

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

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# SERMON SERIES

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TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, Biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series is exactly what you're looking for.

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete sermon outlines and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

## SERIES OVERVIEW FOR ON THE VERGE

Is it an indefinable place where the present and future collide? Or is it the second just before the point of no return? Is it the moment you realize that what you do next matters most? Or is the culmination of collected experiences that caution you to avoid pain at all costs? Did you choose it? Or did it choose you? Regardless of where it is, what it looks like, or when it happens, we have all been there. Some of us are there right now — on the verge of something big.

- **SESSION 1:** On the Verge: Everyone comes to the Edge: You'll help students understand that God uses our "on the verge" moments to move us forward in faith, and communicate in trust as we walk through our lives.
- **SESSION 2:** On the Verge of Giving Up: To show students that the moment when you want to give up is the place to trust God in His plan for your life, and cling to hope that He is with you.
- **SESSION 3:** On the Verge of Giving In: You'll show students that when we are faced with giving into sin, God calls us instead to a healing that cleanses us.
- **SESSION 4:** On the Verge of Giving Out: Students will learn when we cannot go on, when we want to give out, we can call out to God, ask for help, and He will answer.

In this four-part sermon series, we'll examine these moments right before our lives change and how we can look to the stories of the Israelites for understanding how God wants us to view these crucial times as we go through our lives.

# BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

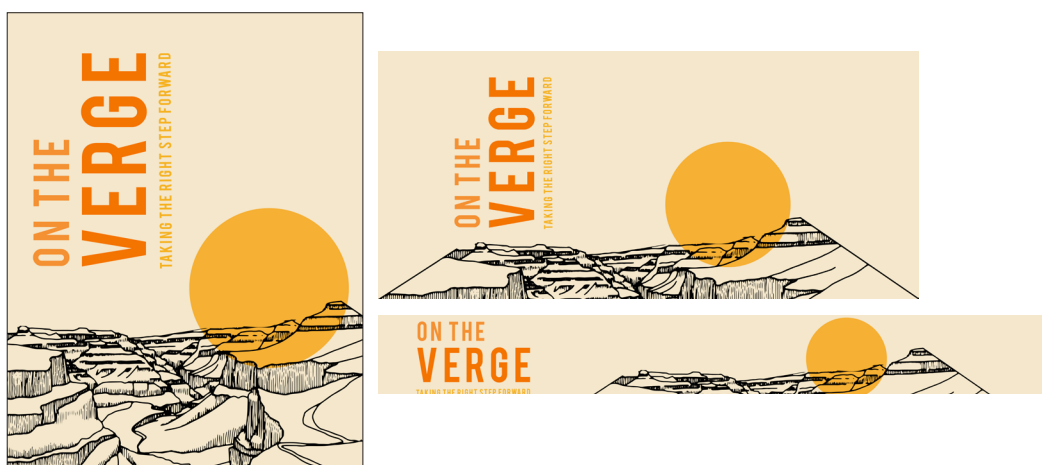
Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments.

Here is what to expect.

## BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



## PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



## INSTAGRAM IMAGES



## LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

## On the Verge Sermon Series Overview

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*The Sermon Series Overview is a one-page glimpse of the stuff you need to know to begin preparing to preach.*

- **Session Purpose:** To understand that God uses our “on the verge” moments to move us forward in faith and communicate in trust as we walk through our lives.
- **Scripture Passages:** Joshua 3:7-17
- **Session Snapshot:** God has big dreams for us. God has a purpose for us. But God also wants us to possess our mission. It is this tension – between the promise and the possession – that leaves us on the verge. We live on the verge because God always calls us to the next step. And no matter what our next step is, we’ll face natural offshoots of being on the verge: fear, intimidation, exhaustion, and overwhelm. We need to use these emotions to remind us to take a timeout because God wants to say something to us in these moments on the verge.
- **What You Need:** Optional phone for “Global Positioning Systems” illustration; optional image or clip for “Base vs. Bungee” illustration.

