

## How To Contend

### Jude 17-23

**Objective:** Teach how to contend with liberal forces threatening the church.

**Reading:** Jude 3-4, 17-25.

**Memory:** Jude 3, "...*contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*"

#### **Introduction:**

1. There are always threats to the church. Bible warns of false teachers, of wolves in sheep's clothing, of drifting astray, of rebellious hearts. Here, In Jude, so-called Christians are using the grace of God as "*license for immorality*".
2. Basically they are saying that one doesn't have to do what the Bible says, we have grace so we can do what we want. Paul faces this in Romans 6 when he says, "***Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! (may it never be!) We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?***"
3. We face this same threat today from many directions. Some "Christian" churches are endorsing same-sex marriage - while Bible teaches that God abhors such as that and those who practice such have no inheritance in heaven. Others neglect or side step the Biblical doctrine of baptism, or perhaps it simply manifests itself as a laxness in regard to sin.
4. The New Testament does NOT teach legalism, but, such laxness as this amounts to blatant disregard and disrespect for God's Word and a falling away from "the faith". It is dangerous to Christians and

#### **We need to know how to fight for the faith.** (HOW?)

Jude 20-21 gives Christians four injunctions directing us on how to contend for the faith.

*Translations vary in their wording, but the original is in 3 participles and one imperative, so I will based my wording on participles as well. The first item we are to be about is ...*

#### **I. Building.** *verse 20, "build yourselves up in your most holy faith"*

##### A. Strengthen your defenses.

1. "Building" is edifying. Strengthening our defenses with knowledge of truth. With the most holy faith, that is the Gospel Truth as the foundation. This is the foundation to build upon.
2. Edify yourself. Through study and application.
  - a. Strength comes from knowledge.
  - b. 2 Peter 1:3, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."
  - c. Know what you believe and why.
  - d. Put it into practice - let become a real part of you, not just words. Philippians 4:8-9, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice."
3. Edify the body, the church.
  - a. Press on and lead others on toward spiritual maturity. Can't do this huddled up at home by yourself - entails getting with others to search Scriptures and talk about them.
  - b. Here is where we construct a solid fortress / building as we join together for mutual support.

##### B. Most holy faith.

1. Faith here is the Gospel. It is the very foundation of Christian life. It is the Truth received from the Apostles.
2. Faith is not simple trust in God in this context, because folks might trust God when they have no right or reason to if they are not doing what He teaches. The might be trusting error! "Faith" here is that body of teachings / doctrines handed down to us by the Apostles
3. It is that body of This is the Gospel! The truth is "holy".
4. Faith has moral implications for daily behavior.

5. There is an emphasis on “holy” here. Galatians 1 teaches that if the Gospel is perverted it is no longer Good News at all!
6. We need to keep it reserved and special. It is vital to salvation
7. 1 Timothy 4:15-16, **“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. <sup>16</sup>Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”** This means that in order to contend for the faith that brings salvation, we need to...

### C. Spend time in the Word!

1. Remembering the warnings and predictions of the Apostles.
  - a. There will be enemies or morality and truth. Even arising in the church itself!
  - b. They will be a source of divisions in the church.
  - c. You can tell they are not in the spirit by their personal morality.
2. Knowing the word can keep you from being led astray.
3. 2 Timothy 2:15, **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”**
4. 2 Timothy 2:19, **“Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”** The Word is the foundation of our defense.
5. 2 Timothy 4:2-5, **“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup>They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup>But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”**

The second item to use in contending for the faith is to be

### **II. Praying.** verse 20, **“and pray in the Holy Spirit.”**

#### A. In the Holy Spirit

1. Any Christian can pray “in the Spirit”. We are all supposed to pray “in the Spirit”.
2. This is like praying “in the name of Christ”.
3. Ephesians 6:18, **“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”**
4. It entails a concept of sincerity and purity and being entirely devoted to God in Christ.
5. It entails Christ’s genuine love for lost souls.
6. It entails listening to the Spirit and being guided by the Spirit.
7. It entails being right with God so you can have total confidence that He is listening and abiding and working with you. James 5:16, **“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”**
8. It entails being the very embodiment of Christ so you are a temple to the Holy Spirit and He is the force at work and moving and guiding your thoughts, your life and your actions.

