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## 1. The warning

Jude 17-19 (NIV) But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. <sup>18</sup>They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” <sup>19</sup>These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

2 Peter 3:3 (NIV) Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

- In the book of Jude, he warns us of some people within the church who are full of unbelief, disobedient and willing to sell out on their faith.
- They reject God’s authority and yet have the appearance of godliness while denying God’s power.

## 2. Secure your faith

Jude 20-21 (NIV) But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

### - Building yourself up in your most holy faith

- Building yourselves up = following a *plan* with *pre-designed* (*pre-defined*) specifications.
- The faith handed down from Christ to and written through the Apostles is our foundation for truth and faith.

1 Corinthians 3:10-13 (NIV) By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup>their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.

- We are each responsible for our spiritual growth.

Acts 20:32 (NIV) And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

### -Pray in the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:26 (ESV) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

- We are to pray by God’s Spirit as he directs us, rather than by our own will.

### -Keep yourself in God’s love.

John 14:21 (ESV) Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

- Obedience places us in the center of God’s love and blessing.

### -Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life

Hebrews 11:16 (NIV) Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

- Building ourselves up in the faith is not something we do alone; it is intended to be done in community, we are to encourage and care for one another in the truth.

### 3. Help rescue others

Jude 22-23 (NIV) Be merciful to those who doubt; <sup>23</sup> save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

#### #1 We are to be merciful in our responses to those who waver or are in doubt.

- Doubting is a normal part of our life experience - questions are ok. *Read the Psalms.*

#### #2 Urgently help save those who are walking toward hell.

- Jude tells us we are to rescue people from the danger of destruction.
- False teachers who deconstruct the Word of God are in danger themselves and dangerous to others. (Galatians 1:8)

Jude 10 (NIV) 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.

#### #3 Showing mercy, we are called to act with caution toward those who are steeped in the sin of false teaching.

- Be careful as you walk with people entrenched in sin so you yourself don't stumble.

Galatians 6:1 (NIV) Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Hebrews 3:12-13 (NIV) See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

- "See to it": pay attention to our brothers and sisters. Listen, ask questions, take a special interest in them, take them back to the beliefs of the early church.

Jude 24-25 (NIV) To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— <sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

- Jesus has the power (if you let Him) to guard you from falling and to make you stand blameless in the presence of God.
- God is greater than any of the false teachers in our current culture!

#### For Small Group Discussion:

**Read/Tell the Story:** Jude 17-23 (**Supporting Scripture:** 2 Timothy 2:23-26, 1 Corinthians 12:25, Hebrews 10:23-25)

#### **Questions:**

1. Is it okay and/or normal to doubt? What does it look like for you to be merciful to (or come alongside) someone who is doubting?
2. Who in your life do you need to help who has doubt or has drifted away? Who do you need to reach out to in order to build up this week? How will you help them?
3. What is the difference between arrogance (scoffers) vs. ignorance (doubters)? How should we as Christ-followers respond to both?
4. From your experience, what are things that encourage or build up your faith?
5. How will you grow in your understanding of the world so that you can discern true vs. false teaching?
6. When have you struggled with doubt, in the past or currently? (Remember our group's "no fixing" guideline)
7. When have you felt the Holy Spirit guiding you contrary to your natural instincts?
8. How can you contend for the faith, for yourself? And for others?

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