### Details on *On the Verge* Sermon Series Outlines

Is it an indefinable place where the present and future collide? Or is it the second just before the point of no return? Is it the moment you realize that what you do next matters most? Or is the culmination of collected experiences that caution you to avoid pain at all costs? Did you choose it? Or did it choose you? Regardless of where it is, what it looks like, or when it happens, we have all been there. Some of us are there right now — on the verge of something big. In this four-part sermon series, we’ll examine these moments right before our lives change and how we can look to the stories of the Israelites for understanding how God wants us to view these crucial times as we go through our lives.

- **Session 1:** On the Verge: Everyone comes to the Edge: You’ll help students understand that God uses our “on the verge” moments to move us forward in faith, and communicate in trust as we walk through our lives.
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God is calling us to a life of trust and faith, a life where we may not understand the full measure of where we’re going or what we’re doing. But His ways are good and right for us, and we can know He will be with us every step of the way. So, let us stand on our tiptoes and boldly follow God into the chasm of what is and what could be.

### How To Use the *On the Verge* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides the illustrations, pictures, Scriptures, background information, and application points that you will need to prepare your lesson. It also includes discussion questions that could be used in a small group following the message, a parent page that gets families involved, and artwork for promotion or message support.

These sermons are designed to be useful for all types of groups and churches, and you should feel free to make adjustments that benefit your particular circumstance.

## **I. Optional Illustration: Global Positioning Systems**

One of the greatest inventions in recent years is the GPS. Before we had these global positioning systems, we had to use maps and compasses and atlases and other old-school tools to try to figure out where we were at any given moment. We had to figure out where we were by looking at the stars in the sky. Now we can determine our locations with the push of a button. Whether you're driving down the interstate or hiking through the woods, a GPS is an invaluable tool.

*[Tip: As an option to supplement, tell a personal story of a time when a GPS got you out of a situation where you were lost. Or ask students to pull out their phones and have a race to determine their longitude and latitude.]*

GPS is a great tool when it works. It can lead you to your final destination. But if you follow the GPS blindly, it can lead you into a precarious situation. Just ask the group of 26 people who followed a GPS and got lost in the wilderness. This group of tourists asked their GPS for directions from Bryce Canyon National Park to the Grand Canyon. The device came up with a route but didn't indicate how tough these backcountry roads would be to travel. So, one of the group's vehicles got stuck in soft sand, and two others nearly ran out of gas. Then the device's suggestions led the group onto dirt roads that ended in a series of cliffs. A park ranger summed up the lesson of this incident: "People can start down a nice, graded dirt road and it can soon turn into boulders and deep washes, but they continue driving instead of turning around. The shortest way is not always the quickest way."

The picture of a GPS device leading us to the edge of a cliff is pretty scary. But this picture can also remind us that we all find ourselves on the verge at sometimes in our lives. That's why we're using this picture of being on the verge of falling off to describe the *On the Verge* series we're starting today. In this series, we're going to talk about the moments when we're on the verge. Sometimes, we're on the verge of something beautiful. Occasionally, we're on the verge of something darker. Whatever it is, in some way, we will all find ourselves on the verge.

And sometimes, it even feels like God leads us to the verge. That's because He does. He led the Israelites to the Edge of the Red Sea. He led Esther into the presence of the king. He drove Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego past the place where the fire's heat was fatal. God is not afraid to lead us to the verge.

So, the question isn't whether we will find ourselves on the verge – it's what we will do when we're there. In this series, we're going to look at three of the biggest challenges we face when we're on the verge – the challenges of giving up, of giving in, and of giving out. But before we dig into these challenges, we'll discover today what we need to do whenever and wherever we come to the verge.

## **II. Background**

In this series, we're going to look at a group of people who were on the verge. God had promised His people, the Israelites, a homeland. But the Israelites kept giving in and giving out and even giving up in their quest to take possession of this land. The Israelites spent 40 years wandering the desert waiting for God to lead them into the Promised Land. They spent 40 years on the verge.

