

FIND & FOLLOW 2022
Fighting for the Faith
Jude 1

I know what it is like to send my kids off to a college where they were no longer under my daily influence, but were consistently exposed to people who had vastly different VALUES from our own. It is TERRIFYING! I remember when we brought my first-born child, Toni, to Hattiesburg (a million miles away from us – 5 whole hours!) to go to Southern Miss. She was excited. We were distraught. I know that we gave her an endless number of instructions about things to watch out for and people to avoid. We also knew that she was not listening! She was wide-eyed about her coming college experience. But we were aware that she would face DECEPTIVE PEOPLE who would try to use her for their own pleasure and purposes. Our words and letters could only encourage her and benefit her if she was willing to HEAR and HEED the WARNINGS that we gave to her. [Don't worry. She is safe and sound here today with a godly husband, two precious children – and one more on the way – and a heart that is fully committed to Jesus! God is good!]

I wish that all stories turned out so good. Sadly, there are many that do not. Some of you have stories about loved ones – children, brothers, sisters, close friends - who were led astray by wicked people and who have stayed off course now for many years. These are stories that break our hearts. They can also be warnings for us.

Jude was writing a letter to his precious brothers and sisters in the faith, and he was concerned for their well-being. He wanted his letter to be light and encouraging, but he realized that there was an impending threat in their midst that had to be exposed. This is how he began his letter. **Jude 1:1-4a NIV**

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.

Jude (a slave of Jesus Christ, the half-brother of Christ and of James) wasted no time in getting to his theme. He originally planned to write a letter about the wonder and beauty of the SALVATION that Jesus gives to ALL people who trust in him by faith. Instead, he acknowledged that there was a CANCER spreading in the church that had to be RECOGNIZED and properly RESPONDED TO if the church was to survive and thrive. And it was going to be up to the PEOPLE to HEAR and to HEED what Jude wrote. This theme is no less URGENT today than it was at the time he wrote to our forerunners. In fact, it is more vital than ever that we STAND UP FOR and STAND ON the FAITH that has been given to us. Here was his challenge: **FIGHT FOR THE FAITH!**

Imagine how awful it would have been for US if the EARLY CHURCH had only CASUALLY guarded the GOSPEL! Remember how the early church spent their days: ACTS 2:42. Do you know how to fight for the faith in your own life? If you are CHALLENGED by someone about what you believe, or if you are ENTICED to embrace some NEW TEACHING, would you know what to do? **YOU CANNOT CONTEND FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND!** If you are not SOLIDLY GROUNDED in basic doctrines of the faith, and if you are not becoming more SKILLED in your ability to handle the Word of God, then you need the warning of Jude!

Jude employs a series of both well-known and lesser known biblical stories to expose false followers that had infiltrated the church body. His language is a bit overwhelming, but he wants the church to gain a heightened sense of DANGER about these people and the destruction and confusion that they bring. **Jude 1:4b-15 NIV**

. . . They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. 5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. 8 **In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings.** 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct--as irrational animals do--will destroy them. 11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. 12 These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm--shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. 14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

This is a breathtaking, descriptive WARNING about apostates who are present in the church at that time. Jude is seeking to EXPOSE them by revealing their connection with apostates found throughout scripture. **These are the KEY CHARACTERISTICS that we should look for to spot these false followers that are among us. [All seen in Vs. 4]**

THEY HAVE NO REVERENCE FOR GOD.

***They are UNGODLY [Ungodly=Without reverence for God, without WORSHIP, BLASPHEMERS.] The word, “ungodly” is used no less than 6 times in this one letter (See especially vs. 15).**

*ISRAEL in the wilderness – DISREGARDING God’s promises: UNBELIEF

*ANGELS – DISDAINING their appointed role as worshippers and servants.

*SODOM – DISCARDING their created sexual identity and God’s moral law.

They MOCK the glory of God and all other spiritual powers. (Vs. 8-9)

-They are FILTHY DREAMERS [They use VISIONS to justify their teaching and sin.]

*MORMONS/JEHOVAH WITNESSES/etc.

They SLANDER anything that disagrees with their desires or opinions. (Vs. 10)

-They are PROFANE – They BLASPHEME anything that is HOLY or PURE.

One of the greatest DANGERS of people like this is that they DO NOT SEE THEMSELVES as dangerous! They just THINK like they think (without regard for God’s revealed truth) and the DO what they do (without fear of God’s JUDGMENT – which WILL COME upon them!), and they TEACH what they teach as a “service of freedom” to others. And many people follow them to the wrecking of their faith and the destruction of their faith and families.

THEY LIVE A LIFE OF IMMORALITY.

These false teachers PERVERT the purity of GRACE and turn it into a LICENSE to sin. They make GRACE and EXCUSE for sin of any kinds. They say, “**God will forgive me.**” They follow in the footsteps of Sodom and Gomorrah by pursuing sexual immorality of any and all types. They have no moral boundaries, and they want no one to put any limitations on their sexual freedom. Their pursuit of sexual freedom ultimately not only pollutes civilization, it also destroys their own bodies! (Vs. 10)

This is understandable if you think that this spirit is in those that are not followers of Jesus Christ, but it takes on a new significance when you realize that the same spirit has invaded the church. One only needs to look at the stunning reality of modern acceptance of LGBTQ+ agendas in so many evangelical denominations to see how this spirit of immorality has infected the church.

