

Even if

MOVING FROM WHAT IF TO EVEN IF



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## *Why do we need this study?*

When you are the mom to a child with disabilities, there are so many situations you face each day that can cause fear, worry, and doubt to swirl in your mind and heart. These thoughts can keep us up at night and rob us of peace. All of the what-ifs and worst case scenarios start to swirl in our minds and can cause us to become anxious, and then chaos and confusion is not far behind.

But, what if there was another way? What if we could have a strategy in place, a way to shift our mindset when all of the what-ifs that come with this life start to invade your mind? What if you could feel safe and prepared BEFORE a crisis hits your family? What if you could increase your trust in God and His plan for your life? Well, you can!

We can learn truths about God and about his love for us and our children that will shift our mind off of all of the worst case scenarios and keep us calm in the midst of the chaos. We can move from thinking about the what-ifs that accompany the disability journey to live a life filled with peace and joy, even if.

## *How to use this resource?*

This resource can be used as a small group curriculum or as a personal reflection and study. If you are utilizing this as small group curriculum, download and print a copy for everyone in your group. The first section, "Today, I'm thankful for..." is designed to begin each session with gratitude. Then, your small group leader can walk you through the discussion questions. Next, watch the video together as a group. "Talk about it" is meant to be a way for you to go deeper in community and discuss the follow-up questions together. Work through the "Personal Study" questions as homework through the following week.





## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY ONE

1. How easy is it for you to talk with the Lord about your deepest fears? Do you trust that you can be honest with Him about what scares you or about why it's hard to trust Him in a situation? What makes you feel this way? What would need to happen in your life to cause you to trust Him more?
2. Write a prayer to let God know how much you WANT to trust Him, explaining what gets in the way, and ask for what you need from Him to help You trust more.

### DAY TWO

1. Spend some time in quiet and honest reflection. What are some of the worst case scenarios you are fearing right now?
2. Take some time to look at those fears head on. If those worst case scenarios became reality, how do you think you would respond?

### DAY THREE

1. Becky talked about when we are fearful, it is actually showing places where we feel separate from God or that God is not with us. Look at your list of worst case scenarios from day two. Can you see that being the case in these scenarios? How?
2. Write out a prayer inviting God into those scenarios.

### DAY FOUR

In this week's video, Becky shared a quote from a friend who was in the middle of a crisis with her child. *"The what-ifs get scary and bring in fear, but the even-ifs bring in peace and kick fear out."*

1. Think about a current situation you are facing. What are some of the what-ifs that come to mind? What feelings and emotions come to mind when you read your list of what-ifs?
2. How can you shift those what-ifs to even-ifs? How do you feel reading your list of even-ifs? How does it shift your perspective?

### DAY FIVE

Read Daniel chapter 3.

1. What is your heart's reaction to the faith demonstrated by these three Hebrew boys - a faith that said that EVEN IF God didn't rescue them, they would still trust Him?
2. What would it look like for you to have the confidence that these men had in what God can do? What would it look like in your life/heart to have a confident response even if God doesn't do what you know He ultimately can do?
3. What steps will you take this week to start trusting God with your what-ifs?





## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY TWO

1. In this week's video, Becky shared a quote her late husband would often say. "When we feel we cannot trust God's actions in our life, we must trust His heart." Journal about a time when you struggled to trust God's actions but you knew you could trust His heart.
2. It's easy to praise God and trust Him when life is easy-going. If you're being honest with yourself, what is your response when the trials of this journey begin to take over?
3. In the video, Becky told a story about a night where she began to speak a prayer of trust over her son. What is one situation in your life right now that you need to practice speaking a prayer of trust over even if you don't understand? You may not believe them at first. But, as you speak TRUST over your situation, they will become truth in your heart.

### DAY THREE

1. Write out Romans 8:28 in your journal. Spend some time meditating on this verse as well as the surrounding verses. Journal the parts of this passage that stand out to you.
2. How does knowing that ultimately God causes all things to work together for good impact your ability to trust God even when situations in your life do not make sense?

### DAY FOUR

1. Take a moment and listen to the Respite For Your Mind called "Accept What Is" on the Rising Above app. Spend some time in quiet reflection asking God to show you any areas in your life where you may be resisting His plans for your life.
2. Journal a prayer releasing those areas to God and asking Him to help you move toward acceptance.
3. Do you ever feel like you are resisting against the story God is writing in your life? How can you begin to trust God as He writes your story?

