and have no value as spiritual training. But by practicing the discipline of secrecy—doing good things for people but not saying anything about it—we can be released from bondage to approval addiction.

Think about the people by whose judgment you measure your success or failure: parents, teachers, neighbors, coworkers, boss, fellow church members, members of your peer group, etc. How much influence do they really wield over you? What are some “secret” things you could do for them?

2. **John writes about our human tendency to “confuse our performance in some aspect of life with our worth as a person.” What are some of the most common areas of life that people tend to use as a measure of their personal worth? What areas of performance are you most tempted to use as a measure of your worth and what are you doing to fight the tendency?**
3. **Jesus actually recommended what John Ortberg calls the practice of secrecy, which helps us gain freedom from approval addiction. Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 and write down the examples Jesus used. Also compare the reward he said will come when we follow or reject his instruction.**
4. **We often think we're pretty clever about disguising our pride. What are some of the ways we try to impress people without letting on that we're trying to impress them?**

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Chapter 11— The Undivided Life—The Practice of Reflection on Scripture

1. James 1:8 says, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” John Ortberg said that double-mindedness is to regard a life of divided loyalties. Jesus said, “You cannot serve two masters(Matthew 6:24).” Again he said, “Seek first his kingdom and righteousness(Matthew 6:33).”
Christ and his kingdom must have our supreme loyalty. **What area(s) of your life do you find (have you found) competing with your desire to be fully devoted to Christ?**
2. According to the quote by Clifford Williams on page 177, **give the characteristics of a person who has simplicity of heart. What did John Ortberg say we need to do to have simplicity of heart(page 178)?**
3. **What is one passage in the Bible that has sunk deep into your heart and how has this portion of Scripture brought transformation in your life?**
4. **Of all you have read in Chapter 11, what words, ideas, or paragraph especially spoke to you? Explain**

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Chapter 12— Life with a Well-ordered Heart: Developing your own Rule of Life.

1. **“In the Bible, names often reflect a person’s character. So to do something in in Jesus’ name means to do it in a way consistent with his character—to do it in a way Jesus himself would.”**
Colossians 3:17 says, **“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of Jesus.”** We need to ask the Lord to use this verse to change the way we live. If we lived our lives doing everything in his name how would that change our lives? Please complete the following sentences.
 - a. To wake up in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - b. To greet the closest members of my family in the morning in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - c. To drive my car in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - d. To watch TV in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - e. To work in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - f. To spend money in Jesus’ name I would _____
 - g. To use the internet in Jesus’ name I would _____
2. **Of all the activities listed above, which one do you find the most difficult to do in Jesus’ name? What practical steps can you take to more reflect the heart of Christ?**
3. **John Ortberg (on page 201) gives examples of five questions we can ask ourselves as we begin to establish a “rule of life. Choose one of these questions and describe how you are presently developing in this area of your spiritual growth.**

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Chapter 13—Life of Endurance: The Experience of Suffering

- 1. John Ortberg uses the analogy of the marathon with the Christian life. He talks about how that after running a good portion of the marathon runners speak of the experience of “hitting the wall”. He says, “To run at this stage—to hit the wall and keep going—is the ultimate test of a runner. Races are won or lost, completed or abandoned, at ‘the wall’.” Has there been a time in your life when you “hit the wall”? Did you stop or keep going? Please think and write out carefully what your strategy should be the next time you “hit the wall”.**
- 2. We all face times of struggle and pain. In James 1:2-4, What counsel does the Apostle James give us that will help us through these rough times? What does he say are the spiritual benefits of such trials? Have you ever had a trial in your life where you experienced joy while you were in the midst of the trial? Explain**
- 3. A large part of Chapter 13 talks about the testing of Abraham on Mount Moriah where God told Abraham to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him on the altar. God wanted to test Abraham to see if he loved God more than Isaac and would be willing to obey him and trust him. Thinking of your life right now, is there an “Isaac” that might be in competition with Christ for your heart? If so, have you surrendered your Isaac to God?**
- 4. In I Peter 2:20-21, what is one of the callings we have as Christians? What is the promise God gives us when we go through suffering? I Peter 5:10**