

Sermon Outline Three
The Energizing Impact of Scripture
[read *TMIWTB* chapters 11-14]

Introduction: John Ortberg tells the story of a woman in Ethiopia. She lived in a rural village hut, was blind, was 99 years old and illiterate. She did have two Bibles: one in Amheric and one in English. People of the village would regularly come and read to her. She heard the words so often and thought about them so much that she committed most of them to memory. People would come from the villages miles around to hear her recite? What would cause healthy people come to a blind, aged, illiterate woman? Because her mind was renewed. Her hut became an outpost of the kingdom of God and people came because they wanted what she had—the mind of Christ. She became “the me I want to be.” We know that Jesus’ life and ministry was shaped by Scripture. The early church was deeply devoted to Scripture. We will learn how to get out of a “chore” mentality and into a “delight” mentality regarding the personal reading of Scripture. Let’s explore the energizing role of Scripture in our journey to personal and church-wide transformation.

- I. The Habitual Patterns of Your Thoughts Determine What Kind of Person You Will Be. Romans 12:2
 - A. The transformation of our lives begins with the renewing of our minds.
 - B. Without aiming for the renewing of our deepest, habitual patterns of thoughts, we will not become “the me I want to be.”
 - C. Jesus very clearly illustrated this truth with a simple metaphor. Matthew 12:33-36
 - 1. Whatever is in us, good or bad, will leak out.
 - 2. We cannot cover up our character by acting spiritual.

In *TMIWTB*, 146-152 lists the good and bad, the strengths and weaknesses, of nine personality types. We need Scripture to help us see the dark side of ourselves honestly. This will provoke us to seek God and personal transformation with intensity.

- II. The Human Mind Apart from God Drifts to Chaos. Romans 1:21
“...their thinking became futile...their foolish hearts were darkened...”
 - A. The human mind goes bad and resists good.

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- B. Social science research mirrors the Word of God that the human mind left to himself drifts to chaos.

A leading researcher in mind and consciousness in our time, Michael Csikszentmihalyi, writes, “Contrary to what we assume, the normal state of the mind is chaos... When we are left alone, with no demands on attention, the basic disorder of the mind reveals itself.” --quoted by John Ortberg

- C. We put the worse criminals in solitary confinement and a disobedient child in “time out”: both are left alone with their thoughts.

III. The Mind Fixed on God Can Transcend Any Circumstance.
1 Corinthians 2:16 “...but we have the mind of Christ...”

A young girl shut up in a prison cell could have no visitor, possessions, information or freedom. On her cell wall were the words of Psalm 27. She began to read it over and over, over a 1000 times. She began to want it, believe it, experience it. She was filled with delight. A prison cell which is hell to a mind shut up with itself can become, by grace, an outpost of the kingdom of heaven.

- A. The mind fixed on God through Scripture makes us a free person.
Philippians 2:5
- B. The mind fixed on God through Scripture operates for the good and we start becoming “the me I want to be.”
1. We find ourselves worshiping God
 2. We find ourselves serving others

Application: *I will have to form an intention to have my mind shaped by Scripture.*

- Make time
- Remove distractions
- Ask God for the love to learn. We were made to learn (curiosity).
- Read a passage of Scripture (example, Psalm 1).
- Ponder every phrase imagining that you are in the verses.
- Listen to Scripture on Tape/CD (ex., CDs “The Bible Experience”).
- Take a class on “How to read/study the Bible” [should be available].