

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 THE CHANGE-UP

What's your greatest fear? That's a question that we often hear, and when we do, we tend to respond to answers like snakes, spiders, or the dark. While those are valid fears, if we're honest, we'll admit that fear also targets us on a much deeper level, one that torments the core of who we are and how we live.

But have you ever thought about how fear targets us? It uses deception to cause us to believe that challenging situations are more significant than they are and that we are smaller inside than we are. Fear functions as a con man in our lives, using ruses to fool us into falling for deceptions that tell us that we're inadequate, or isolated, or unlovable. We'll look at how we're not defenseless against these cons. God's love provides everything we need to pull the plug and change the narrative on the false ideas of fear.

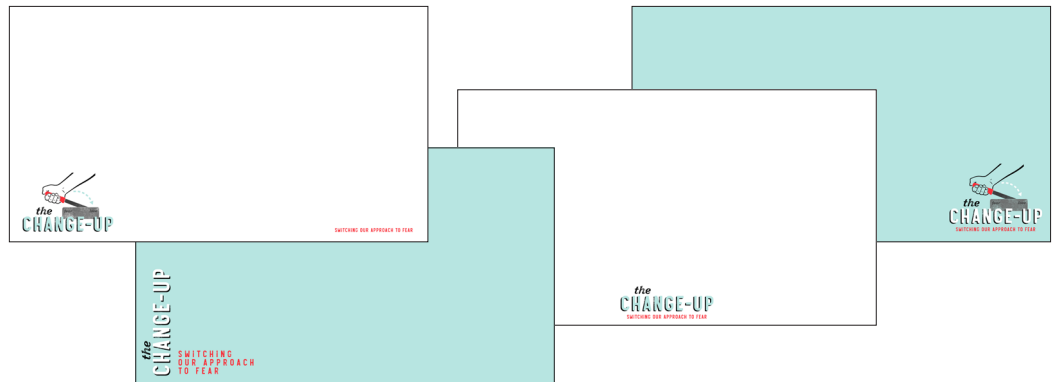
Now we're the ones pulling the change-up as we learn how to identify and breakthrough fear's con games by trusting God's love to counter and conquer each one.

- **SESSION 1:** "I Fear/He Loves": You'll help students understand that we can switch from "I fear" to "He loves" because God's perfect love actively drives out fear.
- **SESSION 2:** "I Can't/He Will": To show students that we can switch from "I can't" to "He will" because God invites us to join Him in work He's doing.
- **SESSION 3:** "I Don't/He Does": You'll show students that we can switch "I don't" to "He does" because God is always with us and accepts us.
- **SESSION 4:** "I'm Not/He Is": Students will learn that we can switch "I'm not" to "He is" because God determines our value.

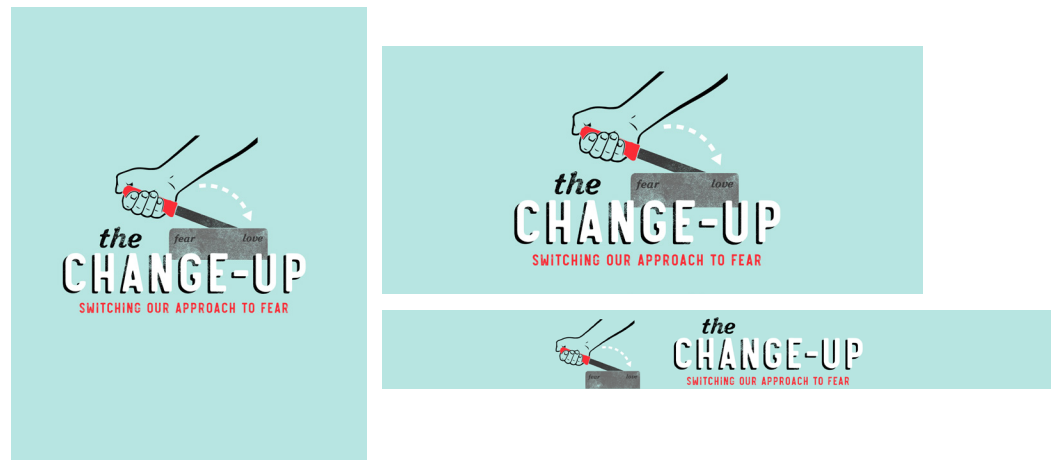
# BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

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.

