

Small Group Guide: Jude - Contending for the Faith

Week 3: Recognizing False Teaching and Holding to the Truth



Before You Begin

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to give your group discernment, humility, and a genuine love for His Word as you work through this material.

Key Takeaways

1. False teachers corrupt the community from within. Jude describes those who have crept into the church as spots or blemishes at the love feast -- their presence makes the gathering unclean, not because of who they are on the outside, but because of what they carry on the inside.

2. False teachers are disconnected from the source of life. The image of uprooted, fruitless trees is central to this passage. Those who lead people astray may appear alive and influential, but they have no root in God. Their words and influence produce no lasting, God-honoring fruit.

3. The warning was not a surprise. Jesus warned about it. The apostles warned about it. Jude reminds the church that the infiltration of false teaching was anticipated. The church is not caught off guard -- it is called to be prepared.

4. The remedy is remembering the words of the apostles. The instruction Jude gives the faithful is not complicated: hold on to what the apostles taught. For us today, that means anchoring ourselves in Scripture.

5. The judgment of false teachers is certain. Jude does not soften the outcome. Those who lead others astray using the name of Jesus face a real and serious reckoning. This is not meant to make us gloat -- it is meant to make us grieve and take the stakes seriously.

Discussion Questions

Opening Up

1. When you first heard the title "Book of Jude" or the idea of a letter about false teaching, what was your initial reaction? Does a warning feel less valuable to you than an encouraging message? Why or why not?
2. Jude wanted to write an encouraging letter about the common salvation they shared, but instead felt compelled to write a letter of correction. Have you ever felt the tension between saying what someone wants to hear and saying what they need to hear? How did you handle it?

Going Deeper

3. Jude describes false teachers as "spots in your love feasts" -- blemishes that make the gathering unclean. In what ways can the influence of false teaching affect the health and unity of an entire congregation, not just the individuals who follow it directly?
4. The image of clouds without water is a picture of false hope. They look like they will bring something life-giving, but they bring nothing. Can you think of examples -- past or present -- of teaching or messaging that looked promising but ultimately produced no real spiritual nourishment?
5. The uprooted tree imagery is described in the sermon as the most scathing of Jude's descriptions. What does it mean practically for a teacher or leader to be

disconnected from the source of life? What does that disconnection look like in real ministry contexts?

6. The sermon draws a contrast between wandering stars -- things that burn bright and grab attention but disappear -- and the fixed stars that can actually guide you somewhere. What is the difference between influence that is attention-grabbing and influence that is genuinely directional and trustworthy? How do you tell them apart?
 7. Jude identifies false teachers as grumblers, complainers, flatterers, and those who walk according to their own lusts. How can a congregation be on guard against this kind of person without becoming suspicious of everyone or creating an atmosphere of distrust?
 8. The sermon points out that Jude's remedy is straightforward: "you, beloved, remember the words of the apostles." Why do you think something so straightforward is so easy to drift away from? What gets in the way of Christians staying rooted in Scripture?
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Personal Reflection

9. The sermon closes with this statement from the pastor: "A warning is not encouraging, but it allows you to be encouraging." What does that mean to you personally? How does understanding false teaching better equip you to share the true gospel?
 10. The pastor mentions that false teaching still exists today -- in pulpits, in denominations, on social media -- where the name of Jesus is used to promote worldly values rather than God-honoring ones. Without naming individuals, have you encountered teaching that felt off to you? What was it that felt wrong, and how did Scripture help you identify it?
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Practical Applications

This week, consider putting one or more of these into practice:

- **Audit what you are listening to.** Take stock of the teachers, podcasters, authors, and social media voices that have regular access to your mind and heart. Ask honestly: do their lives and their fruit reflect genuine connection to God, or do they simply know how to hold an audience?

- **Read a passage of Scripture with fresh eyes.** Choose one chapter from the New Testament this week and read it slowly, asking: what did the apostles actually say here? Let the text speak before you bring in any outside commentary.
 - **Bring a concern to the group.** If you have encountered teaching that confused or troubled you, bring it to your small group or a trusted, mature believer. Do not process it alone. The community is a gift for discernment.
 - **Practice gratitude for Scripture.** The sermon noted that the New Testament is the most well-attested ancient document in human history. Spend time this week thanking God for the miracle of preserved Scripture and ask Him to give you a deeper hunger for it.
 - **Examine your own roots.** Jude's image of the uprooted tree is not only about false teachers -- it is a prompt for self-examination. Ask yourself honestly: where am I drawing life from right now? Is it the Word, prayer, and community, or is it something else?
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Closing Thought

Jude did not write this letter to make his readers afraid. He wrote it because he loved them and because the stakes were real. The same is true for us. Understanding what false teaching looks like is not an exercise in suspicion -- it is an act of love toward yourself, your family, and your church. When you know what is false, you are better equipped to treasure and share what is true.

