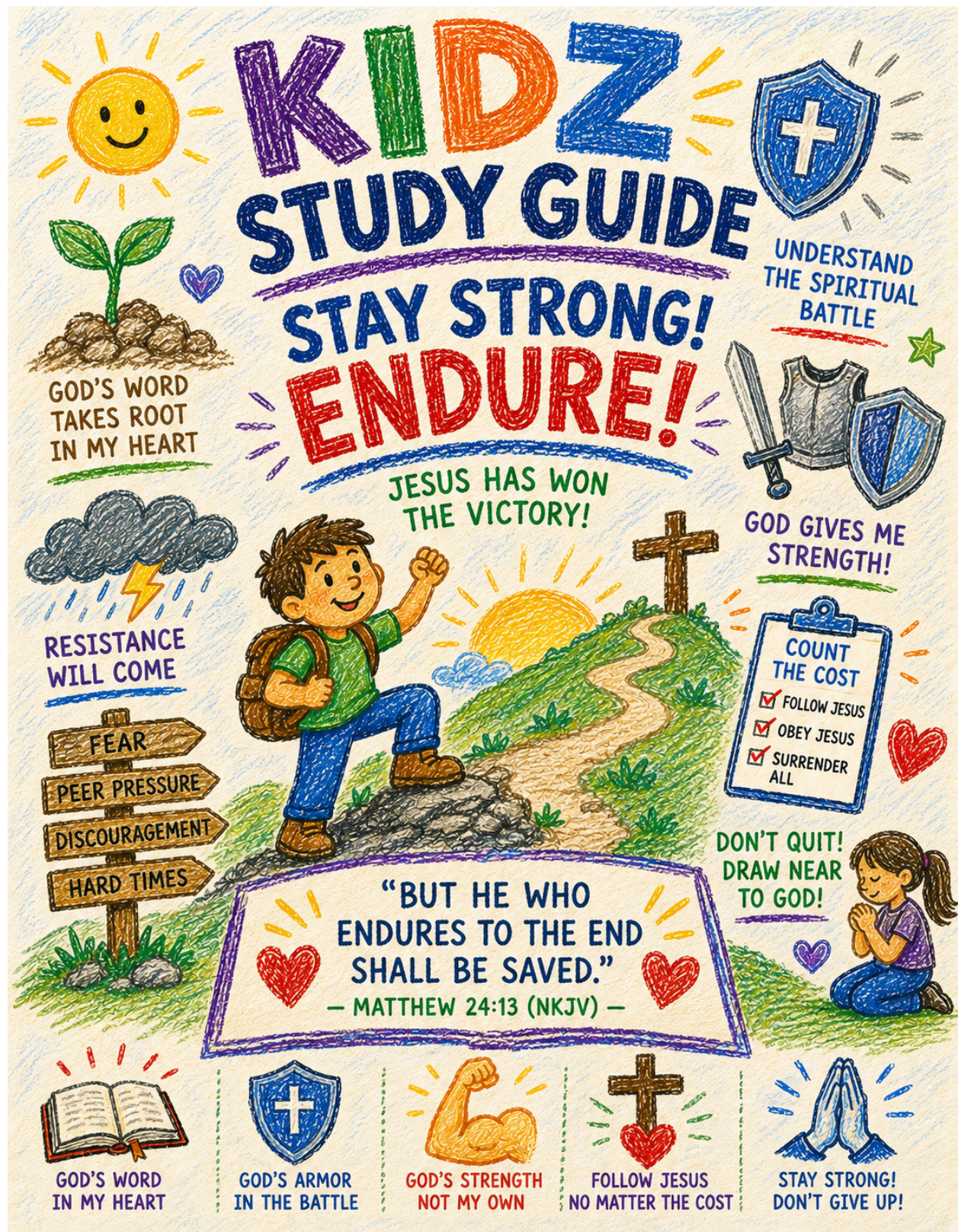




STAY STRONG! ENDURE!

Message from Justin Younger,
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OVERVIEW

What do you do when following Jesus gets hard?

Jesus told a story in Mark 4 about seeds falling on different kinds of ground. Some seeds fell on rocky ground. They started growing quickly, but they did not have deep roots. When things got hard, they could not keep growing.

Jesus explained that the seed is God's Word. Sometimes people are excited to hear God's Word, but when trouble comes, they stop trusting or following what God said.

Jesus wants His Word to grow deep in our hearts so we can stay strong when life is difficult.

Following Jesus does not mean that everything will always be easy. We may have times when people do not understand our choices, when we feel afraid or discouraged, or when doing what God says is harder than doing what everyone else is doing.

But we do not face those things alone.

God gives us strength. The Holy Spirit helps us. The Bible teaches us how to stand against the enemy, and Jesus has already won the greatest victory.

Jesus also tells us that following Him means being willing to choose Him even when it costs us something. We keep trusting Him, keep obeying Him, and keep following Him.

When you feel like quitting, remember:

"Stay strong. Don't back down. Hold fast to your confession of faith. Believe God."

In this study, we will learn how to expect hard times, understand the spiritual battle, depend on God's strength, count the cost of following Jesus, and keep going when we want to give up.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Read About It → Talk About It → Think About It

Open your Bible and read each passage together.

Look for the answers in the Bible before answering the Talk About It questions.

Then use the Think About It questions to talk about how God's Word connects to your own life.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust Jesus when things are hard and show you where you need to stay strong and keep following Him.