THEY REJECT ALL AUTHORITY. (Vs. 8)

***They DENY the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (Vs. 4)**

Jude was COMPELLED to plead with believers to FIGHT for the pure Gospel. The faith was entrusted to us “ONCE FOR ALL.” This implies that it is a FINISHED FAITH that is UNCHANGEABLE! This further teaches that ALL of God’s Holy People are to contend for the faith, not just the pastors and leaders!

We should realize that ANY NEW teaching that some individual or religious group puts forth that adds to or takes away from the Gospel that has already been entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus through his APOSTLES is HERESY, and must be guarded against. A perfect example of clear heresy against the N.T. Gospel is MORMONISM. They outright

say that there is “ANOTHER TESTAMENT” that people must accept as authoritative. The Mormon view of Jesus Christ is much less than the N.T. view, and it opens the door to all kinds of false doctrine and immorality.

***They wildly PURSUE only their OWN DESIRES. [“Lovers of SELF” 2 Timothy 3]**

-They are like WILD ANIMALS that live on instinct and cruel fulfillment of appetites.

***They REFUSE to accept DIRECTION or BOUNDARIES from any authorities.**

They DEVISE their own self-serving, deceitful PATH in RELIGION.

-The WAY of Cain – A path of self-effort, refusal to heed God’s warnings, and murder.

-The ERROR of Balaam – Leading others into sin for his own profit and ultimate doom.

-The REBELLION of Korah – Active opposition, to speak against godly leadership.

TEST: How do they respond to being told, “NO!”

-They are GRUMBLERS and FAULTFINDERS. **Jude 1:16-19 NIV**

16 These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. 17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

*They create discontent through constant complaining

*They constantly look for flaws in any authorities to criticize and condemn them.

*They DIVIDE close fellowships.

*They are DEVOID of the Spirit.

Are these false teachers in our midst today? YES, THEY ARE! Look around you.

Pay attention to what is being taught and lived. We live in a day and age when “spiritual leaders and teachers” in the church are promoting doctrines and opinions about Christianity that BLATANTLY DISREGARD what the Word of God actually says. We have COLLEGE and SEMINARY PROFESSORS who do not believe that the Bible is true or authoritative teaching our children to build their own belief system. These false teachers are promoting the very things that Jude is warning us about. We have famous “PASTORS and SPIRITUAL LEADERS” who are promoting doctrines that can only lead to SELF-WILL and the gratification of FLESHLY desires. They say, “God just wants you to be happy!”

WHY DID JUDE SPEND SO MUCH TIME DESCRIBING AND CONDEMNING THESE PEOPLE?

*To REMIND believers what the Lord did to others who were like these apostates.

*To WARN believers that these apostates will bring DIVISION to them.

*To INSTRUCT believers on how they can PROTECT themselves from these errors.

HOW ARE WE TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH AGAINST THESE GODLESS DECEIVERS IN OUR MIDST? Jude 1:20-23 NIV

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. 22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

This letter from Jude is not a tutorial on how to have a FIST FIGHT with these godless rebels. It is about how to stand for what you believe by KNOWING and BUILDING ON what you have received from God. **FIGHT for the faith by LEARNING and LIVING IT.**

BUILD YOURSELF UP ON THE FAITH YOU HAVE RECEIVED.

***Take PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY for your own spiritual growth!**

-Time in the Word (“ . . . remember what the apostles taught you . . .”) **Acts 2:42**

-Do not STAGNATE in your spiritual growth! **2 Peter 1:3-8 NIV**

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

***Stay SENSITIVE to the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

-Listen for his promptings

-Pray according to his direction

-Repent and confess when he convicts you.

KEEP YOURSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

This does not mean that you secure your own salvation! This actually means that you OBEY CHRIST and thereby grow in your intimate relationship with him. **John 14:21 NIV**

21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Loving Christ is demonstrated by obeying Christ. Obeying Christ reveals things about God to you that make you love him more!

HELP THOSE THAT ARE BEING DAMAGED BY THESE DECEIVERS.

GLORIFY THE ONE WHO GUARDS YOU. Jude 1:24-25 NIV

24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- 25 to the only God our Savior be glory,

majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Give God the glory that is due him. Praise him for his faithfulness and love. Celebrate his plan for your life and eternal standing! Worship him as the only One worthy of all that has been ascribed to him! Let this BENEDICTION be our LIFE SONG!

Let's pray.

FIND & FOLLOW 2022
November 20 – Hernando Facilitation Guide
Jude – Fighting for the Faith

Start talking

What is dangerous about the statement, “God just wants me to be happy,” and how would you respond to it?

Start thinking.

Why do we need to fight for the Faith, and how do we do this?

Start sharing.

[Read Jude 1:3-4](#). Why do you think Jude was so concerned about the ungodly people who were infiltrating the church? How could someone teach that grace gives us freedom to sin, and how would you answer that kind of teaching?

[Read Jude 1:4-16](#). What are the main characteristics that Jude points out about how these ungodly people live? Why do you think Jude stresses their judgment so strongly? How do you see unbelief, immorality, and rebellion infiltrating the church these days?

[Read Jude 1:20-23, 2 Peter 1:3-8, and John 14:21](#). What are some ways that you can build yourself up on your faith? Knowing that we are already loved and kept by God, how can we keep ourselves in the love of God?

[Read Jude 1:24-25](#). Talk about ways that we can glorify God in our lives.

Start praying.

Pray for someone that you know is struggling with doubts about the faith.

Start doing.

This week, really wrestle with God through study and prayer over any scripture that you struggle to accept. Find out why that scripture is true and right.