

Contend - Jude Part 5

Jude 17-25

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.

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. ^[f]

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.

Transition

Today is week 5 of our series called Contend - a study of Jude.

The over arching theme of the book of Jude is – **Contend for the faith.**

Jude 1-4

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. 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.

- Problem was false teaching.
- Some had slipped in among them
- Ungodly people.
- They pervert the grace of God into a license for immorality.
- By doing so they deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord.

Followers of Jesus Christ are...

1. Christ followers are **servants**
2. Servants are **called**

3. Servants are fighters

Contend for the faith.

- Some things are worth fighting for.
- Some things are worth sacrificing for.
- Some things are worthy of laying down your life for.

Three ways to contend for the faith.

1. Build yourself up in you most holy faith.
2. Pray in the Holy Spirit
3. Keep yourself in the love of God.
- Longing and waiting for our Lord's return and the eternal glory that will accompany his return.

I. Build yourself up.

- A. The first mark of keeping the faith in this passage is remembering what endangers the church.
 1. I have heard it said that the greatest danger to the church is not persecution.
 2. It is not restrictions on our religious freedom.
 3. It is not immoral laws that are enacted by the government.
 4. The greatest danger to the church is not from without, **but it is from within.**
 5. **The church thrived under persecution.**
 - a. The church was watered by the blood of martyrs.
 - b. But a church will not stand if it fails to keep the faith in the midst of Satan's **destructive schemes.**
 - c. Jude reminds us of that danger.
 - d. Look at the following verses.

Jude 17-19

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.

- B. Unpack
 1. In these verses, Jude reminds us of dangers that were predicted long ago.

2. Those who **are called, loved by the Father,** and **kept for Jesus Christ,** must contend for the faith that was once for all delivered *because* ungodly people slip into the church and try to corrupt the faith.
3. Jude reminds the church of what they should have known.
4. Jude probably refers to what Jesus and His apostles had already predicted, that ungodly people would *infiltrate the church.*
5. Look at some of these warnings.

Matthew 7:15

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Acts 20:29-30

²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will **come in among you** and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

1 Timothy 4:1

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ For the time will come when people 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. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

C. Warning

1. Not all who claim to be following Christ actually do.
2. There are those who are not genuine believers who teach false things and cause divisions in the church.
3. That is why what we teach and what we learn is extremely important to the health of a church.
4. **We need to know what is true!**
5. We should not tolerate sin.
6. To keep the faith means we will stand up against what God says is wrong.

Illustration

- While Jesus is merciful, He does not tolerate sin.
- There is a **broad way** and a **narrow way**.
- There is **eternal damnation** and **eternal life**.

- There is **holiness** and **ungodliness**.
- If we do not contend for what is true, then we will be guilty of tolerantly embracing every wind of doctrine.
- It's a call to pay attention to what is taught by everyone and pay attention to what others are doing.
- Jude shows us how to keep the faith in the midst of **ungodly influences**.
- We do it by living ***proactively*** as a follower of Christ.

D. Keep the Faith by Cultivating Your Personal Relationship with God.

1. We must not think that contending for the faith simply means attacking false teaching.
2. There are those who spend a great deal of time arguing for or against something.
3. There is a place to oppose lies, but it should never be *at the expense* of our personal relationship with God.
4. We will not successfully keep the faith if we concentrate ***only*** on resisting opponents of the faith.
5. Take **positive steps** to continue in the love of God and to not neglect our own spiritual growth.
6. If you are too seriously keep the faith, you must be *actively engaged* in your own personal relationship with God.

Two Thoughts

1. To surrender to Christ means to be disciplined.

2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Hebrews 5:12

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

2. To surrender to Christ means to be a lover.

Matthew 22:37b

³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Roles of a father or mother.

