Participant’s Guide
Trading Your If Only Regrets for God’s What If Possibilities

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Introduction

If.

It’s a tiny two-letter word, but it’s pregnant with possibilities.

There are 1,784 if’s in the Bible. Most of those if’s function as conditional conjunctions on the front end of God’s promises. If we meet the condition, God delivers on the promise! So all that stands between your current circumstances and your wildest dreams is one little if.

One little if can change everything.
One little if can change anything.

For the next four weeks, we’re going to study four if’s:

1. If only regrets
2. As if faith
3. What if dreams
4. No ifs, ands, or buts about it courage

If you stop and think about it, everything begins with if.

Every achievement, from the Nobel Prize to the Oscars, begins with what if? Every dream, from landing a man on the moon to the
moon pies created to commemorate it, begins with *what if?* Every breakthrough, from the internet to iTunes, begins with *what if?*

So here’s the question: What’s your *what if?*

What gets you up early in the morning? What keeps you up late at night? What breaks your heart or makes your heart skip a beat? What puts a smile on your face? What makes you shed a tear? Those tears are clues. If you follow that trail of tears, it will lead you to your *what if.* So will the smile lines.

Think of this study as a jigsaw puzzle. Each session will reveal one piece of the puzzle. By the time we’re done, you’ll see the picture on the box top—your unique *what if.*
Session 1

If Only

Before watching Session 1 of the If DVD, read chapters 1–7 in If.
Read, pray, and meditate on Romans 8:1–4:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Write down your personal reflections.

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Mark Batterson, If Participant’s Guide
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Session 1

WHAT IF TIP

What if you read Romans 8 in several different translations? Check out the parallel feature on Biblehub.com. Try reading various translations side by side.
WATCH SESSION 1, PART 1

VIDEO NOTES

Watch the video for Session 1, Part 1. As you watch the video, use the following space to take notes.

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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Do you have a favorite coffeehouse? A favorite caffeinated drink of choice?

2. *If* opens with a story about Mark’s life goal #102. Do you have a life goal list? Why or why not?

3. John Piper calls Romans 8 the greatest chapter in the Bible. Do you agree? What is your favorite chapter? Favorite verse?
4. Mark relates how Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, reflected on the opportunity of a lifetime:

“This is my moment, I thought. If I don’t seize the opportunity, if I don’t step out of my comfort zone and risk it all, if I let too much time tick on, my moment will pass. I knew that if I didn’t take advantage of this opportunity, I would replay it in my mind for my whole life, wondering: What if?”

Have you ever had a what if moment like that? Did you miss it or seize it?

5. The word opportunity comes from the Latin phrase ob portu. It was a nautical term that referred to the moment in time when the tide would turn. If a ship missed the turning of the tide, they’d have to wait for another tide to come in to ride into the harbor. Have you missed any opportunities that you regret?
6. One of Mark’s maxims is this: *Don’t seek opportunity—seek God, and then opportunity will seek you.* Are you seeking God first? Or are you seeking opportunity first?

7. What’s your *what if*? Do you have a God-ordained passion or God-given dream that you’d be willing to share with the group?