

JESUS *Strong*

FELLOWSHIP • SCRIPTURE • WORSHIP

AN EIGHT WEEK STUDY GUIDE

GALATIANS • EPHESIANS • PHILIPPIANS • COLOSSIANS • 1 THESSALONIANS

1 TIMOTHY • 2 TIMOTHEY • JAMES • 1 PETER • 2 PETER

What does it mean to be **JESUS STRONG?**

No one wants to be weak, or even worse have a weak faith that fails under the weight of life and the brokenness of this world. Instead, we want to be strong, not only to withstand trials and hardship, but also for the benefit of others, to offer them a helping hand and guide them out of darkness into the Light.

In order to do this, we need to be strong. **Jesus strong.**

There are three practices that form a strong cord that can't be broken:

Fellowship – *Sharing life with a community of people who follow Jesus.*

Scripture – *Being with Jesus through daily time in Scripture and prayer.*

Worship – *Consistently worshiping with your church on Sundays.*

The strength of Jesus is always available to us. We experience His strength when we are consistent in the practices that keep us close to Him.

Use this guide along with the *Jesus Strong* teaching series (*you can find it at <http://bpri.church/jesusstrong>) and commit to these three practices to find out what it means to be Jesus strong together with your church.*

If these practices are already regular habits, use this series to recommit and grow deeper. If these practices are nonexistent or inconsistent in your life, this is your chance to commit to them over the next eight weeks.

We can't endure the challenges of life alone. On our own we are weak, but with Jesus and His community we are strong, Jesus strong.

How to use this guide

This guide will take you through ten letters written by Apostles to the early Church. Each Sunday in the *Jesus Strong* teaching series will set-up and introduce one of these New Testament letters. Then during the week, you will use this guide to read and explore the letter on your own. Each week has a Bible Project video to help you understand the context of the letter, memorize a key verse, and study the letter for yourself through daily reading.

To get the most out of each week it's helpful to understand the three key concepts of Scripture reading: context, preparation and approach.

CONTEXT

The context is everything that surrounds the text. Every part of the Bible was written by someone, to someone, for a specific purpose. While there is power in Scripture whenever it is read, we can gain a lot more when we understand why it was originally written and apply that truth to our lives. Answering these three questions whenever you read scripture will help you know the context:

- *Who wrote this passage?*
- *What's going on?*
- *Why was it written?*

PREPARATION

What you do before you read Scripture is just as important as what you do while you read Scripture. Here are three things that will help you prepare so that you get the most out of your time.

1. Create an environment that eliminates external distractions

Choose a consistent location and time of day.

Find a quiet & set apart space where your focus won't be interrupted

Create traditions or habits that will help you look forward to your time.

Brew a cup of coffee, or grab your favorite blanket. Take a walk and sit outside somewhere, or at a window with a view.

2. Practice silence for two to five minutes to quiet internal distraction.

Perhaps the biggest distraction we face is that of our own mind. Silence creates the space to calm our hearts and clear our minds. This is a discipline that will take some time to develop. Focus on your breathing and push thoughts away as they creep in for a couple of moments.

Pray to ask God to help you to slow down and clear your mind so you can focus.

3. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

Before you read ask the Spirit who inspired Scripture to illuminate it for you now. Remember, what you do before you read is as important as what you do while you read!

APPROACH

This guide uses the SOAP method for Bible study. SOAP is an acronym for Scripture, observation, application and prayer. It's a powerful tool that moves you from the text into the reality of your life. Using this method consistently will make it a habit and something you are familiar with. We've given you space in this guide to use this method each day, but you can always use SOAP with a journal or notebook and work through any passage of Scripture.

Scripture

Write the scripture reference and read through the passage slowly.

Observation

Write down what you notice from the reading. For example...

- *What's the main point the author is trying to get across?*
- *What's something challenging or new?*
- *Is there anything in the passage you want to study more?*

Application

Write down how this applies to your life today.

- *How does this challenge you to live as a disciple?*
- *How does it intersect with your current life circumstances?*
- *Is God speaking a word of encouragement or challenge to you directly?*

Prayer

Write your prayer to God in response to what you've read.

GALATIANS

LETTER OVERVIEW

Paul challenges the Galatian Christians on their division over their observance of the law. Paul insists that the Torah law was never able to make a person right with God. The best it could do is expose our need for forgiveness and grace.

Jesus fulfilled the law through his death and gives us His Spirit who can finally provide us with the freedom and righteousness we need. It's through His Spirit, not the law, that we are right with God and can live life in His way. A life full of the fruit of His life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control. It's the life we've always wanted.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/galatians/>

MEMORIZE

Galatians 5:22-25

*But the fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control.*

Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE: *Read Galatians 1*

OBSERVATION:

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APPLICATION:

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PRAYER:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Galatians 2*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Galatians 4*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Galatians 6*

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PRAYER:

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EPHESIANS

LETTER OVERVIEW

Ephesians provides a beautiful portrayal of the Gospel and an explanation of how it reshapes all of our life. There aren't any major corrections or rebukes in Ephesians from Paul to the people. Paul focuses on believing the right things about Jesus which lead to living the right way for Him. The good news of Jesus should create diverse communities that are committed to Jesus and each other. That's what we get to be a part of today – a community who is held together by our commitment to Jesus.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/ephesians/>

