

Future HS | Growth Thrives in Discomfort

Beyond

Series Description:

Life is full of next steps you can't see yet — decisions, losses, callings, and seasons that feel uncertain. Beyond helps students step into the unseen future God is inviting them toward by anchoring them in Scripture and practical rhythms. Rooted in passages like James, Romans, 1 Peter, John, and Jeremiah, this series shows that hardship doesn't cancel God's plan — it refines faith, builds character, and produces hope. Each session moves from honest theology (God's sovereignty over the future; suffering as sanctifying) to short, usable practices (prayer, confession, faithful rhythms, community) so students learn to move forward even when the next thing is invisible. The goal is to turn anxious wondering into steady, forward-looking faith: students who expect God to be at work in today, who live toward his promises, and who practice spiritual habits that shape how they step into tomorrow.

Core Theology Insights:

Sovereignty, Sanctification, Incarnational Presence, Redemption, Active Faith

Emphasized Relationships:

God, Self, Others

Response:

Hopeful, persevering faith that moves toward God's promises.



Title

Growth Thrives in Discomfort

Scripture

1 Peter 5:10

Bottom Line

Growth Thrives in Discomfort

Memory Verse

"But we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." – Romans 5: 3b-5

25 min

Teaching

5 min

Introduction (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Leader Note:

Before you read or teach this section, share a short, honest story from your own life about a time you were carrying too much (stress, family pressure, anxiety, grief, burnout) and finally admitted you needed help. The goal is to model vulnerability and show students that even leaders hit a point where they can't hold everything alone. Keep it real and age-appropriate.

After you share, you can say something like, "Here's an example of the kind of story I mean," and then use or adapt the story below. The following story is pulled from this week's video. You can also choose to play the video provided.

If you want to become a Navy SEAL, you have to survive one of the most intense training programs in the world. The part of it that many people have heard about is something called, 'Hell Week.'

Hell Week is a notoriously brutal, 5 ½ day crucible with intense physical and mental stress, crazy sleep deprivation (a maximum of 4 hrs sleep total), cold, hunger, and constant challenges like carrying boats and crawling through mud under fire. Hell week is designed to break the recruits mentally and weed out the weak. Only about 25% succeed.

It's a major gut check for determination, teamwork, and performing under extreme pressure.

And here's the part that surprises a lot of people.

Most people who quit SEAL training don't quit because they don't have the physical endurance to finish. Studies and interviews show that most of them quit because the discomfort becomes overwhelming. Not because something is broken. Not because they are incapable. But because staying in it becomes unbearable.

Sounds like torture right? But the Navy is very clear about why they do this. They are not trying to break people. They are trying to form people into the best soldiers this country has to offer.

They want to know who can stay in the fight even when everything in them wants to quit. Surviving 'Hell Week' creates resilience that cannot and will never be formed in comfort.

There's even a phrase used in military training that sums it up. "Get Comfortable with the Uncomfortable."

It's not elegant, but it's honest. It means this. Some things are uncomfortable on purpose. Running from the discomfort doesn't make you stronger. Staying does.

The thing is we're not all in Navy SEAL training, and we're not trying to survive 'Hell Week' right now. So what does it mean for us to "Get Comfortable with the Uncomfortable"?

5 min

Tension (WE)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Lean in with me for a second. You guys, we all love the idea of being awesome. Getting the glory. Being the best. But NONE of us want to be uncomfortable. We haaaaate it.

We want the fortune, but we don't want to have to take the time to work hard at anything.

We want the muscles, but we don't want to spend all of our time at the gym.

We want the popularity, but we don't want to be the kind of friend everyone's lucky to have.

We want the straight A's, but we don't want to study.

We want unshakable faith, but our Bible is gathering dust.

Growth is uncomfortable! We don't like it. Especially when discomfort looks like waiting, trying again, or not being noticed. And in fact, most of the time when things feel uncomfortable, we assume something is wrong.

But the early church thought the opposite. They saw hardship not as a sign they were off track, but as a sign they were following Jesus faithfully in a broken world.

Don't believe me? Ignatius of Antioch, who was discipled by the apostle John in the years immediately following Jesus' death and resurrection, wrote this around the year 107 AD *as he was headed to his execution*: "*Now I begin to be a disciple.*"

On his way to be martyred for his faith, he proclaims, "NOW I begin to be a disciple." For him, discomfort wasn't proof that God was gone. It was proof his faith was real.

Hear me, I'm not saying you and I need to die for our faith to become true disciples, but talk about 'Get comfortable with the Uncomfortable.' Ignatius probably got this idea from Paul's letter to the Romans where he says:

"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4 NIV).

This isn't just a spiritual idea. Research backs it up, too. Psychologist Angela Duckworth, who studies success and perseverance, found that endurance and grit are more predictive of long-term growth than talent. In other words, the people who grow the most are not always the most gifted. They are the ones who *stay in it*.

The problem is, humans naturally avoid discomfort. Our instinct is to escape it, numb it, or distract ourselves from it. But nothing meaningful grows without it. Comfort feels safe, but it rarely changes us.

