



GOALS

- For students to become comfortable growing closer to God.
- For students to have an opportunity to clean themselves of anything that would prevent them from drawing closer to God.
- For students to understand what it takes to dwell in the sanctuary of God (or to be at home in His presence).

MATERIALS: Group

- Variety of colored pencils
- Whiteboard and markers

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal pages
- Scripture sheet, Psalm 15
- A Bible
- A pen

SESSION INTRO

Pray

Pray that God's Spirit will reveal anything that's keeping your group members from being completely comfortable in God's presence—just like a little child in the arms of a loving dad or mom.

Open

Share a personal story regarding a time when you were extremely uncomfortable. For example: a time when you were in pain (injury, surgery recovery), or a time when your shoes were too small or too tight, or when you crammed way too many people into a small vehicle.

After your story has primed the pump a bit, ask for others to share stories of “uncomfortableness” such as:

- long trip in a car*
- camping in a rainstorm (or snowstorm!)*
- walking with a blister*
- standing in line on a hot day and needing to go to the bathroom*

After your group has shared a few stories, share in your own words:

We sometimes take the idea of being comfortable for granted. We don't realize how much we like to be comfortable until we are uncomfortable.

The same is true in our relationship with God. We almost never realize how great it is to be comfortable with God until we experience what it's like to be uncomfortable with Him. The best way to deal with the uncomfortable is to figure out what is making you uncomfortable and change it.

When David penned his well-loved phrase, “I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’” (Psalm 122:1 NIV) his heart must have been right with God. It is good to be in God's presence when we have been obedient, but it can be equally uncomfortable when we have been disobedient or when we know our actions and thoughts aren't lining up with what He wants.

DIGGING IN

Call your students' attention to the Session 2 journal pages and Scripture sheet for Psalm 15. Hand out one or two colored pencils per person.

Have your students quietly read the first verse and then discuss the following questions.

What are the questions being asked here?

What does it mean to dwell in God's sanctuary?

What does it mean to live on God's holy hill?

What point do you think the author is trying to make?

Work together to reword the first verse in a way that it would be written if it were written today.

Now have students read the entire psalm. As a way to play up the comfortable theme you could give them the opportunity to spread out and get "comfortable" as they do their personal study.

As they read, invite them to:

1. **Underline in one color anything they should do in order to sit comfortably in God's presence.**
2. **Take a moment to list these things on their journal pages under the heading "Top Ten Ways to Be Comfortable with God." (You might want to explain that in this passage there are 10 basic instructions but you could come up with 11.)**

Once students have finished, bring them back together as a group (or let them stay where they are, depending on how big the room is). The object of your discussion will be to work as a group to list each of the 10 instructions on the board. Leave room to write beneath each instruction.

As you work through the passage, you'll want to make sure that everyone understands the meaning of each instruction. Now would be a good time for you to weave in your observations on the meaning of verse 2 (regarding a "blameless" walk) and verse 4 (regarding despising a vile person), especially if your students have questions about these things.

TAKING IT INWARD

After you have your 10 instructions listed on the board, give your group a minute to check their journal pages to be sure they have them listed correctly. Then send them back to their comfortable place (or tell them to stay where they are) for a "personal retreat." Their assignment is to use their list of instructions from above, "Top Ten Ways to be Comfortable with God," and identify three practical ways to "do" each instruction. They should write these underneath each instruction. You may want to do the first instruction together as practice.

The first instruction is to be a person "whose walk is blameless." Work together as a group to list three or four ways to be this kind of person. Record the information your group gives you on the board as an example. It may look something like this:

Be someone whose walk is blameless:

Don't do anything you would regret later

Don't lie to anyone

Be the same person in private that you are in public

When your students have the hang of it, give them time to do the work on their own.

After most of your students have finished, bring them back together to discuss the ideas they came up with. Take turns having students share the top one or two that stood out to them the most. List on the board the practical ideas they have for keeping each instruction. Some of these may be very convicting and will require further discussion. Here are a few follow up questions that will help take the conversation a little deeper for any given instruction.

What would need to change in your life so you could (insert instruction here)?

What's stopping you from making these changes?

Do you have people in your life who appear to live very comfortably with God?

What do you see that enables them to live this way?

Do you want to be more comfortable with God?

Do you feel like making some of these changes is too big of a sacrifice?

How would (insert instruction here) make things more comfortable between you and God?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Direct students to the section on their journal page with the heading, "My Comfort Level" and point out the rating scale. Have them rate the current level of comfort they are experiencing on the scale with a 10 being the "most comfortable" and a 1 being the "least comfortable."

Underneath the scale is one question: What is currently affecting my comfort level with God? Have your students journal their thoughts on that question.

Ask your students:

What are you thinking as you look over this list (on their journal page and on the board) and you look at the current comfort level you are experiencing with God?

Which of these instructions most convict or challenge you?

Give students a few minutes to personally respond to the question "What changes can I make this week?" Ask them to write in the box "Changes to Make this Week" any specific things they need to do this week in order to fulfill the instructions of Psalm 15 and be more at home in God's presence.

Depending on the size of your group, you can do this next exercise together or in pairs. If it's a larger group, have your students pair up. If it's a small group come closer together and encourage them to share openly with one another. Take turns having students share what they wrote in their box. Saying it out loud helps lock it in. Telling another person also ramps up the level of accountability. Saying it in front of a group challenges other group members to be bold.

Finally, remind your group of the promise in verse 5: "He who does these things will never be shaken." Ask them what they think this promise means. Ask them if they want this promise to be true of their lives.

One more thing:

Your students may have noticed that because they used the Scripture sheets that they haven't used their Bibles in this session. In most sessions they will be using their Bibles to look up other passages. To encourage personal use of their Bibles, have students open their Bibles to Psalm 15. Invite them to make notes from the session in the margins of this psalm.