## Change Up 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 1 Purpose:** To understand that we can switch from “I fear” to “He loves” because God’s perfect love actively drives out fear.
- **Scripture Passages:** 1 John 4:16-20
- **Session Snapshot:** It’s not comfortable for us to talk about being afraid of failure or rejection, or of being isolated and not fitting in, or of feeling unlovable and unworthy. But the Bible has never shied away from talking about fear because there are things about fear and love that God wants us to know. God’s love drives out fear. The love of God pulls *The Change Up* on fear itself and, in doing so, pulls the plug on fear’s deception. It’s not about how much faith you have or how courageous you can be. It’s about how much God loves you and how powerful His love is.
- **What You Need:**
  - Optional media for “Scaredy Cat” illustration.
  - Optional images for “Diving In” illustration.

### Details on *The Change Up* Sermon Series Outlines

What’s your greatest fear? That’s a question that we often hear, and when we do, we tend to respond to answers like snakes, spiders, or the dark. While those are valid fears, if we’re honest, we’ll admit that fear also targets us on a much deeper level, one that torments the core of who we are and how we live.

But have you ever thought about how fear targets us? It uses deception to cause us to believe that challenging situations are more significant than they are and that we are smaller inside than we are. Fear functions as a con man in our lives, using ruses to fool us into falling for deceptions that tell us that we’re inadequate, or isolated, or unlovable. We’ll look at how we’re not defenseless against these cons. God’s love provides everything we need to pull the plug and change the narrative on the false ideas of fear.

- **Session 1:** I Fear/He Loves: You’ll help students understand that we can switch from “I fear” to “He loves” because God’s perfect love actively drives out fear.
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Now we’re the ones pulling the change-up as we learn how to identify and breakthrough fear’s con games by trusting God’s love to counter and conquer each one.

## How To Use *The Change Up* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides various elements such as suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, 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 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: Scaredy Cat

Welcome to our new series, *The Change Up*. I'm about to show you a video of something that might be considered disturbing. Still, you must watch this video because it's going to help you understand exactly what we're going to be unpacking during this series.

[Tip: Search YouTube for a compilation video of "Cats Scared of Cucumbers." Show the video and continue:]

So we're going to be talking about fear. We're all afraid of something, whether it's sharks, public speaking, or vegetables. Of course, everyone has a fear like this. But during *The Change Up*, we're going to be diving into the deep, heart-level concerns that haunt us because we're human, and we live on earth. Think about those cats. Something (in this case, just a cucumber) crept upon them, overtaking their lives at an unexpected time and in an unexpected place. This can happen to us, although probably not with cucumbers, in our own lives. In *The Change Up*, we're going to look at what God says about this kind of fear.

We're going to be talking about your fears. These are the deep-down-in-your-gut fears that you may not even want to admit to yourself, much less to anybody else. These are fears like the fear of failure and insignificance, the fear of rejection and abandonment. These are your fears and fears. They are the fears that keep you awake at night, forcing each of us to obsess on various scenarios of what could go wrong or what has gone wrong. These are the fears that give you an empty feeling at the bottom of your stomach when you don't see how things could turn out well. These are the fears that hit you where you live and then won't leave you alone.

Unlike a fear of spiders, which may only affect you when you come across one of those eight-legged predators, the fear that you're not valuable or lovable can haunt you 24/7. The fear that you're just not good enough can haunt you always. And once these fears infect you, they impact every decision you make and every relationship you have. Here are some examples: Maybe you try to be friends with a particular group of people because you're afraid that's the only way other people will like you. Perhaps you try to be a part of every extracurricular activity you can fit into your schedule because you're afraid that's the only way to prove to your parents and everyone else that you're valuable. Or maybe you shut yourself off from people because deep down, you're afraid that if they knew you, there's no way they could love you.

