

Review:

- Jude - the half-brother of Jesus is the writer, but humbly calls himself “a servant (or slave) of Jesus Christ”
- We know Jude was a skeptic prior to the resurrection, but after became a believer and leader in the early church. Jude was later crucified around 70 AD
- The audience he is writing to is to believers - “beloved” or “friends”
- He desired to write a more encouraging message, but was instead forced to deal with what was happening in the church: false teachers who have slipped in, deceiving and advocating immoral living

*Jude 17-19 (ESV) “But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”*

- This is a warning to **alarm** believers of how serious a threat is among them. It was written to the early church, but has just as much application today.
- Today we have 2 extremes **Alarmism** vs **Pacifism** (see podcast for more discussion on this)
  - “There is danger around every corner!”
  - “Just calm down”
- So, how do you and I respond with this warning in mind?

**Jude’s Call to Persevere as we “Contend for the Faith”**

*After helping these believers understand the dangers of false teachers, he now turns to some practical steps to respond to insiders and outsiders.*

*Jude 20-23 (ESV) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.”*

**1 - BUILD**

*(VS 20) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,”*

- We are given the task to “build”
- We are given a specific set of instruction of the “most holy faith” seen from God’s Word and lived out in the early church:
  - Right Gospel
  - Right Doctrine (beliefs)
  - Right Living
- Building yourselves up is an ongoing activity
- Construction vs Deconstruction
- It’s possible to grow up in church, but not grow up in Christ

**2 - GUARD**

*(VS 21-22) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt;”*

- “Keep” is translated **τηρήσατε** (tērēsate), an active verb: “to guard”
- We guard the faith we’ve been entrusted with, all the while building
- As Christians, we help guard “the faith” of other believers:
  - Encourage one another, **when** we struggle and **when** we doubt

*2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (ESV) “But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

#### Levels of Relational Maturity:

1. I'll take care of me, you take care of you.
  2. I'll take care of you, don't worry about me.
  3. We care for each other - when I'm struggling, you help me. When you're struggling I'll help you.
- Guarding also involves confrontations in a merciful way - Speak truth in a loving way

Ephesians 4:15 (ESV) "...speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"

### 3 - SEEK AND SAVE

(VS 23) "...save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."

- As we grow, we have the same mind and mission of God: to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10)
- Remember what you have been saved from and who God is: God hates sin, but loves us (John 3:16)
- It is God's kindness that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4)

2 Timothy 2:23-26 (ESV) "Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will."

#### NEXT STEPS

- Investigate your personal beliefs against what the Bible says on that topic. What are untrue or partially true beliefs that have wormed into your mind not in-line with scripture?
- Inspect your faith community. Who is helping you "build" and "guard" right now? Are you susceptible to danger because of a lack of authentic relationship? Who do you need to open up to about doubt and struggles?
- Evaluate your calendar and priorities. Does your daily routine reflect the mission Christ has given you to "seek and save the lost"? Who are you praying for on a daily basis? Who do you know is more open to the Gospel than ever before?

**For Small Group Discussion:** What has stood out to you the most so far in this series?

**Opening Question:** As a kid, what did you adamantly believe that you later found out was wrong or untrue?

**Main Point:** Jude reminds us to build each other up when we doubt—this is how we contend for the faith, using the Word of God and the Holy Spirit as our guide.

**Read/Tell the Story:** Jude 17-23

#### Questions:

##### Head -

- Is it okay and/or normal to doubt?
- What does it look like to have mercy on those who doubt?
- What is the difference between arrogance (scoffers) vs. ignorance (doubters)? How should we as Christ-followers respond to both?

##### Heart -

- What do we do with those who are struggling? How do we bring them back?
- From your experience, what are things that encourage or build up your faith?
- When have you struggled with doubt, in the past or currently? (Remember our group's "no fixing" guideline)
- When have you felt the Holy Spirit guiding you contrary to your natural instincts?

##### Hands -

- How can you contend for the faith, for yourself? And for others?
- What does it look like for you to be merciful to (or come alongside) someone who is doubting?
- Who do you need to reach out to in order to build up this week?

**Supporting Scripture:** 2 Timothy 2:23-26, 1 Corinthians 12:25, Hebrews 10:23-25

You can find resources plus Jim's podcast at the link below:

<https://realliferesources.org/current-series/contendforthefait/>

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