



## JUDE - WEEK 4

**LIE #7 - "WE NEED TO BE MORE RELEVANT."**

Throughout this series in the letter of Jude, we have dealt with seven different lies that are propagated by false teachers who often claim to be Christian.

**LIE #1 - "BECAUSE WE'RE UNDER GRACE GOD DOES NOT DEMAND OBEDIENCE."**

**LIE #2 - "THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS DIFFERENT THAN THE GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT."**

LIE #3 - "GOD GAVE ME THIS DESIRE, SO IT MUST BE RIGHT."

LIE #4 - "PEOPLE REJECT AUTHORITY."

LIE #5 - "YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE ANYONE."

LIE #6 - "BUT I GET SO MUCH OUT OF THEIR TEACHING."

Today, we conclude our series with the often heard refrain:

LIE #7 - "WE NEED TO BE MORE RELEVANT."

So, let's stop wearing ties. That'll bring the revival we long for. And the robe. Can preachers stop wearing those robes? Oh, can you get rid of the hymns. Check, check, check. Anything else? Can you stop using some of those words people don't know. You mean the ones from the Bible? Yes, those. People don't wanna know about theology. They want to know how to have a better life. What about the afterlife? Don't be a downer. And make the services shorter so we can get

back to the things that really matter to us. Be more relevant.

I am convinced that the church has made a lot of changes throughout the years without really understanding how those changes would change the church.

In many cases, while trying to be more relevant we were actually reducing our relevancy.

## **1 Corinthians 3:18-20**

**18** Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. **(If you think you're hip with the time, if you believe your thinking to be up-to-date about what's going on in culture)** **19** For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. **(What the world calls smart, God calls stupid.)** For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," **20** and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."

When relevance is our first priority we end up powered not by the Spirit of Christ, but the spirit of the age. We don't end up with the wisdom of God, but with the wisdom of the world.

If we live like the world, we cannot win the world.

If we think like the world, we cannot win the world.

If we mirror the world, we are merely worldly Christians.

The only thing the church needs to be relevant is the Holy Spirit.

- The Moody Bible Church in Chicago (1924)
- I didn't show up there with any expectations about the music. I didn't show up thinking, "Hey, I wonder if their band is going to be as good as REM."
- We have something that the world cannot offer people — the truth. The truth is the only thing that's relevant.

**14** It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, **15** to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Now, he seems to be emphasizing ungodliness.

- Ungodliness vs. wickedness

This is the most common New Testament teaching of the end times — Jesus will return with His holy angels and He will judge the living and the dead for every word spoken.

This sounds frightening and it is without the covering of the gospel. One reason the Bible gives so much emphasis to words we speak is because what we say reveals our heart.

## **Romans 10:9**

**9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Now, if you grasp the truth of that Scripture, it should relieve you of fears about being judged for every word you speak, because **this is the word that covers every ill-conceived utterance to trip from our tongues: Jesus Christ is Lord and God raised Him from the dead.**

**Now, Jude again gives us some characteristics of these false teachers, notice it is both their words and their actions that mark them.**

**16** These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

### **Grumblers**

**Now, grumbling is when we complain about something under our breath. Being a grumbler doesn't necessarily make you a false teacher and in today's climate most false teachers are marked by statements of positive affirmation rather than grumbling.**

**Michael Horton characterizes today's false teaching succinctly, "Basically, God is there for you and your happiness. He has some rules and principles for getting what you want out of life, and if you follow them, you can have what you want. Just declare it and prosperity will come to you. God as personal shopper."**

**He also adds that in this false teaching, "Salvation is not a matter of divine rescue from the judgment that is coming on the world but rather a matter of self-improvement**

**in order to have" a good life. I think this is what a lot of Christians want out of church. They just want a little something to make life better. It's not a matter of truth. It's a matter of pragmatism.**

**One further quote in which Horton quotes a false teacher of today. This false teacher, in his own book writes, "I'm not called to explain every minute facet of Scripture or disputes that don't touch where real people live. My gifting is to encourage, to challenge, and to inspire."**

**Horton responds correctly by asserting, "Ambassadors do not get to choose what they say. As ministers of the gospel, our gifting is to preach 'the whole counsel of God' (Acts 20: 27). As Paul says in Romans 10, we do not ascend to God; he descends to us in grace. He sends ambassadors who will preach the Good News that they have been appointed to preach."**

**The grumbling Jude is referring has to do with grumbling against sound doctrine, which is really what this false teacher is doing with a positive sounding spin. "I'm not called to explain every minute facet of Scripture or to expound on deep theological doctrines."**

*Wow. You're not? What exactly are you called to do there, you little positive piper?*

In today's climate, grumbling will sound like protests against a biblical view of sex and marriage, that it's outdated and harsh and bigoted, etc.