Whatever the fear and however you tend to address it, we all can agree that this is one place in all of our lives that we can use a lot of help. So, let's turn to Scripture now and see what God has to say to us about fear.

## II. Background

Would you be afraid if you saw your best friend killed right in front of you? What if you were told to shut up by the leaders of your town? We can safely say that someone who went through all this would know about fear. That's true of John, the author of the letter we're looking at today. He was the

disciple Jesus loved, and so Jesus' trial and crucifixion must have been a frightening experience for him. Later, Peter and John were hauled before the religious leaders and told not to speak of Jesus anymore, or else something awful would happen to them. And toward the end of his life, John was exiled to a desert island because of his faith. There's even a legend that John was boiled in oil at one point. Those are all incredibly good reasons to be frightened. But through it all, John found a way to pull the plug on *The Change Up* of fear. Let's look into his first letter to see the antidote to fear that John discovered.

The book of 1 John is a practical letter written to Christians who were dealing with a controversy about the person of Jesus. False teaching concerning the divinity and humanity of Christ had arisen in the church. John wrote to reinstate what right belief looks like, to reassure troubled believers of the truth that they would have eternal life, and to restore those in the wrong to right fellowship with God. John discussed many essential themes as he attempted to redefine the essence of Christianity.

One of these themes is the importance of love in the life of the believer. In this passage, we see the importance of love as it relates to the primary issue of fear in our lives. John's experience with fear was vast, but his understanding of love ran even deeper.

### III. Explanation

[Read 1 John 4:16-20]

"Perfect love drives out fear." These are shocking words, and they are not the answer to fear that we expect. Most of the time, when we think about the response to fear or what a positive reaction to fear should look like, we think of courage. If we could muster up enough courage, we could conquer anything. But John doesn't see fear this way. He takes us down a different road. It is a road that might result in what looks like courage to others, but it begins from a different source than courage that we merely muster up. This road comes from love.

Love isn't a passive observer of fear or a silent witness to fear. Love doesn't even ignore fear. No, love takes an active role in pulling the plug on fear's deception. Love is the key. In every instance of terror, we come upon in this study, we will see how God's love drives it out as we focus on the relationship and freedom that His love provides.

You might be having a hard time buying John's answer right now, but let's dig further to see if this answer matches up well with life.

### IV. Optional Illustration: Fear Reactions

How do you react to fear? When something scary happens, people tend to fall into a few different types of reactions. Let's look at some:

[Tip: Ask for a few volunteers to showcase the different types.]

1. **The Runner:** This person doesn't waste time. Something unexpected happens, and he's gone. One minute a group is standing there together, then there's a noise, and the next thing you know, one guy is long gone. The Runner may wish you luck in saving yourself, but he is gone in a flash. If the scary thing wants to get him, it will have to catch him first.

2. The Yeller: The Yeller doesn't have the instant flight instinct; instead, she relies on the hope that if she yells loud enough, help will come. Either that or the pure decibel level of the yell will severely damage or maim whatever is scaring her.

3. The Freezer: This guy finds himself frozen by fear. He can't run, can't yell, can't even move. Deep down, he's hoping that if he stays still long enough, he'll become invisible, and the whole situation will go away. Whoever said that someone should play dead if attacked by the bear must have been a freezer. That's the only explanation for that terrible advice.

4. The Fighter: The Fighter's first instinct is to battle it out with whatever causes the fear. This person will punch and kick whatever is directly in front of her when the scare occurs. So it's vital if you are scaring this kind of person or are just around her when she gets scared, to always stand to the side. It's important to note that after the first punch, kick, or slap, the Fighter often morphs into the Runner. But, the mere seconds that gained by the Fighter's aggressive response could make all the difference in the getaway.