Moses was the leader God had chosen to guide the Israelites during this time, but he too had to wait to enter the land God had promised. The book of Deuteronomy ends with Moses going up on a mountain that overlooked the land so that he could see it as God had promised. But because Moses had disobeyed one of God's direct commands, he could not enter the Promised Land during his life. He was left on the verge.

Joshua replaced Moses as the leader of the Israelites, and this new leader was charged with finally leading these people on the verge into the land God had promised them. We find Joshua's call in chapter 1. Then in chapter 3, Joshua led the Israelites to the verge of the Promised Land – a boundary called the Jordan River.

### III. Explanation

[Read Joshua 3:7-17]

This moment the Israelites found themselves in is one of the most exciting yet terrifying moments in all of Scripture. The Israelites had been waiting to enter the Promised Land for 40 years in the wilderness, not to mention the 400 years before that in Egypt. Now they could finally see what they had heard about for so long. But as they stood on the verge, they faced a raging river.

They didn't have boats. They didn't have rafts: no ziplines and no life jackets. Once again, the Israelites stood on the verge, and once again, they had to rely on God's promise. Just as God had promised to give the Israelites the land, they saw across the Jordan River, God promised to stop the river's raging waters. But this wouldn't happen until the Israelites took the first step into the water. They would have to go from being on the verge of the rip currents of these waters if they were to possess what God had promised them. They had to trust. It had been forty years since the Israelites as a people had to take a similar step into the Red Sea, wondering if God was going to make a way. And here they were again.

Imagine what it was like to be at this moment. The Israelites were on the verge of something they had heard about their whole lives. They were about to realize the dream, not just of their generation but of their ancestors. But there was a considerable obstacle that kept them on the verge. It was not going to be easy to possess the land that had been promised to them. Going from on the verge into the Promised Land was not automatic.

But God wanted to show the Israelites something about Himself here. While they were on the verge, He wanted them to know that "I am with you as I was with Moses." (v. 7) God wanted the Israelites to have an unforgettable picture to remember about how He was with them on this step in their journey so that they could remember it in the next phase of their journey.

Thankfully, we get to read on and see what happened to the Israelites when they were brave enough to go over the verge and step into the water. As soon as the priests leading the procession had their feet touch the water, "the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a great heap a great distance away... while the water was flowing down... was completely cut off" (v. 16). The entire nation of Israel completed the crossing on dry ground.

#### IV. Optional Illustration: Base vs. Bungee

*[Tip: If possible, show a video or images of someone bungee jumping. Bonus points if it's you or someone students would know from your congregation.]*

Have you ever been bungee jumping? Our ancestors might be amazed at the sight of people throwing themselves off of perfectly good bridges, but bungee jumping is one of the most popular extreme sports out there. Most of us out here haven't jumped from a bridge or a crane, but there's a couple of different ways you can pay someone to let you fall from a high place.

Bungee-jumping is the first. As you all probably know, the jumper is attached to a giant rubber band at their ankles. They then jump, hurtling towards the earth until the bungee cord snaps them back up before they connect. You can also try base-jumping. In base-jumping, the jumper jumps from a high point with a parachute. It's similar to skydiving, just off a (perfectly good) cliff.

When we think about these two kinds of leaps, one is really like flying, and one is not. When you base jump, you're genuinely on your own. It's up to you to open the parachute, and it's up to you to land safely. But when you bungee jump, you're not flying. The cord keeps you from hitting the ground, and you need help to get off of the cord when your jump is over. Today, we're going to think about the difference between these kinds of leaps as we talk about what it's like to be on the verge.

#### V. Application

The picture of the Israelites reminds us that we all live on the verge. God has big dreams for us, just as He had big dreams for the Israelites. God has a purpose for us, just as He called the Israelites to move into the Promised Land. But God also wants us to possess our purpose, just as He wanted the Israelites to possess the land He had promised them.

