



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Even If / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

Everything changes but some things never change.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students find the confidence to face even the scariest changes by focusing on the God who is bigger than all they may face.

WEEK 3 BOTTOM LINE

You can have courage, even if . . .

SCRIPTURE

- *Numbers 13:27-28 NIV*
 - *Numbers 13:33 KJV*
 - *Numbers 14:7-9 NIV*
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TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and teaching points that are bolded in this script are also provided as slides in your weekly "Teaching" folder.

OPTIONAL VIDEOS

*OPTIONAL MEDIA for this week available for purchase through the XP3 HS Media Package:

- The Even If Countdown (10 minutes)
- The Even If Teaching Video – week 3

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- *Note: Tell a personal story about a time you faced a change that involved risk and fear.*

TENSION

- Sometimes, we don't even have to experience anything in real life to get our fear going. We can simply imagine a change going wrong, and it's enough to shut us down, like . . .
 - a **fear of failure**
 - or the fear of the unknown
 - or the fear of rejection
- This list could probably continue, but you get the idea. Making a change isn't easy.
- But what if—even if everything never stopped changing around us—there was a way not to get knocked off course by fear?

TRUTH

- The Hebrew people are an important part of the Christian faith. They were the group of people God chose to remain connected with in a special way.
- At one point, the Hebrew people went to Egypt to escape a terrible famine. They ended up staying there and growing so large in number that they started to be seen as a threat to the Egyptians.
- The Egyptians enslaved the Hebrew people. The Hebrew people cried out to God to rescue them. God listened and sent a man named Moses to lead them out of slavery.
- Through Moses, God set them free from slavery and committed to lead them to an incredible land of their own—a land they called the Promised Land.
- Upon arriving, they wanted to check it out before moving in. They sent 13 spies to the land they were hoping to make their own—to see what this “promised land” was like.
 - *They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit” (Numbers 13:27 NIV).*
 - *“But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large” (Numbers 13:28 NIV).*
- It was all good until they noticed that there were people living there who appeared to be powerful and had built cities that seemed indestructible.
 - *“And there we saw giants . . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Number 13:33 KJV).*
- This is a confusing part of the Bible (and it's okay to say that). And as a general rule, when it comes to reading passages that cause us to ask questions and wonder what God is really like and what He really cares about, we should always look at Jesus.
- The spies got to the land and saw a problem: giants. And they were afraid.
- When you and I decide to make changes in our life for the better, we face giants, too—often in the form of fear.
- Many times, we respond like the spies. We let fear take over. So, even if we really want what's on the other side of change, we stay exactly where we are.
- Fortunately, not all the spies came back with the same report. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a completely different view than the other spies.
 - *And [they] said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not*

rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them” (Numbers 14:7-9 NIV).

- Their fear didn't get the last word. They knew their fear was not the end of the story. Even if they were afraid, God would meet them on the other side of their fear.
- Here's the thing about trusting God: It's not about *not* being scared. It's about following Him, *even* though you're scared.
- You can have courage even if . . .

APPLICATION

- Here are a few steps to help you get started on having courage even if you are afraid:
 - Identify one change you'd like to make.
 - Identify one fear that surfaced as you thought of it.
 - Invite God in.

LANDING

- When we live with the confidence of who God is, even if we are afraid, we can have courage.
- We have our small groups—the opportunity to have other people who walk alongside of us, encourage us in our faith, and help us make good changes in our lives.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Even If / Week 3

PRELUDE

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HOME

BOTTOM LINE

You can have courage, even if . . .

INTRODUCTION

5 MINUTES

Tell a personal story about a time you face a change that involved risk and fear. Keep it short and light-hearted, less than 220 words and about a minute in delivery.

For example:

When I was a junior in high school, I decided to try out for theater. We had a great drama program at my high school, but I had never been involved before. Also? I didn't know what I was doing. I wanted to give it a shot, but at the same time, it felt overwhelming and scary. But since I had a lot of friends in the program, I decided to go for it.

The next play was a musical. Which presented more problems: I can't sing. So now the idea of auditioning for a play, which I wanted to do, became TERRIFYING. See what I mean? Some change can be scary!

Despite my fear, I auditioned. And as it turns out, I can sing—I got the lead part. KIDDING!! I didn't make the cut. Not even close. I told my friends that I'd be cheering them on from the audience.

