

STUDENT STUDY GUIDE - August 30, 2026

STAY STRONG! ENDURE!

Based on the message by Justin Younger,

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OVERVIEW

What happens to your faith when following Jesus starts costing you something?

In Mark 4, Jesus describes “seed” that falls on stony ground. The people represented by that soil receive the Word with gladness, but they have no deep root. When tribulation or persecution comes because of the Word, they stumble.

That should make us ask a serious question: Is our faith deep enough to survive pressure?

It is easy to follow Jesus when the message feels encouraging, your friends support your choices, life is going well, and obedience does not cost much. The real test comes when following Jesus puts you at odds with the people around you, when life becomes painful, when prayers seem unanswered, or when doing what is right makes your life harder instead of easier.

Jesus never promised His followers a comfortable life. He told His disciples that if the world hated Him, they should expect resistance too.

Justin Younger challenges us to stop assuming that every hard season means something has gone wrong. Sometimes resistance comes because you are actually moving in the right direction.

The enemy wants to interfere with what God is planting inside you. He wants the Word to stay shallow enough that pressure can uproot it. He wants discouragement, fear, compromise, isolation, and hardship to make you quit becoming the person God created you to be.

But Scripture calls you to endure.

Paul tells Timothy to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells His followers to count the cost and carry their cross. James tells believers to resist the devil and draw near to God.

Following Jesus is not about proving how tough you are. Your strength comes from Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

This study will challenge you to examine whether your faith is actually rooted, how you respond to resistance, what you do when obedience gets costly, and whether you are becoming someone who will continue following Jesus when quitting would be easier.

“Stay strong. Don’t back down. Hold fast to your confession of faith. Believe God.”

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read → Respond → Reflect → Pray

Read each passage slowly and pay attention to what Scripture actually says.

Respond using the Bible before answering from your own opinion.

Reflect honestly. Do not answer based on what sounds spiritual. Ask yourself what your actual choices, reactions, friendships, habits, and priorities reveal about your faith.

Pray about what the Holy Spirit shows you. Be willing to repent, change direction, ask for help, or surrender something you have been holding onto.

Then live it. Choose one specific way to obey what God is showing you instead of simply agreeing with it.

SECTION 1 — EXPECT RESISTANCE WHEN YOU FOLLOW JESUS

FOCUS

Jesus describes people who receive the Word with joy but have no deep root. When hardship comes because of the Word, they stumble.

Jesus also tells His disciples in John 15 that if the world hated and persecuted Him, His followers should not expect to avoid resistance.

Following Jesus will not always be comfortable. The question is whether your faith is deep enough to remain steady when following Him becomes difficult.

READ

Mark 4:14–17; John 15:18–21

RESPOND

1. According to Mark 4:14, what does the seed represent?
2. How do those on stony ground first receive the Word?
3. Why do they endure only for a time?
4. What causes them to stumble?
5. According to John 15:18, whom did the world hate before it hated Jesus' followers?
6. What does Jesus say in John 15:20 about a servant and his master?

REFLECT

- Is your faith strongest only when life is going well, or are you learning to trust Jesus when things are confusing, painful, or unfair?
- Have you ever backed away from something you knew was right because you did not want to be judged, excluded, or made fun of?

- What pressure has the most power over your choices right now—friends, dating relationships, social media, approval, fear of missing out, sports, academics, family expectations, or something else?
- If your faith was tested this week, what would reveal whether God's Word is deeply rooted in you?

Further Scripture Reading

Mark 4:3–20; John 15:18–25; Matthew 24:9–13

SECTION 2 — UNDERSTAND WHAT THE ENEMY IS AFTER

FOCUS

Justin says, “The devil’s not after you. He’s after what’s on the inside of you.”

The enemy wants to interfere with the Word God is planting in your heart and keep you from becoming who God created you to be. That battle is spiritual. People are not your real enemy.

Recognizing that changes the way you respond to opposition. Instead of becoming bitter, attacking people, or giving up, you can stand for what God says is true.

READ

Mark 4:14–17; Ephesians 6:10–12

RESPOND

1. According to Mark 4:14, what does the seed represent?
2. In Mark 4:17, what happens when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word?
3. According to Ephesians 6:12, who or what is our struggle not against?
4. What kinds of spiritual forces does Ephesians 6:12 say believers wrestle against?
5. How does Ephesians 6:11 describe the reason believers need the whole armor of God?