Close your time together by reading Jude 17-19 aloud as a group, then pray for discernment, for love of the Word, and for the courage to hold fast to the truth even when it is unpopular.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Book of Jude: Contending for the Faith



Day 1: The Call to Contend

Reading: Jude 1:1-4

Devotional: Jude wanted to write an encouraging letter. Instead, the Holy Spirit redirected him toward a harder, more necessary message. There is a lesson here for every believer. Faithfulness does not always look like what we planned. Sometimes God calls us away from what is comfortable to address what is urgent. The faith delivered to the saints is worth defending, not because we earn salvation by defending it, but because truth protects those we love. Ask yourself today whether you are willing to set aside your preferred comfort to contend for something eternal when God requires it of you.

Personal Reflection: What has God been pressing you toward that you have been avoiding because it feels less encouraging than what you had planned?

Practical Application: Identify one area in your life where you have allowed comfort to override a clear conviction. Take one concrete step today toward addressing it honestly.

Day 2: Recognizing Fruitlessness

Reading: Jude 1:12-13; Matthew 7:15-20

In Matthew 7:15-20, Jesus warns that false prophets come disguised but are ultimately known by what they produce, or fail to produce.

Devotional: Jude paints a vivid picture of those who appear to belong but bear no fruit. They are uprooted trees, clouds that carry no rain, wandering stars that burn briefly and vanish. The common thread in every image is disconnection from the source of life. A tree cannot bear fruit if its roots do not reach water. A believer cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit without remaining connected to the Spirit. This is not a warning reserved for false teachers alone. It is a mirror for every one of us. Where are your roots reaching today, and what are they drawing from?

Personal Reflection: What does the fruit of your life currently reflect about what your roots are drawing from?

Practical Application: Spend fifteen minutes today in quiet prayer, not asking for anything, but simply remaining connected. Let that be the beginning of a daily practice of abiding.

Day 3: The Danger of Division

Reading: Jude 1:19; Romans 16:17-18

In Romans 16:17-18, Paul urges believers to watch for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to sound teaching, noting that such people serve their own appetites rather than Christ.

Devotional: Jude describes worldly infiltrators as those who cause divisions because they are not connected to the Spirit. Division is rarely announced. It creeps in through flattery, through grumbling, through the slow erosion of trust within a congregation. The enemy does not need to destroy the church from the outside if he can get people on the inside to turn against one another. Unity in a church is not the absence of disagreement. It is the commitment to resolve disagreement through truth and love rather than through manipulation and self-interest. Guard your words today. Consider whether what you are about to say builds or fractures.

Personal Reflection: Is there any relationship within your church community where grumbling or flattery has replaced honest, loving communication?

Practical Application: Reach out to one person in your church community today with a word of genuine encouragement rooted in something specific and true about who they are in Christ.

Day 4: The Patience of God and the Urgency of the Gospel

Reading: Jude 1:14-15; 2 Peter 3:9

In 2 Peter 3:9, Peter explains that God's apparent delay in returning is not slowness but patience, because his desire is that none should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Devotional: Jude describes the return of Christ as a moment of final conviction, when even those who rejected him will recognize the holiness they stood against. That image is not meant to produce fear in the believer. It is meant to produce urgency. Every day that passes before his return is another day of opportunity. God's patience is not indifference. It is mercy extended toward those who have not yet heard or have not yet responded. The same cross that satisfied the wrath of God is available to every person who has not yet received it. How are you participating in that extension of mercy today?

Personal Reflection: Who in your life is still outside of relationship with Christ, and how has God been prompting you to reach them?

Practical Application: Pray specifically by name today for three people who do not yet know Christ. Ask God to open a door for a natural, honest conversation about faith within the next week.

Day 5: You, Beloved, Remember

Reading: Jude 1:17-21; Psalm 119:9-11

In Psalm 119:9-11, the psalmist declares that the way to remain pure and avoid straying is to treasure God's word deeply within the heart.

Devotional: After all of the warnings, all of the vivid imagery of apostasy and judgment, Jude turns to the church and calls them beloved. That word carries the full weight of God's affection. You are not merely warned. You are loved. And the instruction given to the beloved is simple and profound: remember the words of the apostles. The Scriptures are not a rulebook designed to restrict you. They are the preserved voice of those who walked with Christ, warning you, guiding you, and pointing you toward the source of life that false teachers can never offer. The word of God is your anchor. Return to it today and every day.

Personal Reflection: How consistently are you allowing Scripture to shape your thinking, or are you more often allowing culture, trends, or other voices to set the standard?

Practical Application: Commit to a specific, realistic daily Scripture reading habit this week. Choose a time, choose a place, and write it down. Let the words of the apostles become the first voice you hear each morning rather than the last resort when trouble arrives.