I bring this up because in this series, we have been talking about change. All kinds of change. And one of the things we often experience with change is fear—like me auditioning for the school musical—and fear can stop us from making the changes we want.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

In fact, sometimes we don't even have to experience anything in real life to get our fear going. We can simply imagine a change going wrong, and it's enough to shut us down. Like a **fear of failure**. The idea of not making the team, getting rejected for the date, or not getting into that college can stop us from even trying. It's scary!

Other times, before we make a change, we want to know what the outcome will be. If somehow you knew that you'd make the team before you tried out, then trying out would be a piece of cake. But we can't see the future—we don't know the "after." And that is also scary. It's called a **fear of the unknown**. There's uncertainty about what's going to happen in the future, which makes the present tough to handle. It makes us feel vulnerable, or insecure, just facing the possibility of disappointment or being rejected.

Other times, our fear of change is connected to whether or not other people are watching us. There are other people on the court when you try out for the basketball team. There were other people at my very emotional audition for youth group band. If you tell your small group that you want to stop drinking or ask them to hold you accountable, all of a sudden, they're paying attention to your drinking. If you tell your parents you want to help out more around the apartment, they're going to watch to see if you follow through. Cause let's be honest, if I wanted to make a change, and the only person who knew whether I succeeded or failed was me, that's one thing. But as soon as other people are involved, it feels different. It's really less a fear of the unknown, and more a **fear of rejection**. And rejection hurts, which can lead to us feeling judged, made fun of, or left out.

This list could probably continue, but you get the idea. Making a change isn't easy.

Fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of rejection—I get it. All of that fear can make us want to avoid any sort of change at all costs, pushing us to want to quit, hide, or play it safe. But what if—even *if* everything never stopped changing around us—there was a way not to get knocked off course by fear?

TRUTH

7 MINUTES

As we talked about in part two of this series, the Hebrew people are an important part of the Christian faith. They were the group of people God chose to remain connected with in a special way. In fact, eventually, Jesus would be born out of this group of people. Most of what we call the Old Testament tells the history of the Hebrew people, and you don't have to get very far into their story to realize they didn't have it easy. As a people, they spent a lot of that time being defeated and captured by other larger, more powerful groups of people.

At one point, the Hebrew people went to Egypt to escape a terrible famine. They ended up staying there and growing so large in number that they started to be seen as a threat to the Egyptians. This scared the Egyptians, so in order to control the Israelites, they enslaved the Hebrew people. The Hebrew peoples cried out to God to rescue them. God listened and sent a man named Moses to lead them out of slavery. Through Moses, God set them free from slavery and committed to lead them to an incredible land of their own—a land they called the Promised Land.

Israel's story doesn't get easier. They still wandered the wilderness for a long time (think decades!) before FINALLY landing on the outskirts of the Promised Land. Upon arriving, they wanted to check it out before moving in. (And after what they'd been through in Egypt, could you blame them?) They sent 13 spies into the land they were hoping to make their own—to see what this "promised land" was like. Here is their report:

They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit" (Numbers 13:27 NIV).

Sounds amazing, right?! They discovered the land was absolutely beautiful! It was everything they dreamed it would be. But look what follows in the next verse . . .

“But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large” (Numbers 13:28 NIV).

It was all good until they noticed that there were people living there who appeared to be powerful and had built cities that seemed indestructible. In fact, the King James version of a verse that follows says, *“And there we saw giants . . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Number 13:33 KJV).* Could you imagine what it would take for you to see something you think is so big you call yourself a grasshopper?

The majority of the spies went on to tell the Israelites there was no way they could live there because they were too afraid. It didn't matter how much they wanted the land; their fear was way too big. (And so were the people living there. So you couldn't blame them!)

Now, we don't know the actual size and weight of the people living in the land the Hebrew people were scoping out, but we don't have to in order to relate to that feeling they had. **When you and I decide to make changes in our life for the better, we face giants, too—often in the form of fear.** The fear of failure, rejection, and the unknown are kinds of giants. It's not easy to make a change, or get out of a toxic relationship, or try to confront an addiction, or break a different bad habit, or make a positive move we know we should. And often, we respond like the spies did. We say, “I can't do it. It's too difficult and scary. The giant of fear is too big.” So, even if we genuinely want what's on the other side of change, we stay exactly where we are.