#### B. Necessitates behavioral standards.

1. Requires holiness in thought and deed.
2. If you have malice or jealousy in your heart, or are living in sin, you can not pray in the Spirit.
3. Necessitates a genuine concern for holiness. Get the evil out of you life! Totally!
4. False teachers are morally loose. This is indicator that they are NOT in the spirit. Are you?

The next item is the imperative, the absolutely necessary one.

### **III. Keep.** verse 21, **“Keep yourselves in God’s love”**

#### A. In God’s love

1. This is mandatory. We need God’s blessing and favor at all times, but especially to see us through times like these!
2. You cannot expect to prevail in spiritual warfare unless God is on your side.
3. He will not abide with you if you are rebellious or knowingly abiding in sin.

4. John 15:9-10, ***“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”***

B. “Love” goes both ways.

1. We need to keep our love for God; putting Him first and foremost in our lives, and we need to keep His love for us.
2. Requires appropriate response of devotion - if we are nasty we cannot expect His help.
3. If God takes second place, if you practice spiritual adultery by putting something else on a higher priority than God, you are not giving Him the appropriate love.

Finally, one other thing we can do is to be

**IV. Waiting.** verse 21, ***“wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ...”***

A. For God’s mercy

1. Hold steadfast until God works. He is alive and active and faithful. He will take care of things in His own good time.
2. Isaiah 30:15, ***“This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength,”***
3. Even in the book of Revelation, when all those terrible things happen and Satanic forces seem so victorious, those who are faithful to God, win in the end!
4. When God decides it is time, when God moves, the faithful win.
5. *But, what do we do while we “wait”? We ...*

B. Practice mercy with fear.

1. Maintain the heart of Christ even toward the erring. Toward those who have been led astray. We hope that they will repent, but we be careful lest we be infected.
2. ***“Be merciful to those who doubt;”*** (verse 22)
  - a. Some may be wavering, “exploring”
  - b. Struggling to find truth. Help them, Hope for them. Pray for them, teach them.
3. ***“snatch others from the fire and save them;”*** (verse 23)
  - a. Those who are erring must be rebuked.
  - b. This life is a test! We need to pass the test and help others pass the test.
4. In your mercy toward these folks, be very cautious.
  - a. ***“to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”*** (verse 23)
  - b. Their error is a desperately serious thing - a very real and present danger!
  - c. Hate even their clothing. Concept is that it is defiled and you might get defiled. Like the teaching of Haggai 2 where if a person carries something consecrated and it touches something dirty, it becomes dirty and defiled - not the other way around!

**So What?**

We can be sure there are hard and testing times coming on the Lord’s church. They are here, but they will get tougher. We need to contend earnestly for the most holy faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. We do this by waiting and trusting in God. While we wait, we need to *protect ourselves from error and erring ones by building ourselves in the most holy faith and by praying in the Holy Spirit and keeping ourselves in the love of God!*

**Closing Prayer:**

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**Reading:** Jude 3-4, 17-25.

**Memory:** Jude 3

*“...c\_f\_t\_f\_t\_w\_o\_f\_a\_e\_t\_t\_s.”*

### We need to know how to fight for the faith.

Four injunctions directing us on how to contend for the faith.

#### I. Building.

A. Strengthen your defenses.

Jude 20

2 Peter 1:3 Philippians 4:8-9

B. Most holy faith.

1 Timothy 4:15-16

C. Spend time in the Word!

2 Timothy 2:15 2 Timothy 2:19 2 Timothy 4:2-5

#### II. Praying.

A. In the Holy Spirit.

Jude 20,

Ephesians 6:18 James 5:16

B. Necessitates behavioral standards.

#### III. Keep.

A. In God's love.

Jude 21,

John 15:9-10

B. “Love” goes both ways.

#### IV. Waiting.

A. For God's mercy.

Jude 21,

Isaiah 30:15

B. Practice mercy with fear.

Jude 22 Jude 23a Jude 23b

#### So What?

Protect ourselves from error and erring ones by building ourselves in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit and keeping ourselves in the love of God!