

if 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 *ifs* in the Bible. Most of those *ifs* 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.

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For the next four weeks, we're going to study four *ifs*:

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*.

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.

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?¹

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?