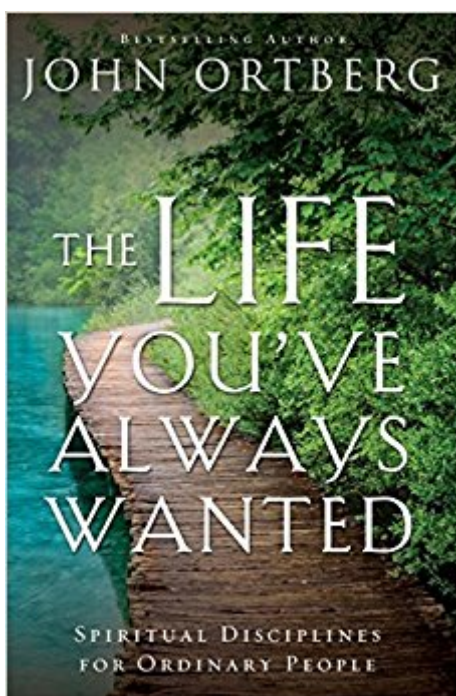


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# The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines For Ordinary People



## Synopsis

You can live a deeper, more spiritual life right where you are. The heart of Christianity is transformation—a relationship with God that impacts not just our spiritual lives but every aspect of our daily lives. John Ortberg calls readers back to the dynamic heartbeat of Christianity—God’s power to bring change and growth—and reveals how and why transformation takes place. The Life You’ve Always Wanted offers modern perspectives on the ancient path of the spiritual disciplines. But it is more than just a book about things to do to be a good Christian. It’s a road map toward true transformation that starts not with the individual but with the person at the journey’s end—Jesus Christ. As with a marathon runner, the secret to finishing a race lies not in trying harder, but in training consistently—training with the spiritual disciplines. The disciplines are neither taskmasters nor ends in themselves. Rather they are exercises that build strength and endurance for the road of growth. The fruit of the Spirit—joy, peace, kindness, etc.—are the signposts along the way. Paved with humor and sparkling anecdotes, The Life You’ve Always Wanted is an encouraging and challenging approach to a Christian life that’s worth living—a life on the edge that fills an ordinary world with new meaning, hope, change, and joy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

‘What John learned is transferable to all of us ordinary people---because all his truths are from the Bible. His transparency, honesty, and ability to laugh at himself will show you, his reader, how you, too, have this God-given potential [for change] in you.’ -- Evelyn Christenson, Author  
John Ortberg takes Jesus’ call to abundant living seriously, joyfully, and realistically. He believes human

transformation is genuinely possible, and he describes its process in sane and practical ways.' -- Richard J. Foster, Author 'A readable, helpful study of things that Christians have practiced for centuries that modern people need to apply today.' -- D. Stewart Briscoe, Elmbrook Church 'John, in his winsome 'let's sit down and talk about this' style, has crafted a powerfully convicting book on the process of spiritual transformation.' -- Dr. Joseph Stowell, Moody Bible Institute 'John Ortberg opens to us the age-old wisdom of the spiritual disciplines. In a practical, witty, and deeply insightful way, he not only creates in us a hunger for transformation, but paints a brilliantly attractive picture of the life that God can live through us.' -- Archibald D. Hart, Ph.D., Professor --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

You Can Live a Deeper, More Spiritual Life Right Where You Are. An expanded edition with a new chapter on prayer and discussion questions The heart of Christianity is transformation---a relationship with God that impacts not just our 'spiritual lives,' but every aspect of living. John Ortberg calls readers back to the dynamic heartbeat of Christianity---God's power to bring change and growth---and reveals both the how and why of transformation. With a new chapter on prayer and added discussion questions, this expanded edition of *The Life You've Always Wanted* offers modern perspectives on the ancient path of the spiritual disciplines. But this is more than just a book about things to do to be a good Christian. It's a road map toward true transformation that starts not with the individual but with the object of the journey---Jesus Christ. As with a marathon runner, the secret to winning the race lies not in trying harder, but in training consistently---training with the spiritual disciplines. The disciplines are neither taskmasters nor an end in themselves. Rather they are exercises that build strength and endurance for the road of growth. The fruit of the Spirit---joy, peace, kindness, etc.---are the signposts along the way. Paved with humor and sparkling anecdotes, *The Life You've Always Wanted* is an encouraging and challenging approach to a Christian life that's worth living---a life on the edge that fills an ordinary world with new meaning, hope, change, and joy. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

From the first sentence, I identified personally with Ortberg. I felt as though he wrote from personal experience of my own life and struggles with spiritual disciplines, especially the last six months. So, I don't have a single negative thing to say about this book. I'm biased, I admit it. But, I'd recommend this to any person who feels burdened by the guilt of 'failing' at spiritual discipline or who feels lost looking for ways to grow. This refreshing book is a map leading to practical, actually doable disciplines. It opens your eyes to the freedom that is found in Christ from burdensome spiritual

transformation. It points the way to life enjoying Jesus, following Him as well as you can, and turning around to see that you've come farther than you ever thought possible. He describes the life you've always wanted, and it really is.

