

spiritual adult

# DISCIPLE ME

## TRACK 4: MISSIONAL LIVING

## DEFEND THE FAITH

### ICEBREAKER: RANT AND RAVE

To get started today, each person in the group will choose an opinion they hold that might be considered unpopular - something like pineapple on pizza, summer being the worst season, or the middle seat on an airplane not being that bad. Once everyone has chosen an opinion, each person will have 60 seconds to passionately defend their position. Use the full minute to make the strongest case you can. While each person is sharing, the rest of the group should keep time, listen carefully, and think about how convincing the argument really is.



- How did it feel to defend something you care about under pressure?
- What was the best argument you heard, and what made it so convincing?

### STUDY: WHEN FAITH TAKES A STAND

As we grow spiritually, something begins to shift. Faith is no longer just something we experience - it becomes something we represent. At this stage, we start to realize that our faith isn't just for us, and our story isn't just personal - it's meant to be lived out in a way that impacts others. We're not only being shaped by truth anymore; we're called to stand on it, live it out, and defend it.

In our last conversation, we looked at 1 Peter 3:15 and learned that we should always be ready to give an answer for the hope we have. That's an important part of our faith - being prepared to explain what we believe and why it matters. But as we continue to grow, we begin to realize that sometimes an answer isn't all we need to be ready for. There are moments when following Jesus means more than explaining our faith - it means standing for it, defending what is true, and holding onto it even when it's challenged.

#### Read Jude 1:3

- What do you think it means to "contend for the faith"?
- Why do you think Jude says this is something we should feel *compelled* to do?
- What does it look like to treat your faith as something that's been *entrusted* to you?

- Where do you see biblical truth being challenged in your current environments?
- What fears or hesitations keep you from standing up for your faith?

When Jude urges believers to “contend for the faith,” he’s using a very intentional and vivid word. The Greek word translated “contend” is *epagōnizomai* (ἐπαγωνίζομαι), which comes from the root *agōn* – which is where we get the English word *agony*. In its original context, this word was often used to describe athletic competition, intense struggle, or fighting with full commitment. The prefix *epi* intensifies the meaning, pointing to an earnest, active, and wholehearted effort.

So, when Jude uses this word, he’s not talking about casually defending your faith or only speaking up when it’s convenient. He’s calling believers to strive, to stand firm, and to hold onto the truth with urgency and effort. From a Spiritual Adult perspective, to “contend” means you care enough to engage, you’re willing to stand even when it’s uncomfortable, and you don’t treat truth passively - you protect it and represent it. This isn’t about being argumentative or aggressive, but about recognizing that your faith has been entrusted to you, and it’s worth standing for.

## ACTIVITY: TRUTH AND LOVE

**Read Ephesians 4:15.** As Spiritual Adults, we’re called not just to speak truth, but to speak it *in love*. That balance is where real influence happens. Some people lean toward truth without love - it comes across as harsh or judgmental. Others lean toward love without truth - it feels kind but lacks clarity or conviction. But Paul challenges us to bring both together. This activity will help us practice what it looks like to live - and speak - in that tension.

Read each scenario together. Then have one person give a response focused only on truth, and another person responds using only **love**. After both responses, work as a group to create a version that combines **truth and love**, as you play out that final conversation.

**SCENARIO 1:** Someone you know is making choices that are clearly harmful to themselves, but they don’t see a problem.

**SCENARIO 2:** A friend is constantly gossiping about others, and it’s starting to affect the group.

**SCENARIO 3:** Someone says, “There’s no absolute truth - everything is relative.”

**SCENARIO 4:** A friend only reaches out when they need something and never reciprocates.

## CHALLENGE: STAY READY

This week, choose one common question about faith - such as suffering, truth, Jesus, or the Bible - and spend time this week learning how to answer it clearly and confidently so you’re ready to defend and contend for what you believe. Next time you gather, come prepared to share what you learned.