### DAY FIVE

1. Write Isaiah 46:9-10 in your journal. What resonates most with you in these verses? When you think about your life as a special-needs mom and the life of your child, does it comfort you to know that God knows the future? How?
2. Spend some time searching for verses that speak to trusting God even when life doesn't make sense. Add them to your journal and be prepared to share with your group next week.



# Even if MOVING FROM WHAT IS TO WHAT IS NEXT Session Three

## Talk about it

Use the following questions for group discussion after the video.

- What stood out to you most from the video?
- Read and discuss Mark 9:14-24.
- As Becky shared in the video, Webster's dictionary defines doubt as a *feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction*. Where in your life are you currently feeling uncertain?
- Life seems to happen in seasons. Share a story of a time in your life when you had a season of doubt. How was God faithful even when you had big questions?
- What circumstances in your life as a special-needs mom lead you to doubt God?

## Group Prayer

Use this space to jot down any group prayer requests.

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## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY ONE

1. As we start this week's personal study, we need to ask ourselves some fundamental questions. Take a moment to sit with and think about these questions. Then, write out your thoughts/answers in your journal.
  - What do I really think about God and who He is?
  - What does God think about me?
  - What does God think about my child?
2. Each day this week, you will have the opportunity to remember a specific time in your journey as a parent of a child with special needs where God has been faithful. For today, think of a time when God showed up and showered His goodness on your family. Write that story out in your own journal.

# Even if MOVING FROM WHAT-IF TO EVEN-IF Session Three

## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY TWO

1. What is your default response when life gets challenging or things don't go the way you had hoped?
2. If you are honest with yourself, do you believe that God is good, even if He doesn't do what you know He can do or what you hope He will do?
3. Think of a time when you knew God was directing every step; a time when you knew, without a shadow of a doubt, God was walking with you through a big decision or a season of waiting. Write the story out in your journal.

### DAY THREE

1. Becky shared in the video that for us to build trust in God we must have a deep, abiding friendship with Him. Spend some time in reflection. Journal how you would currently describe your relationship with God. Does it resemble a deep and abiding friendship?
2. What are some practices you can incorporate into your day to build up that friendship?
3. Think of a time when God sent you a blessing or encouragement through a friend. Write the story out in your journal.

### DAY FOUR

1. Trusting God begins with knowing His character and believing He is who He says He is. Write out these three scriptures: 1 John 1:5, 2 Peter 3:9, & Psalm 116:5. Each one describes the character of God. Then, take a moment and listen to the Respite For Your Mind called "God Is" on the Rising Above app. Spend some time in quiet reflection meditating on the character of God.
2. Think of a time when you saw God's character through the way He provided for you or your child at just the right time. Write the story out in your journal.

### DAY FIVE

1. God is always very close to us. He is closer than our breath. He is eager for you to see and feel His love for you. Take a couple of minutes to slow your thoughts and practice being in the presence of God. Can't find a quiet space? Don't worry! Practicing the presence of God means keeping in mind that God is with you as you go about your day. So, as you go about your tasks today, remind yourself that God is with you and keep Him at the forefront of your mind.
2. Instead of thinking back to a time when you saw God move, how is He moving & meeting your needs today? What are you grateful for today?

*As you reflected on your story this week, was it difficult to think of times when God came through for you? If so, thank you for sticking with it! Practicing gratitude in this way is such a huge part of our journey to moving from the what-ifs to the even-ifs. Thank you for taking the time to write out your story! It will be so good to have these stories written out for you to remember and come back to later.*





## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY TWO

1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.
2. Journal a time when you were comforted by God in the midst of your pain.
3. Think about a time when you had an opportunity to comfort someone with the comfort you received from God. How did that experience impact you? How did it impact them?

### DAY THREE

1. Being in the presence of God brings us comfort in our pain. One of the best ways to be in the presence of God is through worship. Write Psalm 100 in your journal. What forms of worship are listed in this Psalm? How do you personally practice each of these?
2. If you don't already have one, spend some time creating a playlist of songs you can play during painful times to remind you that God is with you.

