

SESSION 10

rest in God's presence



SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Psalm 91

BUILDUP THEME



INTERNALIZE GODLINESS

God is worthy of and sufficient for the believer's trust.

MEASURABLE RESPONSE

The students will go to the Most High for comfort and protection.

MEMORY VERSE

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust" (Psalm 91:1, 2).

Teacher Preparation

- ☐ Read Psalm 91. Note the well-known verses in this psalm that are often quoted. Even Satan quoted parts of verses 11 and 12 (Matt. 4:5–7). Satan challenged Jesus to test God the Father's promise to care for His own by throwing Himself off the top of the temple. If God was true to His Word, then He would send His angels to catch Jesus, Satan suggested. Jesus refused because it is wrong to test whether God will be true to His word. Jesus' underlying point is that God is always trustworthy. He always means what He says and keeps His promises.
- ☐ What have the truths in Psalm 91 meant to you? In what circumstances have you appreciated them?
- ☐ Encourage your students as you teach Psalm 91. Be sensitive to those who are facing particularly difficult trials.

Session Summary

Psalm 91 teaches the trustworthiness of God. The psalmist made a clear statement of his trust in God, called others to trust in God, and described the benefits that come to those who choose to trust in Him. Those who are experiencing doubts for any reason can find comfort in the beautiful words of this psalm.

Session Starters

Option 1—Complete Trust

Steps

1. Discuss the trustworthiness of restaurant workers.

ASK: For those of you who have worked in a restaurant, what have you witnessed that customers might find disturbing?

ASK: As a customer, how much do you want to know about what happens in the kitchens of your favorite restaurants? (Q2)

Some restaurants would go out of business if their customers knew what happens to their food while it was being prepared. For most of us, ignorance is bliss. We blindly trust the workers so we can continue to enjoy our dining-out experiences.

2. Transition to the Bible study.

Unlike most restaurant kitchens, the Lord is completely trustworthy. We don't have to question what He is doing behind the scenes. In fact, He invites us to come near Him. Psalm 91 will challenge you to deepen your trust in God no matter what circumstances you are served.

Option 2—Comfort and Safety

Steps

1. Discuss comfort and safety.

ASK: Where would you go to be comfortable?

ASK: Where would you go to be safe?

2. Transition to the Bible study.

Most likely the place you find the greatest comfort isn't exceptionally safe. And the place you find the greatest sense of safety isn't comfortable. Psalm 91 teaches us that in the presence of the Most High, the believer can be both comfortable and safe. The psalm will encourage us to draw near to the Most High.

Bible Study

Gather

- Resource 68-R12.

I. Statement of Trust in God (Ps. 91:1, 2)

A. Descriptions of God (91:1, 2)

In the first couple verses of Psalm 91, the psalmist provided some important facts about God that formed the basis for his trust in Him. When we understand God, deciding to trust Him is not difficult.

READ: Psalm 91:1.

The psalmist's first reference to God is as the **Most High**.

READ: Daniel 4:34–37. **ASK:** What do we learn from Nebuchadnezzar about God's position as the Most High? (Q3) *It involves complete control over people, time, well-being, and human power. People can't overcome the Most High.*

ASK: What decision did Nebuchadnezzar make when he realized Who God is? (Q4) *He blessed, honored, and praised God.*

Nebuchadnezzar thought he was worthy of exultation because of his power and majesty (Dan. 4:30). After losing his mind for perhaps as long as seven years, Nebuchadnezzar realized the absolute authority that the Most High held. Even he, the most powerful man on earth, was no match for God.

The place of the Most High is a sheltered secret hiding place. God's presence makes it protective. Near the Most High is the securest place a person could be. But only those who choose to dwell in the secret place of the Most High enjoy the security of God's presence.

Dwelling in a place means settling down there for good. Choosing to dwell in the secret place of the Most High means to choose to trust the Most High, resting in His identity and authority.

As the **Almighty**, God is all-powerful. Those who trust in Him will abide in His shadow.

ASK: What does it take to be in someone's shadow? (Q5) *It takes being close to the person and being smaller than the person.*

ASK: When you were a child, how safe and secure did you feel when walking by the side of a trusted adult? (Q6)

Choosing to trust God is choosing to be next to the Almighty.