1. If I say to my wife I love you and I value you as the most important thing on this earth.
2. And **instead** of living a disciplined life to **provide** and **protect**.
 - a. And I **never** set my alarm clock and get up to go to work.
 - b. And I let everyone go to bed at night and never check the doors to see if they are locked.
 - c. And I never teach my children about safety and the fact that not everyone in this world loves them and some would want to harm them.
 - d. I only tell them I love them and try to have fun all of the time.**
 - e. You would say that I am NOT a good husband or Father.
 - f. I have not fulfilled my responsibility - How can you say you love them if you are not disciplined.
3. On the other hand if I get up at 5:00 every day and go to work and work 12-14 hour days
 - a. Install an alarm system in the house.
 - b. Buy 3 shotguns – one for every door.
 - c. A pistol for the car.
 - d. Give my kids mace and put trackers on their phones so I can watch them 24/7.
 - e. Install the latest smoke detectors and fire safety equipment.
 - f. Buy them bullet proof back packs.
 - g. BUT... I never show up to any of their school functions...
 Never watch a game.
 Never kiss them good night.
 Never tell them I love them.
 Never hug them.
 Never encourage them.
 Never laugh with them.
 Never play games with them.
 - h. I never take my wife on a date.
 - i. I never tell her I love her.
 - j. I never remind her that she is the most wonderful and beautiful woman on the earth.
 - k. I never dance with her or hold her or laugh with her.

You might say that although I am a good provider and protector that is all that you are.

Your kids don't really know that you love them.

Your wife doesn't feel like a princess.

You never tell them.

- **You are disciplined but you are not a nurturing lover of your family.**

You have to be a **fighter** and a **lover**.

You have to be a **warrior** and a **poet**.

You have to be their **leading protector**, **chief provider** and their **biggest fan** and **greatest lover**.

My challenge to you in your relationship with Christ is to be **Disciplined** like a warrior and **adoring** and **affectionate** like a lover

King David – was a man among men. He was a warrior, a giant killer.

He was also a psalmist and a poet.

A lover and song writer.

When the Arc of the Covenant was returned to Israel

2 Samuel 6

Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might

Application

Be grounded in the Lord.

Pursue HIM like **the discipline of a soldier**, the **discipline of an Olympic athlete**.

Enjoy the Lord like love song.

Enjoy the Lord like he is your best friend.

Enjoy the Lord like he is the **King of the Kingdom** and **you are his bride**.

II. Pray in the Spirit.

Jude 20-21

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.

Romans 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Galatians 4:6

Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

- A. What are you praying over and over to God in the name of Jesus that he will make of your life?
1. What are you asking God to make of you and your time on this earth?
 2. What part of God's purpose revealed in the Bible has captured your imagination and become a passion for you so that you take hold of God day after day and ask him to use you in it?
 3. What thing do I want God to do so much that it is there in my prayers constantly
 - a. For many of us the answer to that would be prayers that our children be saved and walk in truth.
 - b. That our marriages be strong.
 - c. That you would fulfill your purpose on the earth.

B. But what about the bigger picture?

1. God is the God of the whole earth and all the nations and all of history and all of life and culture and all the universe from one end of the galaxies to the other.
2. Each of us was created to have a significant place in that great scheme.
3. What is it?
4. What do you pray for day in and day out about how you fit into that?

For me...

The prayer I have probably prayed more often than any other at that level is...

"Father, cause your name to be hallowed in my life and through my life."

"Hallowed be thy name."

"Make my life a means of people coming to reverence your name and love your name and praise and honor and cherish and treasure and glorify your name."

1 Corinthians 14:15

¹⁵ So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.

What Is "Praying in the Spirit?"

- C. The best brief statement I have found of *what* it means to pray in the Holy Spirit goes like this: It means "so to pray that the Holy Spirit is the moving and guiding power.

Moving and Guiding Power

1. The key words there are "moving" and "guiding."
2. In other words, when you pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God is "**moving**" you to pray.
 - That is, he is the one who **motivates** and **enables** and **energizes** your prayer.
3. And when you pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God is "**guiding**" **how you pray** and **what you pray for**.
 - So, to pray in the Holy Spirit is to be **moved** and **guided** by the Holy Spirit in prayer.
 - We pray by his power and according to his direction.

The Power of the Spirit

Let's see where this interpretation of praying in the Holy Spirit comes from in the Bible.

- Parallel passage

Ephesians 6:18

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit."

Application

- The reason this is important is that it shows that "praying in the Spirit" is not a special form of prayer – like speaking in tongues.
- We can tell this is so because Paul says in that we should pray "at all times" in the Spirit.
- In other words, *all* prayer should be "in the Spirit."

Praying in the Holy Spirit is not one form among several.
It is the way all prayer is to be offered.