REFLECT

- When someone hurts, criticizes, rejects, or embarrasses you, do you immediately make that person your enemy?
- Where are you currently being pressured to compromise something you know God says is true?
- Is there a lie you have started believing because it has been repeated by friends, culture, social media, or your own thoughts?
- What would it look like to stand firmly for God's Word without becoming arrogant, angry, or hateful toward people?

Further Scripture Reading

Mark 4:14–20; Ephesians 6:10–18

SECTION 3 — ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER

FOCUS

Paul tells Timothy to “endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

Following Jesus includes spiritual battle, but you do not have to fight in your own strength. God gives strength through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Endurance means remaining faithful when the situation does not change as quickly as you want it to.

READ

2 Timothy 2:3; Ephesians 6:10–13

RESPOND

1. According to 2 Timothy 2:3, what does Paul tell Timothy to endure?
2. What comparison does Paul use to describe this kind of endurance?
3. According to Ephesians 6:10, where does a believer’s strength come from?
4. What does Ephesians 6:13 tell believers to do when facing the evil day?
5. After doing everything, what does Ephesians 6:13 say believers should still be able to do?

REFLECT

- What situation in your life currently makes you want to quit, shut down, or stop trying?
- When you are overwhelmed, what do you run to first—Jesus, friends, entertainment, your phone, anger, isolation, substances, or something else?
- Are you waiting for God to remove every hard thing, or are you learning how to stay faithful while walking through it?
- What would endurance look like in one specific area of your life right now?

Further Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 2:1–4; Ephesians 6:10–18

SECTION 4 — COUNT THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

FOCUS

Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship.

In Luke 14, He tells His followers to bear their cross and count the cost. Salvation cannot be earned, but following Jesus requires surrender. Jesus does not ask for one religious part of your life. He calls you to follow Him with all of it.

READ

Luke 14:27–33

RESPOND

1. According to Luke 14:27, what must someone be willing to bear in order to follow Jesus?
2. What does Jesus say a person planning to build a tower should do first?
3. Why should the builder calculate the cost before beginning?
4. What happens if the builder begins but cannot finish?
5. According to Luke 14:33, what must a disciple be willing to forsake?

REFLECT

- What does following Jesus actually cost you in your life right now?
- Is there an area where you want Jesus to be Savior but do not want Him to be Lord?
- Are there friendships, dating relationships, habits, goals, entertainment choices, or plans that you know compete with obedience to Jesus?
- If following Jesus meant losing popularity, a relationship, an opportunity, or comfort, would you still follow Him?

Further Scripture Reading

Luke 14:25–33

SECTION 5 — STAY STRONG, STAND YOUR GROUND, AND DON'T QUIT

FOCUS

Resistance does not get to decide whether you remain faithful.

Scripture tells believers to resist the devil, draw near to God, and endure. You do not stay strong by pretending life is easy. You stay strong by staying close to Jesus when life is hard.

READ

James 4:7–8; Matthew 24:9–13

RESPOND

1. According to James 4:7, to whom should believers submit?
2. What does James 4:7 tell believers to do toward the devil?
3. What does James 4:7 say will happen when we resist him?
4. According to James 4:8, what happens when we draw near to God?

5. According to Matthew 24:13, what does Jesus say about the person who endures to the end?

REFLECT

- Where are you most tempted to back down from your faith right now?
- When life gets hard, does your normal response move you closer to God or farther away from Him?
- Are you isolated in something you are struggling with because you are afraid of what people will think if they know?
- Who is a spiritually mature person you could talk to instead of fighting your battle alone?

Further Scripture Reading

James 4:7–8; Matthew 24:9–13; Mark 4:14–20

PRAY

Ask God to show you where your faith has stayed shallow.

Ask Him to reveal where fear, pressure, hardship, or the opinions of others have begun to influence your obedience.

Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to endure and courage to stand for what God says is true.

Pray specifically about the area where you feel the greatest resistance right now.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

You do not know what situations will test your faith in the future, but you can decide what kind of roots you are growing now. Let God's Word go deep enough that you still trust Jesus when you are misunderstood, disappointed, tempted, rejected, afraid, or exhausted.

When resistance comes, do not quit. Draw near to God, resist the devil, stay connected to other believers, and hold fast to your faith. "Stay strong. Don't back down. Hold fast to your confession of faith. Believe God." Stay Strong! Endure!