READ: Psalm 91:2.

The psalmist next referred to God as a "**refuge**" and a "**fortress**." Both are designed for protection. Those who run to God find security. They can relax even though the enemy still lurks outside the walls.

READ: 2 Samuel 22:1–7. **ASK:** What did it take for David to "enter" his refuge, the Lord? (Q7) *He cried out to the Lord with faith.*

ASK: Describe a time when you “entered” your refuge, the Lord. (Q8)

ASK: What other “fortresses” might believers try to run to when they face turmoil? (Q9) *Fantasy; amusement; other people; things that make them feel good (e.g., shopping, sports).*

B. Decision to trust (91:2)

After stating God’s ultimate position, almighty power, and absolute protection, the psalmist simply stated that the Lord was his God and that he would trust in Him (Ps. 91:2). God didn’t make him just feel safe and secure, He actually made him safe and secure.

ASK: Must we feel safe and secure before we decide to trust God? Explain. (Q10)

Feelings should not determine our decisions; feelings should follow our decisions. When David was fleeing from Saul, he felt alone, abandoned, and hopeless. But he chose to trust in the Lord (2 Sam. 22:7). His choice to trust made him safe, and his feelings of safety followed.

Often turmoil comes at us like a flood. In those times we may have to renew our decision to trust God every day.

II. Solicitation to Trust in God (Ps. 91:3–8)

The psalmist could have stopped with verses 1 and 2. But he continued with the rest of his song to encourage others to trust in the Lord too. He gave three reasons to trust God.

A. God will raise His “feathers” (91:3, 4)

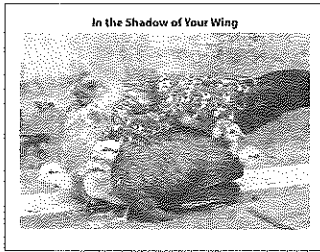
READ: Psalm 91:3, 4.

The “snare” referred to in verse 3 is the trap set by a “fowler,” or bird catcher. Fowlers were particularly cunning. They took young birds of the type they hunted and raised the birds to trust them. They put the tame birds in cages and used their calls to attract other birds. When a flock was gathered, the fowler used a net, arrows, or a throwing stick to capture or kill the birds. Even a surprise attack like that of the fowler can’t trap those who trust in the Lord.

READ: Proverbs 29:25. **ASK:** What does this proverb say about what protects a person from a snare? (Q11) *Trusting in the Lord.*

God also promises to deliver those who trust Him from the deadly “pestilence” (plague) (Ps. 91:3). The pestilence perhaps represents unseen attacks that threaten believers.

READ: Psalm 91:4. **ASK:** What two words would you use to describe God based on the metaphors in this verse? (Q12) *Caring and strong.*



68-R12

We covered the protection of a mother bird's wing in session 7. To us, the flimsy wing of a bird doesn't seem like a place of protection. But the comparison shows care more than protection. God cares for those who are His, much like a mother bird cares for her young.

DISPLAY: Resource 68-R12.

For the believer, the thought of being gathered under the Lord's wing is comforting. When God raises His feathers, those who are His should come running to Him.

By contrast to a bird's wing, a "shield and buckler" are strong and offer secure protection (91:4). For an Old Testament soldier, the shield received the brunt of an enemy's blows. When we think of God as our shield, we realize the grief we are spared as we trust Him to direct us with His truth. Proverbs 3:1–8 encourages us to trust in the Lord and take Him at His Word. When we do, He will direct our paths and shield us from the enemy (Eph. 6:16). When we don't, our way is hard (Prov. 13:15).

B. He will remove your fear (91:5, 6)

READ: Psalm 91:5, 6.

The terror of the night is being unable to see the enemy. The terror of the day is the enemy's ability to see us. In other words, there is no rest for the hunted. But God takes away both fears. The psalmist was telling those who feel as if they cannot escape and find rest for their souls to trust in the Almighty and Most High God. His presence in the midst of uncertainty chases away our fear and gives us peace (Phil. 4:6, 7).

TESTIMONY: Share a time when you were relieved of dreadful fear and anxiety by simply praying about the matter and expressing your trust in the Lord. (Q13)

C. He will "reward" your foes (91:7, 8)

READ: Psalm 91:7, 8.