John Ortberg (2002), through his book, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, is attempting to answer the age old question, "how do I become Christ-like?" or as the once popular acronym once asked, "WWJD?" Rather than just accepting that salvation is the "minimal entrance requirement for getting into heaven" (Ortberg, p 29), the author contends that salvation is about living a glorious human life - now, on earth. He describes the process of becoming a person who lives victoriously and Christ-like as morphing, and describes the pre-morphed life as one of disappointment and guilt. Ortberg confesses his life disappointments which are common to most of us - desiring to be a better parent, spouse, and Christian. Rather than just trying to act like a better person or doing the right things, Ortberg suggest that the morphing process will make us want to do the right things and make us be a better person. In making his assessment of the current state of the church, Ortberg (2002) quotes William Iverson who wrote: "A pound of meat would surely be affected by a quarter pound of salt." (p. 33.) He contends that Christians are not bringing about the changes in the world that Jesus spoke about and concludes that it is because very few people actually morph into the Chris-like beings we are instructed to become. Ortberg reveals that the reason Christians are not worth their salt in the earth, is that we have been trying instead of training. He points to the disciplines of studying the Bible, prayer, being joyful, and unhurried as training methods that must be practiced in daily life. He also includes a section on servant hood, and confession before he sums it all up with a discussion on the role of the Holy Spirit as He leads us into transformation. The book ends with a chapter on suffering which deals with coming to terms with unanswered prayers and persevering through our suffering.

I was assigned to read this book for my REL 105 class and I am so grateful. I loved the book. Refreshing. Enlightening. Helpful. Good Perspective on how to intentionally live every day from one's heart ... not before man (as if performing for acceptance + significance) but before God alone as one's friend. There is so much in this book to feast on.

Reading through several books on Christian spirituality recently, I have been surprised to find that there are very few good ones written by Evangelical authors. This is one of the few. Ortburg is open about the fact that the Evangelical tradition has yet to find its feet as far as spirituality is concerned.

And yet there is a depth and richness of spiritual practices to be drawn from our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Ortberg begins by writing on the idea of spirituality and transformation in general. He says: "Because by and large we do not expect people to experience ongoing transformation, we are not led to question whether perhaps the standard prescriptions for spiritual growth being given in the church are truly adequate to lead people into a transformed way of life." Chapter 3 gets the focus right, it's about training more than trying. No one questions the wisdom of taking regular physical exercise if you want a healthy body, so what about regular spiritual exercise if you want a healthy spirit? Sounds simple! The remaining chapters one by one present practices such as celebration, prayer, reflection and confession. I plan to make use of this book and the included study guide as I lead small communities. The communities we plant out are only ever going to be as deep as the communities we are part of. I have the kindle version, which is very well set out and includes a helpful study guide.

What a gift! I value the advice presented in a clear, interesting and sometimes funny way. This advice will save your soul- take it seriously! Plan to get it for dear friends.

This is simply one of the best resources on Spiritual Disciplines I have encountered since Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline. "For ordinary people" is right on. I don't know how Ortberg does it, but he did, with a large dose of the Holy Spirit in him and through him. The book is well researched with great quotes and background from the best of the best the Christian tradition has had to offer on the topic of Spiritual Disciplines - Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and many others. You can tell John has lived his faith. He is honest and transparent with his failings and victories in the area of his disciplines. It is now on my "must read" list for those who ask "What should I be reading to grow my relationship with God. I've purchased 8 copies and gave them out to 8 people to read to evaluate the book for a small group curriculum we are developing. Every single one commented that they loved the word pictures and illustrations, Ortberg's honesty and transparency, and how accessible, real, and "reasonable" he makes the spiritual disciplines out to be. All of a sudden, growing deeper in my relationship with God has become more doable. ALL 8 commented what a great book this is and are extremely glad they were asked to read it for this project.

Perfect book for the person looking to grow in their walk with God. Great and simple ways to challenge yourself and those around you.

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