It is this tension – between the promise and the possession – that leaves us on the verge. The Israelites had to follow God out of Egypt, stepping through the Red Sea. They had to follow God through the desert. They had to trust Him with their food source, with their protection from enemies, and with His actual presence among them as they traveled. And here, they had to step into the raging rapids of the Jordan River. Time after time, they had to move from being on the verge and go over the edge so that they could take the next step toward the promise God had for them.

The same is true for us. We live on the verge because God always calls us to the next step. And no matter what our next step is, we'll face the same kind of fears and traps that the Israelites encountered.

We will be frightened.  
We will be intimidated.  
We will be exhausted.  
We will be overwhelmed.  
We will even mess up.

When these things happen, we need to recognize that they are natural offshoots of being on the verge. We need to use these emotions to remind us to take a timeout because God wants to say something to us in these moments on the verge.

Just as God was with the Israelites on this step of their journey, God is with us on the next stage of our journeys. We don't have to stay scared because the God who can stop a raging river is with us as well.

So, the question we come to today (and then take on in the rest of the series) is what each of us will do when we find ourselves on the verge of the next step in our journeys with God. Will we give up or give in or give out? Or will we take a timeout, listen to God, and then act on what He says as we seek to possess the promise, He has given us. In other words, when it's time to leap, stop, and listen to hear God speak.

The first thing God wants to say to us on the verge is this: Cut the cords. When you're on the verge, and it's time to leap, we must let go of our ropes and jump. We can't be satisfied just to bungee jump; instead, we need to base jump. That's because a bungee cord will always pull you back and keep you from truly soaring.

Over the next few weeks, we're going to talk about cords that can keep us from taking the leap God wants us to take. And we're going to discover how God wants us to cut those cords. But today, remember this: when it's time to leap, stop and listen to hear God speak. Then we cut the cords.

## **VI. Optional Illustration: Triage**

When there's a disaster that leaves many people injured, medical professionals go into a procedure known as triage. The fundamental goal of triage is to assess which patients will benefit from the most immediate treatment so that most people can be helped. If a patient has minor injuries, he has to wait for a patient with significant injuries to be treated. Broken arms can't be set if someone is bleeding out from a gunshot wound. Headaches take back seats to heart attacks. The triage system is all about assessing where patients are quickly so that the most appropriate treatment can begin for patients who are on the verge of living and dying.

Think of this *On the Verge* series as triage. Over the next three sessions, we'll diagnose some problems people have when they're on the verge, and then we'll talk about the best things for us to do to cut those cords. We'll use three different vital elements of triage to help us understand what we can do to cut those cords when we're on the verge.

## **VII. Closing**

Everyone comes to the verge. We see it with our ancient brothers and sisters, the Israelites. And it's also happening now. And being on the verge of our next step can leave us excited, terrified, vulnerable, questioning, or even damaged.

But being on the verge also gives us a story. Maybe we'll become the people who walked through the raging river on dry ground. Maybe we'll become the people who found greatness instead of backing down in fear or failure. Maybe we'll stop and listen to hear God speak, and perhaps we'll cut the cords.

And when we do, maybe we'll realize like never before that God is with us, jumping alongside us, ready to launch into what could be in our lives.

### **Small-Group Discussion Questions**

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. What journey had the Israelites been on? How had God led them on this journey?
2. What do you think the Israelites felt like at some of the significant moments on this journey?
3. What were the Israelites on the verge of in this passage?
4. How do you think the Israelites felt in that moment on the Edge of the Jordan River?
5. Why did God want the Israelites to step into the Jordan River?
6. What was He trying to show them about Himself?
7. How do you think the Israelites felt as they walked through the Jordan River on dry ground?
8. How would you have felt in this situation?
9. What did the Israelites know about God on the far side of the Jordan River that they didn't know when they were on the verge?