So the question isn't whether discomfort will show up. It will. The real question is what you do when it does.

5 min

Truth (GOD)

This is where Scripture gives us clarity.

In 1 Peter 5:10 (NLT), Peter writes: "*After you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.*"

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Application (YOU)**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

Landing (ME)**What You Need**

No supplies needed

Peter is not sugarcoating anything. He openly acknowledges suffering. Discomfort. Difficulty. He doesn't say if. He says after. Which tells us something important. Discomfort is not a failure. It is a season. And seasons, by definition, are not permanent.

Before that, Peter says: *"In this kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus"* (1 Peter 5:10 NLT). That matters. Because it means God does not abandon us in discomfort. He walks with us through it. He shares it. He doesn't watch from a distance. He is present in the process.

And then Peter says something powerful. God Himself will restore you. Strengthen you. Establish you. God does not outsource growth. He is personally involved in forming you. Even when it feels slow. Even when it feels uncomfortable.

And look at the outcome. Strong. Firm. Steadfast. Not fragile. Not shaky. Not easily knocked over. Discomfort has a purpose.

Think about how muscles grow. They grow under tension. Resistance. Time. The tension isn't the enemy. It's the mechanism. And the same is true for your heart and your faith.

I want to ask you: "Where are you uncomfortable right now?"

Maybe it's a relationship.

Maybe it's faith questions you don't know how to answer.

Maybe it's academic pressure or anxiety.

Maybe it's identity. Leadership. Family stress.

Name it. You don't have to say it out loud. Just be honest.

And here's the challenge. Stay. Don't run.

Jesus says in Luke 9:23 (NIV): *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*

Jesus actually says following Him would require daily choosing to stay, even when it's uncomfortable. What Jesus did not mean is staying in abuse, danger, or unhealthy situations. That is not what we're talking about. We are talking about the spiritual and emotional work God is doing in you when things feel hard.

Staying looks like continuing to pray when answers don't come quickly. Staying looks like showing up again. Staying looks like building habits that shape you over time.

James Clear, the author of *Atomic Habits*, puts it this way: "You don't rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your habits. Staying builds habits. And habits shape faith."

Growth doesn't happen in one big moment. It happens through faithfulness over time.

Discomfort is not a sign that God has left you.

It may be a sign that God is forming you.

Growth comes from discomfort, time, and God's grace working together. You don't have to rush it. You don't have to escape it. You just have to stay with God in it. Comfort will keep you safe, but discomfort is what makes you strong.

Galatians 6:9 (NIV) says: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Let's pray.

Jesus, help us embrace the discomfort that causes us to grow. Help us carry the confidence not to run when You are trying to grow us. Give us faith to trust You, and believe that You are working even when it feels uncomfortable. We choose You. We love You. Amen.

37 min

Groups

2 min

Think About This

What You Need

No supplies needed

Help students see that some discomfort is not a sign God has abandoned them, but often the space where God is forming them. Clarify the difference between healthy, stretching discomfort and unsafe or abusive situations.

Leader Tips

- This week can get real, fast. Some students will think “discomfort” = hard practice or AP Chem. Others will hear “discomfort” and think trauma, anxiety, abuse, or depression. Your job is not to mine for pain but to make it safe to be honest.

A few coaching notes:

- Never pressure a student to share details. Offer “write first, share if you want” moments
- Keep repeating the difference between *stretching* discomfort (learning, waiting, pushing through) and *harmful* situations (abuse, self-harm, unsafe homes). If a student hints at harm, follow your church’s safety & reporting process after group.
- Celebrate small, quiet courage: showing up, being honest, admitting “I want to quit.”

Keep the tone hopeful: God is not causing evil, but He *is* present in hard seasons and can grow endurance, character, and hope in them.

10 min

Discussion Questions (Core Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These hit the heart of the week's content.)

Quick around-the-circle:

"On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you hate being uncomfortable? 1 = 'I kind of like a challenge,' 10 = 'If it's awkward, I'm out.' Share your number and one example of something that makes you uncomfortable."

1. If your life had a "Hell Week" like in SEAL training, what would make you quit first: no phone, no sleep, someone yelling at you, constant group projects, or having to talk to new people all day? Why that one?
2. What's something you were excited about until it got hard... and then you wanted to bail? (Sport, class, music, job, reading the Bible, whatever.)
3. When stuff gets uncomfortable, which phrase sounds most like you right now:
 - "I push through silently"
 - "I complain but keep going"
 - "I disappear"
 - "I convince myself I never cared anyway"
 Share a quick example if you're comfortable.
4. Take 30 seconds and quietly write this in your notes: "Where am I uncomfortable right now?" It can be school, faith, friendships, family, anything. You don't have to share details, but if you want to, you can.
5. The teaching said, "Most people quit not because they can't keep going, but because the discomfort feels unbearable." Does that feel true to you? Why or why not?
6. Read 1 Peter 5:10 (NIV) together. Which word lands hardest for you today: *suffered*, *restore*, *support*, *strengthen*, or *firm foundation*? What about that word sticks out?
7. When you hear the bottom line, "Growth thrives in discomfort," what's your first reaction: "That makes sense," "I hate that," or "I'm not sure yet"?