MEMORIZE

Ephesians 2:6-10

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

*For it is by grace you
have been saved, through faith*

—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

SCRIPTURE: *Read Ephesians 1*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Ephesians 2*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Ephesians 4 - 5:20*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Ephesians 5:21- 6:9*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Ephesians 6:10-24*

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APPLICATION:

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PRAYER:

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PHILIPPIANS

LETTER OVERVIEW

Philippians is written by Paul who is suffering in prison to suffering Christians in the city of Philippi. He wants them to understand their life is an expression of the Gospel, for which Christ suffered. When we surrender in humility, like Jesus, our lives become an expression of the Gospel to the world around us.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/philippians/>

MEMORIZE

Philippians 2:5-11

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself

*by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

SCRIPTURE: *Read Philippians 1*

OBSERVATION:

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Philippians 2:1-11*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Philippians 3*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Philippians 4*

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APPLICATION:

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PRAYER:

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COLOSSIANS

LETTER OVERVIEW

Paul writes Colossians to confront Jesus followers who have lost their distinction in what they think and how they live. The Gospel is not shaping their lives as it should. Just like the Colossians, we want to be careful to allow our faith in Jesus to change us from the inside out. Paul encourages the Colossian Christians to see Jesus as the center of all reality so they don't give in to the culture around them. We have the same invitation to put Jesus at the center of our lives.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/colossians/>

MEMORIZE

Colossians 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

SCRIPTURE: *Read Colossians 1:1-14*

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APPLICATION:

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PRAYER:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Colossians 1:15-23*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Colossians 1:24 - 2:23*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Colossians 3:1-17*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read Colossians 3:18 - 4:18*

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1 THESSALONIANS

LETTER OVERVIEW

Paul directs the persecuted Thessalonian Christians to hope in the future of king Jesus' return who will make all things right. Despite persecution and suffering, the believers stood strong in their commitment to Jesus. The same is true for us. We can put our hope in king Jesus' return during difficult times. What we hope for is what we live for. So, the return of Jesus should impact how we live and how we love, in the midst of the struggles we face.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-thessalonians/>

MEMORIZE

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you

do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Thessalonians 1*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Thessalonians 4*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Thessalonians 5*

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1 & 2 TIMOTHY

LETTER OVERVIEW

1 & 2 Timothy were written by Paul to give instructions to his young apprentice. Timothy became the leader of the church in Ephesus and needed guidance on how to lead the church to become the healthy body of Christ. We can follow the advice of Paul to help our church become the best it can be. These books provide Christ's vision for the church, which should be known for its integrity and service. We all have a part to play in making the church what Jesus wants it to be.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-timothy/>

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/2-timothy/>

MEMORIZE

1 Timothy 6:11-12

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Timothy 1-2*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Timothy 3-4*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Timothy 5-6*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 2 Timothy 1-2*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 2 Timothy 3-4*

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PRAYER:

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JAMES

LETTER OVERVIEW

James was written by Jesus' half-brother to challenge suffering Christians to put their faith into action in every part of their life. No part of our life should remain unchanged by Jesus and faith that doesn't produce action is no faith at all. Our challenge is clear: to live a life wholly devoted to God. The book of James gets in your business and challenges the way you live.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/james/>

MEMORIZE

James 1:22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says.

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it

—they will be blessed in what they do.

SCRIPTURE: *Read James 1*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read James 2*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read James 3*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read James 4*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read James 5*

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1 & 2 PETER

LETTER OVERVIEW

1 & 2 Peter are written by Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, to followers of Jesus who are suffering and seriously discouraged. Peter urges them to find comfort in Jesus and in the fact that God's people have always lived as a misunderstood minority. Putting our hope in Jesus and living consistently with His teaching no matter what will give us the strength to keep going until the end.

WATCH

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-peter/>

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/2-peter/>

MEMORIZE

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of
him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Once you were not a people,

but now you are the people of God;

once you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Peter 1-2:3*

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APPLICATION:

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Peter 2:4-3:22*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 1 Peter 4-5*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 2 Peter 1*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 2 Peter 2*

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SCRIPTURE: *Read 2 Peter 3*

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Living JESUS STRONG?

Do you feel stronger? Do you feel closer Jesus or like you know Him more? Have you moved from avoiding Jesus to craving time with Him?

Take some time to reflect over your journey. How have you grown? Where would you like to grow more? How have you changed? What's one thing God's done in your life?

No matter how these past weeks have gone, our hope is you've moved closer to Jesus and feel stronger in your faith.

Following Jesus doesn't happen by accident. Like any skill it takes commitment and practice, slowly over time, to become stronger. Now that you've committed to be Jesus Strong, how can you continue to prioritize fellowship, scripture and worship?

Connect with your community, pick your next reading plan and show up to worship on Sunday. Through these consistent practices we are confident you can live with the strength of Jesus in your daily life.

This is just the beginning of the spiritual strength and life Jesus wants for you.



BRIDGEPOINTE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

This guide was created by the staff at BridgePointe Christian Church. Founded in 2013, BridgePointe is a non-denominational Christian church located in East Providence, RI with the mission to make disciples of Jesus in relationship.

Find out more at: <http://bpri.church>