These reactions to fear to make us laugh. And as long as we're just talking about a scene from a movie or a person jumping out to scare us when we aren't expecting it, these reactions are fine. But how do you think we should react to fears like the fears we talked about earlier – fears of failure or insignificance or rejection or abandonment? We can't spend our entire lives running or freezing or even fighting. That's why John's answer to fear is so important.

## V. Application

It's not comfortable for us to talk about our deep-seated fears, the ones that are more subtle than being scared of the dark or of snakes. When we talk about being afraid of failure or rejection, or of being isolated and not fitting in, or of feeling unlovable and unworthy, we get a bit more tight-lipped and are tempted to become Fear Reactors. But we don't have to.

The Bible has never shied away from talking about fear because there are things about fear and love that God wants us to know. The most repeated command in the Bible is "Fear not," which occurs more than 365 times. Don't you think it might be essential to pay attention to this command?

Our passage today tells us that God's love drives out fear. It doesn't suggest that fear disappears – love actively drives it out! So, we don't have to try to ignore fear or pretend like we don't struggle with it. We don't have to try to muster up all the courage we can. We don't have to beat ourselves up for not having enough faith. Instead, we need to switch I fear to He loves by focusing on God's loving presence amid fear.

We need to remember that fear will always try to deceive us into thinking that it is stronger than it is. It will try to pull a *The Change Up* and convince us to focus on the situation and rather than on the freedom of living in God's love. But the love of God pulls *The Change Up* on fear itself and, in doing so, pulls the plug on fear's deception. God's love is more potent than any deception, and this perfect love drives out fear.

So here's the excellent news: it's not about you! It's not about how much faith you have or how courageous you can be. It's about how much God loves you and how powerful His love is. His passion is bigger and better than any fear we have. That is why we can switch I fear to He loves.

## VI. Optional Illustration: Diving In

[Tip: Gather Some Stock Images of Divers]

Do you remember the first time you jumped off a diving board? Think back. Can you feel the fear constrict your small, floatie-framed body? You walked to the edge but ended up standing there, paralyzed between the possibility of fun and the risk of the unknown. Maybe you stood there for what seems like an hour, debating what your next move should be.

Maybe a parent or older brother or sister was waiting on the side of the pool, almost as nervous as you were. Your loved one encouraged you to jump and reassured you that everything would be OK. Still, you remained glued to that spot by fear because courage alone was not enough to conquer this overwhelming situation.

But maybe, just maybe, something then happened that changed everything for you. Just when you thought you would never be able to leap from the diving board, your dad or mom plunged into the water, opened his or her arms, and called, "Jump! I'll catch you!" Delight and peace emerged immediately on your face, and a minute later, you had taken the leap and already returned to the diving board to do it again. You overcame fear because what courage alone could not overcome, love did.

Just as it did when we were kids on that diving board, fear still tries to paralyze us. It attempts *The Change Up*, attempting to make us think that a situation is more significant than it is and that something is way too challenging for us to handle. So how can we pull the plug on a deception that seems so real?

Just as a parent's presence helps us jump off the diving board, God's presence helps us overcome fear in our lives. John's letter reveals how love can help us reverse *The Change Up*. When we face fear's deception, we need to switch from I fear to He loves.

## VII. Closing

Does all this talk about fear scare you or make you uncomfortable? Fear not.

Do you feel like you're facing some things better left un-faced? Fear not.

Do you think that you're not up for the challenge of unplugging fear? Fear not.

God knows you. He knows who you are, what you are, and where you are. Your insecurities, fears, and past do not surprise Him. God is not scared of your fears, and neither should you be. The fear that's holding you back? It's a lie. Fear not.



## **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 type of Fear Reactor do you tend to be? Why do you think that is?
2. List three kinds of fear you have dealt within your own life.
3. Which one caused you the most problems?
4. Is there a particular deception of fear that you're facing right now? Tell me more.
5. What does today's passage say about God? What does this passage say about God's love?
6. How does God's love impact our fear?
7. Why can't courage completely drive out fear?
8. How does the truth that perfect love drives out fear affect your perspective about facing your fear?
9. How can you pull the *The Change Up* on fear by living in God's perfect love?