Or the grumbling will be that Christians are narrow-minded for believing that there is only one true way of salvation, etc. Some of this grumbling has been going on a very long time. It's nothing new to grumble against sound, clear biblical teaching.

### Malcontents

Then he says they are malcontents. Being a malcontent is different than being discontent. Malcontents like to stir the pot and cause trouble. They are the leaders in new views of Jesus and new views of the Christian life and the new kind of Christianity, which is always just a repackaging of an old kind of heresy.

Now, the motive Jude gives for these false teachers who grumble against clear biblical teaching and who want to begin a revolution that changes how people see biblical truth — is their own sinful desires. They want the Bible to conform to their view of the world, rather

than conforming their heart and mind to Christ and His Word.

### Loud-mouthed Boasters

Then Jude adds to their characteristics, loud-mouthed boasters. They make themselves heard and they always do so with a list of credits to bolster their authority. “Our next speaker against long held Christian teaching is a professor of Harvard University where he received his doctorate of philosophy. He is the author of the bestselling book *Why Christianity Is More Dangerous Than Ever*, please welcome...”

### Favoritism

Finally, Jude says that false teachers develop relationships based upon social-political advantage. They care for people based upon what they can gain from them.

And to be clear on this, the battle lines in false teaching have always been around the same topics — the nature of truth itself, the nature of Christ and salvation.

That's why Jude writes next:

A Call to Persevere

**17** But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. **18** They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”

**A scoffer will not engage in an honest conversation, because it might reveal his shallow thinking.**

**Here’s something Scripture teaches us about engaging in conversations with people who don’t know Christ — there is always something behind their objections.**

**In other words, the conversation is usually about something other than their objection to the Christian faith. It’s about their passions, their desires. In short, the objection is often just a smokescreen so they won’t have to face their own sin and rebellion. They want to feel justified in their behavior. Everyone does. That’s the whole reason people will lie to themselves about what is real and true, so they can continue to live the way they want to live.**

**19** It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

**This is what the worldly church looks like... the world. It has the tastes of the world and**

**the methods of the world and the outlook of the world.**

- **Side note: Now, I’m not calling for social disengagement. The Christians who love Jesus the most will be most engaged with the world in trying to win the world to Jesus. You can’t be socially and culturally disengaged and win people to Christ.**

**These are the kinds of people who split churches or split from church. They stop going. When church leadership confronts a member regarding something in their life — now, you may ask, “Is that done?” Not often.**

**But let’s look at why it should be done.**

**The simple reason is that if you claim to be a Christian but have some sustained action or behavior in your life that discredits the gospel, that is reason for loving confrontation.**

**If it is our mission to bring people far from God into a saving relationship with Him through Christ, our lives act like testimonies to the credibility of this claim that Jesus saves, that Jesus changes lives. And that He’s changed our lives.**

**This isn't about being the perfect Christian, but it is about being a sincere one. It's like this. You can't claim to embrace Jesus and then deny His word. That's what discredits the gospel.**

**What we are faced with now is a worldly church. This brings us face-to-face with the final lie in this series: "WE NEED TO BE MORE RELEVANT."**

**So, he tells us how to be more relevant.**

**20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

**How do you build yourself up in the faith?**

- **Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (believe)**
- **Praying in the Holy Spirit (pray)**
- **Keeping yourself in the love of God (obey)**
- **(Stay) focused on the gospel**

**And you do all this, so that you might minister to others.**

**So, if you believe, pray, obey and stay — focused on the gospel — you will find that you are relevant to people.**

**22** And have mercy on those who doubt;

**23** save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Doxology

**24** Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,

**"With great joy," this means Jesus is delighted to save you.**

**25** to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.