

**Sermon Outline Five**  
Up to the Challenge  
[read *TMIWTB* chapters 19-22]

Introduction: We have to face life with all the challenges that it brings. John Ortberg finds that difficult. John tells the story about the time he and Nancy were sleeping and Nancy elbowed him in the ribs and asked loudly, “What’s that sound?!” John responded, having to shout over the loud beeping, “What sound?” Nancy said, “That tremendously loud beeping sound!” “O, that sound,” John said. “I’ll go find out.” He came back later and said it was the smoke detector, but he took the battery out to stop the sound. “You just can’t do that. There might be a fire somewhere,” she said. John countered, “Nancy, there’s no smoke. I sniffed. No smoke.” John had an early breakfast appointment and as he left home he wondered why his hall lights and garage opener did not work. While at the restaurant, a server told him, “Your wife called. She wants you home. Your house is on fire.” There were fire trucks everywhere putting out the fire. A bird’s nest in the chimney casing smoldered and caught fire. The fire started behind the walls and caused unbelievable damage. John said, “I’m pretty sure the bird was a crow because that’s all I ate for the next 12 years.” We all face challenges. God uses challenges to transform us into “the me I want to be.” As we’ve seen, there is a gap between our current me and the vision God has us of us- the me I want to be. *That gap is a challenge.* We’re not called to judge the gap. There are only two ways to bridge the gap: pull the vision toward reality, that is, lower our vision and aspirations, or, pull reality toward the vision. There is tension in the gap produce energy to move toward Jesus. The Spirit enhances the energy compels toward “the me I want to be.”

**Our greatest challenge is grow deeper with God in our spiritual lives.**

Psalm 39:4-7

- A. We must face how fleeting our lives are.
- B. What will we give our lives for—wealth, security, success?
- C. We must desire for God’s vision to be fulfilled in our lives.  
Philippians 3:10-11

**The gap between our current “me” and “the me I want to be” energizes us.**

Philippians 2:12-13

- A. We progress in stages toward the vision—spiritual seekers, then believers in Jesus, followers of Jesus, and companions of Jesus.
- B. We will face obstacles and temptations on the journey.

God isn’t at work producing the circumstances you want. God is at work in bad circumstances producing the you he wants. *TMIWTB*, 232

Sermon Outline Five: You: A Dangerous Person

- C. Based on the Caleb story, we have to “know our mountain.”  
Joshua 14:10-12 “We are wired to grow through challenges.”

*The Spirit wants to make you a dangerous person. The Spirit wants to make you threatening to all the forces of injustice and apathy and complacency that keep our world from flourishing. The Spirit wants to make you dangerously noncompliant in a broken world.*

--John Ortberg

**Spiritual friendships and mentors are key to becoming “the me I want to be.”**

Philippians 3:17 Is our life a pattern for others? We all need help.

- A. We need to know others and be known in deeply committed relationships.
- B. We need the love and accountability that small groups provide as we grow into “the me I want to be.”
- C. We need those to listen when we pour out our heart saying, “Above all, I want God’s vision for my life.”

**Application:** [the pastor can tell the story of “Granny Brand” from *TMIWTB*, 244. Paul, Granny Brand’s son, said this about his mother:

*This is how to grow old. Allow everything else to fall away until all those around you see only love.*

“These three remain: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.”

When all is said and done, what do you want to be remembered for?