We have no idea what we could miss if we allow our fears to be greater than our attempt to change for the better. **If we let our fears control us, they have the ability to cause us to miss out on some really good things in life.** The goal behind fear in these moments is for us to miss out on God's best for us, and that's the last thing God wants for us.

Fortunately, not all the spies came back with the same report. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a completely different view than the other spies. Here's what they said . . .

And [they] said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them” (Numbers 14:7-9 NIV).

Now, maybe you noticed that at the end of that verse, it says they will devour the people already living there. And that sounds weird and violent. If that makes you uncomfortable, good, it should! That's a weird thing to say! The point in saying that is, the Hebrew people were divided into tribes where having land and taking land was a way of showing and maintaining power. Needless to say, sometimes it got violent. It made sense to them to have to take this land and the people living it—which doesn't mean that's what they should have done, or even that that's what God actually said. This was what they understood God to mean, and they wrote it down that way.

The point in bringing this up is that when you are reading a document several thousand years old, written in a different culture with different practices, there are bound to be confusing things that come up. It's okay to acknowledge them and talk to people about them, and best of all, God isn't afraid of them. If the Hebrews got it wrong about what God said, we can know the truest

representation of what God is like is Jesus, who is referred to as the Word of God. So, while we may not know exactly what God said in this instance, we can know what God's son was like. There is no confusion over Jesus demonstrating God's love.

Now, back to the Promised Land. Everyone said they couldn't take the Promised Land except for these two spies. Why was their response so different? Because their fear didn't get the last word. They knew their fear was not the end of the story. They saw God as part of the story, and He had gotten them this far. **Even if they were afraid, God would meet them on the other side of their fear.** They knew that now was the time to flex their ability to trust.

Does that mean they weren't scared? No way! They probably *were*! But here's the thing about trusting God. **It's not about *not being scared*. It's about following Him, even though you're scared.** Remember it this way:

You can have courage, even if . . .

Those giants may have been real. And their fear was definitely real. But they knew they could have courage because of who God is. So, they trusted Him and took that leap of faith. If they had let their fear run the show, they would've given fear the final word of the story. They knew God would meet them on the other side of their fear no matter how real it felt.

You and I can do the same thing when it comes to the areas of life where we want to make changes—you can have courage, even if you are afraid. It may be scary before we make the changes, but it will be so worth it after!

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

Now, this all sounds great, but what are some ways you can practically put this into action? Here are a few steps to help you get started on having courage even if you are afraid:

- 1. Identify one change you'd like to make.** As you listened today, was there something that came to mind?
 - *Is there something you want to audition or try out for?*
 - *Is there a relationship that's not good for you that you need to step away from for a little while?*
 - *Is there a relationship that needs to be improved, and you could take some steps to do that?*
 - *Is there a habit in your life that needs to be replaced with something healthier?*
 - *Is there a grade that needs to be raised?*
 - *Is there a part of yourself you are holding from others because of fear?*

You may have multiple answers. But for the sake of today, let's just focus on one.

- 2. Identify one fear that surfaced as you thought of it.** This is the thing that makes you want to pause and think, "I'm not sure I can do that." Maybe it's a fear of rejection or failure or the unknown. Maybe it's a fear of actually changing. Maybe it's a fear of the work you'd have to put in to make that change. Whatever it is, this is your giant. Pay attention to the giant. And then . . .

- 3. Invite God in.** This is your chance to introduce your fear to God. This is your chance to have your Joshua and Caleb moment. This is your chance to remember that God is bigger than your fear. You could do something as simple as praying to God and sharing with Him the change you want to make and the fear that is keeping you stuck. Let sharing your fear be the first step in choosing a different response to fear.

Fear is a legitimate and normal thing, but it doesn't have to control us and cause us to miss out. Even when you and I are scared of taking that step, we can invite God into that fear. Because everything may change, but some things never change. A few of those things are that God is with us, and He is bigger than our fear.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Imagine if you and I could live with that type of trust? What if we knew that no matter what fear we face, God is bigger? And if that trust in God helped us to make a positive change in our lives, how much more confidence would it give us to make the next change? When we live with the confidence of who God is, even if we are afraid, we can have courage.

Not only that, we have each other. We have our small groups—which gives us an opportunity to have other people who walk alongside of us, encourage us in our faith, and help us make good changes in our lives. Let's remind each other this week that **you can have courage, even if . . .**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