### DAY FOUR

1. Write the following verses on the power of gratitude in your journal or on notecards to place around your home. These verses give us a road map for what to do in all circumstances, including times of pain. Feel free to add more verses that are meaningful to you.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
  - Philippians 4:6-7
  - 1 Corinthians 15:57
  - Psalm 29:7

### DAY FIVE

1. Your losses and pain matter. They matter to you and they matter to God. Lamenting our hurts helps to bring healing to the pain. Read Lamentations 3:1-24 paying special attention to verses 21-24.
2. In these verses, Jeremiah pours out his heart regarding all of the pain he has endured, but then his perspective shifts when he remembers God's faithfulness. Think about a painful situation that is still hurting your heart. Journal a lament following the pattern Jeremiah set in the verses above.



## Talk about it

Use the following questions for group discussion after the video.

- What resonated the most with you in this session's video?
- Read and discuss Luke 22:39-42. How does Jesus respond when the answer is "no"? How can we use this as a model for the situations in our lives?
- How do you wrestle with God's silence or His answer of "no," especially when you know He can do anything?
- What stood out to you most in Rosie's story?

## Group Prayer

Use this space to jot down any group prayer requests.

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## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY ONE

1. Take a moment to reflect on a recent painful experience. Journal what happened, how you responded, and how you felt towards God.
2. When you encounter hurtful experiences, how does it impact your relationship with God?

### DAY TWO

1. Everything we have discussed in this series leads us to this deep foundational question. Spend some time in silence with this question and then journal your thoughts. Write out a prayer asking God to speak to your heart and reveal to you who He truly is.
  - Who is God to me and can He be trusted, even if His answer is "no"?
2. What is/was your relationship like with your earthly father? Have you seen this relationship impact how you perceive your Heavenly Father? If it has been impacted in a negative way, invite your Heavenly Father to reveal to you who He truly is.

## Personal Study

Use your own writing space to journal your answers to the following questions.

### DAY THREE

1. Your view of God, whether His answer is “yes” or “no,” will impact the way you interpret your story. It will direct the narrative of how you see your life and the world around you. Spend some time in quiet reflection with the following questions.
  - What is the story you believe about yourself?
  - What story are you telling yourself about your child?
  - What is the narrative you believe and tell others about your life as a special-needs mom?
2. Knowing the truth of who God is and who He says you are will keep you from sinking when the next trial or storm comes your way. Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal anything false that you may be believing about Him or your story.
3. Are there parts of your story or the narrative you are believing that you need to surrender to God? How do you need to allow God to adjust the narrative you are believing about Him or your life? Journal your thoughts.

### DAY FOUR

1. We live in a fallen and sinful world filled with pain. But God, in His sovereignty, dictates that His plans, His will, and what He deems is for the best, supersedes our temporary circumstances. How does that make you feel? What emotions stir in your heart as you ponder those words?
2. In this session’s video, Rosie shared, “God has rarely given me what I’ve wanted, but He has always, always, given me exactly what I’ve needed.” Have you seen this to be true in your own life?
3. How did Rosie’s foundational truth (God is Love and causes all things to work together for good.) sustain her through her tragic loss and grief?
4. Think back to the worst case scenarios you journaled about in session 1. Does Rosie’s response impact the way you might respond now if your what-ifs became a reality?

### DAY FIVE

1. Read Revelation 21:1-5. How does knowing that God will “make all things new” help us when His answer here on earth doesn't always make sense?
2. What three things are you looking forward to the most when “all things are made new”?





## Moving Forward

*As we finish our time together, let's look at how we can move forward and not only prepare for the what-ifs in this life but to stand firm in God's truth for life's even-ifs.*

In order to be prepared for the next what-if season to arise, we must have a plan in place. In the session this week, Becky shared the importance of the ballast in a ship. A ballast is the weight you put in the hull of a ship to keep it straight and steady.

As we strengthen ourselves with God's truth, you will begin by filling your "ballast" with daily practices, personal proclamations, and your personal narrative to have at the ready for when the storms of life toss us about.

### DAILY PRACTICES

List the daily practices you will commit to put in place, i.e daily prayer, daily Bible reading, journaling.

### PERSONAL PROCLAMATIONS

Write a personal proclamation from each of the following questions:

- What are the truths I know about God?
- What does God think of me?
- What does God think of my children?
  - Example proclamation: In times of fear, I will trust the Lord. He is here with me now and He will not leave me. I know He is good and I trust that He is going to work everything together for the good, even if I do not get the answer I am looking to get.
  - If you need some inspiration, look back at the Rising Above App's Respite for Your Mind. Check out "God Says I Am..." & "Is God Really for Me?".

### PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Use the stories you journaled in session 3 to craft a personal narrative of God's faithfulness in your life. This narrative will be what you look back on if doubts start to invade your mind.



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