This guide can be used with your family, your Kidz group, or during a large group discussion.

 MEMORY VERSE

“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” — Matthew 24:13 (NKJV)

BIG WORDS

- Endure = To keep going and stay faithful even when something is hard.
 - Resistance = Something that pushes against you or makes something harder to do.
 - Persecution = Being treated badly because you follow Jesus.
 - Spiritual Battle = The fight between what God wants and what the enemy wants. Our battle is not against people.
 - Resist = To stand against something and refuse to give in.
 - Disciple = Someone who follows Jesus, learns from Him, and lives His way.
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SECTION 1 — EXPECT RESISTANCE WHEN YOU FOLLOW JESUS

BIG IDEA

Following Jesus will not always be easy, but God’s Word can grow deep in my heart and help me stay strong.

READ ABOUT IT

Mark 4:14–17; John 15:18–21

TALK ABOUT IT

1. According to Mark 4:14, what does the seed stand for?
2. How did the people with rocky hearts first receive God’s Word?
3. What happened when trouble or persecution came?
4. According to John 15:18, who did the world hate before it hated Jesus’ followers?
5. In John 15:20, what does Jesus say happened to Him that His followers may also face?

THINK ABOUT IT

- What do you usually do when something becomes hard—keep trying, ask for help, or want to quit?
- Have you ever found it harder to obey Jesus because your friends were doing something different?
- What is one truth from God's Word that you want to remember when things get hard?

Further Scripture Reading

Mark 4:3–20; John 15:18–21

SECTION 2 — UNDERSTAND WHAT THE ENEMY IS AFTER

BIG IDEA

The enemy wants to keep God's Word from growing in me, but I can stand for what God says is true.

READ ABOUT IT

Mark 4:14–17; Ephesians 6:10–12

TALK ABOUT IT

1. According to Mark 4:14, what does the seed represent?
2. What happens in Mark 4:17 when trouble comes because of God's Word?
3. According to Ephesians 6:12, is our real battle against other people?
4. What kind of battle does Ephesians 6:12 tell us we are facing?
5. According to Ephesians 6:11, why does God give us His armor?

THINK ABOUT IT

- When someone makes you angry or hurts your feelings, is it easy to start treating that person like an enemy?
- What is something you know God says is right even when other people may choose differently?
- How can you stand for what is right without being mean to someone who disagrees with you?

Further Scripture Reading

Mark 4:14–20; Ephesians 6:10–18

SECTION 3 — ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER

BIG IDEA

I do not have to face hard things in my own strength. God gives me strength to keep going.

READ ABOUT IT

2 Timothy 2:3; Ephesians 6:10–13

TALK ABOUT IT

1. According to 2 Timothy 2:3, what does Paul tell Timothy to endure?
2. What kind of person does Paul compare a follower of Jesus to?
3. According to Ephesians 6:10, where does our strength come from?
4. What does Ephesians 6:13 tell us to do when a hard day comes?
5. After we have done everything, what does Ephesians 6:13 tell us to keep doing?

THINK ABOUT IT

- What is something hard in your life right now where you need God's strength?
- When you feel tired, afraid, or discouraged, who do you usually go to for help?
- What could it look like for you to depend on Jesus instead of trying to handle everything by yourself?

Further Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 2:1–4; Ephesians 6:10–18

SECTION 4 — COUNT THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

BIG IDEA

Following Jesus means choosing His way even when it is not the easiest choice.

READ ABOUT IT

Luke 14:27–33

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What does Jesus say His disciples must be willing to carry?
2. What does Jesus say a person should do before building a tower?
3. Why should the builder figure out the cost before starting?
4. What could happen if the builder starts but cannot finish?
5. According to Luke 14:33, does Jesus want only part of our lives or all of our lives?

THINK ABOUT IT

- Can you think of a time when doing what Jesus says might be harder than doing what your friends are doing?
- Is there something you know Jesus wants you to obey even though it feels difficult?
- What would it look like to choose Jesus in that situation?

Further Scripture Reading

Luke 14:25–33

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

BIG IDEA

When I want to give up, I can draw close to God, resist the enemy, and keep following Jesus.

READ ABOUT IT

James 4:7–8; Matthew 24:13

TALK ABOUT IT

1. According to James 4:7, who should we submit to?
2. What does James 4:7 tell us to do when the devil tries to pull us away from God?
3. What does the Bible say the devil will do 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 keeps going to the end?

THINK ABOUT IT

- Is there something right now that makes you want to quit or give up?
- When you are having a hard day, what can you do to draw closer to God?
- Who is a trusted adult or friend who can pray with you and help you when you are struggling?
- Finish this sentence: "With Jesus helping me, I will keep going when _____."

Further Scripture Reading

James 4:7–8; Matthew 24:9–13

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Following Jesus will not always be easy, but you never have to face hard things alone.

Let God's Word grow deep in your heart. When resistance comes, do not give up. Ask Jesus for strength, draw close to God, and remember that people are not your enemy. Choosing Jesus may sometimes be hard, but He is worth following.

When you feel like quitting, remember: "Stay strong. Don't back down. Hold fast to your confession of faith. Believe God."



ACTIVITY — KEEP GROWING!

Draw a plant with BIG, DEEP ROOTS.

Inside the roots, write or draw things that can help God's Word grow deep in your heart. You might include: PRAY, READ THE BIBLE, OBEY JESUS, ASK FOR HELP