2nd parallel

Romans 8:28

The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

- Here it is plain that one thing the Holy Spirit does for us is help our weakness when we need to pray but can't the way we should.
- So it is natural to take "praying in the Holy Spirit" to mean praying with the help of the Holy Spirit – with the strength and enablement of the Spirit to make up for our weakness.

3rd parallel

Romans 8:15b-16

¹⁵ ... the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

- The point here is that the Spirit of God helps us have assurance that we are children of God by causing us to cry out from the heart (to pray!), "Abba, Father."
- In other words, the Spirit moves our prayers.
- He motivates, enables and energizes our prayers.
- That's a key part of what "praying in the Holy Spirit" means.

The Guidance of the Spirit

D. The other part of what it means to pray in the Holy Spirit is that when we do so, our prayers are not only "moved" by the Spirit, but also "guided" by the Spirit.

1. This is no surprise, because if the Holy Spirit is prompting and enabling and energizing our prayers, it would be natural to think that he does so in a way that lines up with his Word.
2. We would not want to say, The Spirit moves our prayers, but they are not according to God's will.
If the Spirit is moving us to pray, then he would move us according to his will and Word.

So praying in the Holy Spirit would mean not only experiencing the *power* of the Spirit to help us pray when we are weak, but also experiencing the *guidance* of the Spirit to help us when we are foolish or confused or selfish.

James 4:3

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- That would not be praying "in the Holy Spirit."
- That would be praying - selfishly - or in your own sinful nature.

How Do I Pray in the Holy Spirit?

- This is the way human life is, since God is sovereign and we are responsible.
- We act. We are responsible to act.
- But God is the decisive actor.
- Our action is dependent.
- So when we are told to "walk" ([Galatians 5:16](#)), or fight sin ([Romans 8:16](#)), or confess the Lordship of Jesus ([1 Corinthians 12:3](#)), or worship ([Philippians 3:3](#)), or pray ([Jude 1:20](#)), we are told to do it "in the Holy Spirit."
- *You* do it so that it is the Holy Spirit who is doing it in and through you.

So *how* do I pray so that it is really the Holy Spirit prompting and guiding the prayer?

Trusting God to Give His Spirit

I think there are two basic answers. The first is faith. We pray "in the Holy Spirit" when we take our stand on the cross of Christ (which purchased all divine help) and trust God for his help by the Spirit. In other words, when you admit that without the help of the Spirit you cannot pray as you ought, and then you consciously depend on the Spirit to help you pray, then you are praying "in the Holy Spirit."

So the first answer to the question, *How?*, is by *faith* – by *trusting* God to give you the Holy Spirit to help you pray.

To "pray in the Holy Spirit" is

By not putting any confidence in what we can do in our own nature, but instead looking away from our own resources and trusting in the mercy of God to help us pray by his Spirit.

Trust God for the help we need to pray.

When you are too weak or too confused or too depressed or too angry or too dull to pray, at that moment do not assume that you can't pray.

Instead, consciously look away from yourself to Christ and to the mercy of God in Christ, and trust him to help you – even if it is only to produce groanings too deep for words

Romans 8:28

Learn to distrust yourself and to trust God in prayer. Learn that without him you can do nothing and cast yourself on him at all times for all you need in order to pray.

Let Your Prayers Be Shaped by God's Word

- If you live in the Word of God, meditating on it day and night by reading it every day and memorizing portions to carry with you all day and savoring them hour by hour, then your prayers will be shaped by the Word.
- Which means they will be shaped by the Spirit.
- And that is what it means to pray "in the Holy Spirit."
- Not only to be moved by the Spirit in prayer, but to be guided by the Spirit in prayer.

III. Keep yourself in God's love.

Vs. 20-21

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.

- A. Consider the context of this word about prayer in verse 20.
 1. There it says that we are to "pray in the Holy Spirit."
 2. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love . . ."
 3. What you can see from this immediate context is that building yourselves up on the foundation of faith and praying in the Holy Spirit are the way Jude wants them to keep themselves in the love of God.
 4. "By building yourselves up and praying, keep yourselves in the love of God."
- B. Now keeping Christians safe for eternal life is what this book is really about.
 1. That is, this little letter from Jude is about perseverance – it's about how to fight the good fight and take hold of eternal life 1 Tim 6:12
 2. And how to finish the race and keep the faith, and how to endure to the end and so be saved
 3. And verses 20-21 say: This perseverance is something you do.
 4. *You* build yourself and others up on the foundation of faith.
 5. *You* pray. *You* keep yourselves in the love of God.
- C. But that is only part of the context.