Our enemies, the wicked, will not go unpunished. They will get their "reward" (Ps. 91:8). Though in this life some of the wicked may appear to be happy, content, and full, their day is coming. They will not escape God's wrath.

READ: Ephesians 5:5–8. **ASK:** How should believers respond to the coming wrath of God on the wicked? (Q14) *They should live as lights before the lost by being obedient to the Lord.*

III. Safety of Those Who Trust God (Ps. 91:9–13)

A. Assurance of safety (91:9, 10)

READ: Psalm 91:9, 10.

The psalmist's solicitation to trust in the Lord is convincing—so much so that he expected the reader to choose to trust God. He didn't say, "If you have now chosen to trust God." No, he said, "Because you have made the Lord, my refuge and the most High, your habitation."

Having already laid out the benefits of trusting God in verses 3–8, the psalmist simply summarized them and applied them to the reader. He began by telling the reader no evil would befall him and no plague would come near his dwelling (91:10).

B. Means of safety (91:11–13)

READ: Psalm 91:11–13.

The psalmist elaborated on what the Lord uses to ensure the safety of those who trust in Him. The first means is the angelic host (91:11). Angels minister as God sees fit. God gives them a "charge." He tells them what to do, and they carry out His will in regard to believers. God sends angels to keep or guard believers.

READ: Hebrews 1:14.

Angels make a difference in our lives in that they intervene and keep us from harm. Angels aren't sporadic in carrying out their duties. They are reliable and well equipped to do their jobs. God trusts them, and we can find comfort in knowing they are near.

God also gives believers strength for the way (91:13). Treading on the lion and cobra is extraordinary. The apostle Paul experienced such extraordinary strength. In Philippians 4:13 he said he can do all things through Christ Who strengthens him. God strengthens us to meet the challenges of life as we trust Him and choose to obey Him.

IV. Satisfaction of Those Who Trust God (91:14–16)

In the last three verses, God Himself spoke to the psalmist about the reader who puts his or her trust in God. His words include some precious promises.

A. They are lifted up (91:14)

READ: Psalm 91:14.

The first and last phrases in verse 14 could be used interchangeably. Loving God is equivalent to knowing and trusting God's name (the Most High and Almighty, 91:1). As readers think about the psalmist's statement of trust, look at the reasons for trusting God, and then decide to trust God (91:9), they are also choosing to love God.

ASK: What has helped you get to know God's "name" better? (Q15)

In response to love from the psalmist's audience, the Lord promises to deliver them and lift them up on high, where they will be safe. Though the trouble is still there, they can know that God is in control and that they can endure with peace and assurance.

B. They are listened to (91:15)

God declares to those who trust Him that He will listen to them if they will but call on Him.

READ: Psalm 91:15. **ASK:** How should the promises of God in verse 15 affect a believer's prayer life? (Q16) *God's readiness to answer our prayers should cause us to run to Him in prayer.*

God also promises His presence in the midst of trouble. Notice God didn't say, "I will take the trouble away." But God's presence in the trouble is just as effective and comforting as our being out of trouble.

God honors those who trust in Him. He expects us to trust Him, and when we do, we enjoy His blessings both in this life and in eternity.

C. They enjoy long life (91:16)

READ: Psalm 91:16.

A long life is also promised to all those who place their trust in God. People may protest that some of the most devoted souls have lived relatively short lives. But when we take into consideration that the days they did live were satisfying and that after they died, their satisfaction and lives continued in the presence of God, we can know that God has never gone back on His promise. Those who choose to trust in God and live for Him will find a satisfaction in this life that will continue forever in eternity, where they will ultimately realize God's salvation.

Most people try to find satisfaction in life by trying to control their lives. They will ultimately fail. Only those who humbly trust God have the promise of satisfaction in life—despite their circumstances

Session Application

Steps

1. Challenge your students to trust the Most High with their needs.

Psalm 91 reveals the heart of the Most High. We can trust Him and run to Him with our needs.

ASK: For what do you need God's comfort right now? (Q17)

ASK: For what do you need God's protection right now? (Q18)

2. Have students close by praising God for being their source of comfort and protection.