10 min

Discussion Questions (Dive Deep)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These dig into the Bible, context, and theology in student language.)

1. Look again at 1 Peter 5:10. Why do you think Peter says “after you have suffered a little while”? What does that tell us about hard seasons being temporary vs permanent?
2. How would you explain the difference between:
 - Discomfort that God uses to grow you (stretching, challenging, exhausting), and
 - Harm that God does *not* want for you (abuse, manipulation, constant fear)?
 Let students name examples on each side.
3. In the teaching we heard, “Discomfort is not a failure. It is a season.” How does seeing it as a *season* change the way you feel about what you’re facing right now?
4. Read Luke 9:23 (NIV): “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” In normal high school life, what might “take up your cross daily” actually look like? (Think habits, choices, conversations, not just big dramatic moments.)
5. Why do you think God often grows people *through* discomfort instead of just removing it immediately? What does that show you about His character and His long-term view of your life?
6. Talk about a time (it can be small) when you stayed in something hard and later realized you had grown. What changed in you: your patience, your courage, your trust, your self-control, something else?
7. If you were going to treat your current hard thing like “training” instead of just “misery,” how would that change the way you pray about it this week?

10 min

Discussion Questions (Culture Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These connect the topic to real life and the world students live in.)

1. How does our culture usually respond to discomfort: push through it, numb it, post about it, joke about it, or pretend it's not there? Where do you see that most clearly?
2. Where do you see pressure to escape discomfort instead of grow through it? Think about social media, relationships, school pressure, jobs, or even church.
3. A lot of content online promises "shortcuts" (quick money, instant fitness, overnight success). How do those shortcut messages clash with the Bible's picture of slow growth through endurance?
4. When you scroll, does it usually make your discomfort feel smaller, bigger, or just numb? How can that affect your faith or mental health over time?
5. How does the idea "growth thrives in discomfort" challenge the way we usually talk about "self-care"? What's a healthy balance between rest and just avoiding anything hard?
6. If your friend told you, "Life is way too hard right now; I just want out," what's one honest, non-cheesy way you could respond that lines up with 1 Peter 5:10?
7. Last one: think about one area this week where you're tempted to tap out because it's uncomfortable. What's one small, realistic step you can take instead that says, "I'm going to stay and let God grow me here"?

5 min

Try This

What You Need

No supplies needed

Pick a time each day this week—same time, same place.

1. Set a **3-minute** timer.
2. First **2 minutes**: Tell God what's on your mind like you're unpacking your backpack at the end of the day—item by item, talking to Him about everything that felt heavy, stressful, or confusing.
3. Last **1 minute**: Sit quietly and repeat in your head, "You care for me."

If a helpful thought or next step comes to mind, write it down and tell a trusted adult or leader before the day is over. Don't carry it alone.

Resources

Teaching Outline

What You Need

No supplies needed

HS LESSON OUTLINE / Beyond / WK 2 1 Peter 5:10

Bottom Line: Growth Thrives in Discomfort

INTRO (ME)

- Navy SEAL training → Hell Week
- Extreme discomfort by design
- Most quit due to discomfort, not inability.
- Goal isn't to break people, but form resilience.
- Phrase: "Get Comfortable with the Uncomfortable "
- Some discomfort is intentional.
- Staying grows strength.
- Question: What if discomfort is part of how God forms us?

TENSION (WE)

- We want results without discomfort
- Want:
 - Muscles without training
 - Success without effort
 - Faith without discipline
- Growth feels uncomfortable:
 - Waiting
 - Trying again
 - Being unnoticed
- We assume discomfort = something is wrong.
- Early church believed the opposite.
- Ignatius of Antioch:
 -

"Now I begin to be a disciple."

- Romans 5:3-4:
 - Suffering → perseverance → character → hope
- Research confirms:
 - Grit > talent
- Discomfort is unavoidable.
- Question: What do you do when it shows up?

TRUTH (GOD)

- Read 1 Peter 5:10
- "After you have suffered" = season, not failure
- God is "the God of all grace."
- Grace = God present in the process.
- God Himself:
 - Restores
 - Strengthens
 - Establishes
- Growth is personal, intentional.
- Muscles grow through resistance.
- Discomfort has purpose.

APPLICATION (YOU)

- Identify current discomfort:
 - Relationships
 - Faith questions
 - School pressure
 - Anxiety
 - Identity
-

Challenge: Stay, don't run

- Luke 9:23:
 - Take up your cross daily.
- Staying ≠ abuse or danger
- Staying looks like:
 - Praying again
 - Showing up again
 - Building habits
- Habits shape faith. (James Clear)
- Growth happens over time.

LANDING (ME)

- Discomfort ≠ God's absence
- Discomfort = formation
- Growth requires:
 - Time
 - Discomfort
 - God's grace
- Comfort keeps you safe.
- Discomfort makes you strong
- Galatians 6:9:
 - Don't give up.

Invitation: Stay with God in the process.