1. At the beginning and the end of this little book, there is another truth, a deeper truth about perseverance – or about "keeping."

Jude 1

¹Jude, 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:

²Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

2. Notice the word, "kept."
3. Here is the idea of perseverance again, only here at the beginning it is *not* the Christian who is keeping himself. He is *being kept*.

Illustration

Some translations say "by Jesus Christ." Some say, "for Jesus Christ."

The original Greek can mean the one as easily as the other.

Both are probably true in Jude's mind.

But let me show you why the NASB chose to say "for Jesus Christ."

Evidently the translators thought that the "keeper" behind the verb, "kept," in verse 1 is not the Christian himself and not Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but someone else. Who?

Who Is the Keeper?

- Sometimes you need the end of the story to know the full meaning of the beginning.
- So look at the famous doxology in verses 24-25. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy. . ."
- Now we have our perseverance attributed not to ourselves, but to someone else.
- Who is this?
- The next verse makes it crystal clear.
- Verse 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."

Truth

- So the one who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make sure you arrive in the presence of God blameless and with great joy is "God our Savior through Jesus Christ."
- So God the Father is the ultimate keeper and he acts "through Jesus Christ" because the death of Jesus is the purchase price and foundation of all grace, including the grace of keeping us – that is, the grace of perseverance.

- D. So back to verse 1. "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and *kept for Jesus Christ*."
1. The main thing to see here is that it is not we who are keeping in verse 1 or verse 24.
 2. It is God the Father through Jesus Christ.
 3. God *called* us, God sets his saving *love* upon us, and God *keeps* us.
 4. So now we have two truths about our being kept safe for eternal life as Christians.
- E. Over and over in the Bible we see this: God's action is decisive; our action is dependent.
1. And both actions are essential.
 2. So I urge you again to resist the mindset that cynically says, "If God is the decisive keeper of my soul for eternal life (verses 1, 24), then I don't need to 'keep myself in the love of God'" (verse 20).
 3. That would be like saying, since God is the decisive giver of life, then I don't need to breathe.
 - a. No. No. NO... Breathing is the means that God uses to sustain life.
 - b. So the command to breathe is the command to fall in with the purposes and patterns of God to give and sustain life.
 - c. **His keeping is decisive and our keeping is dependent on his.**
- F. **To our spirit prayer is like breath to the body.**
1. Prayer is the breathing of the Christian life.
 2. Notice in verses 20-21 that prayer is one of the ways we are to keep ourselves in the love of God.

Jude 20-21

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...

- Shortened down, it says, "By praying, keep yourselves in the love of God."
- So the effort to "keep ourselves in the love of God" (verse 21) is the means God uses to keep us safe for eternal life.
- And *praying* is one way we keep ourselves in the love of God ("praying, keep yourselves in the love of God").
- Therefore, prayer is a crucial and essential means of grace that God ordains to keep us safe for eternal life.

Straw Man

- So don't ever think, Since God is the decisive keeper of my soul, and I am eternally secure therefore I don't need to be vigilant to pray for perseverance.
- That would be like saying, Since God is the decisive giver and sustainer of life, I don't need to breathe.
- I can spend as much time underwater as above water and it won't make any difference.
- Yes it will.
- God's methods of sustaining life is not only the gift of life, but the gift of breath to sustain it.

Acts 17:24-25

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Application

- So don't think, Since God is the decisive keeper of my soul, I can spend as much time in prayerless sinning as in prayerful serving, and it won't make any difference. Yes it will.
- God's means of keeping your soul is not only the gift of life, but also the gift of prayer to sustain it.
- If you don't receive and use the gift of life-sustaining prayer, there is little reason to think that you receive and cherish the gift of life.
- If you don't treasure the gift of breath, you don't cherish the gift of life.
- Prayer is utterly crucial to your life.

Luke 21:36

³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Pray that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man at the Last Day.

Prayer is a means of persevering to the end in faith and standing with joy before the King of the universe.