

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 15- How to Combat Heresy **Jude 17-21**

172 How to Combat Heresy Part 8

WOSM Thursday 07/03/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are continuing to go over what Jude taught about "How to Combat Heresy." So, let's open our Bibles and read **Jude 17-21** again together:

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Now on this broadcast, we are continuing to go over the first of the four ways that Jude gave us to combat heresy when it comes to our Church. This first way is based upon the inspired words that Jude wrote to us in verse 20:

1. Build Yourself Up on Your Most Holy Faith

Now this first way of combating heresy could also be called "the way to achieve spiritual health" because that is what Jude is saying here. Now we can all agree that if given a choice it is better to be strong in the Lord than it is to be weak. So since being strong in the

Lord will help us combat false teaching- how do we become spiritually strong?

As we saw last time- there are 10 separate Biblical keys for every believer to become spiritually strong; edified; mature; and equipped. So, let's go over the list again:

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Godly Fellowship
4. Obedience
5. Being Filled With the Spirit
6. Confession
7. Love
8. Trust
9. Witnessing
10. Discernment

Now we have already gone over the first key to our spiritual strength- Prayer- and today I want to look at the second way to achieve spiritual strength- which is Bible Study.

The Bible is God's final, complete, and authoritative Revelation to Man. It contains everything that we need for both life and godliness. There are other things that we can read or listen to or watch or be a part of, that, no doubt, will help us in various ways- but the Holy Bible should be our main source of godly instruction.

And I suppose that Bible Study is one of the most overlooked aspects of Christian Life today. We live in a time when Bible knowledge among God's people is at an all time low. If you have listened to many of these radio broadcasts, you will know that I deal with this issue quite often because it is at the heart of all that Jude wrote about in this Epistle.

More and more Churches today have almost completely abandoned historic Christianity and are following the broad road which the modern church growth gurus have designed and the result is always a de-emphasis on Bible Study.

Today fewer people study the Bible than at any time in the 2,000 year history of the Church- and that is despite the fact that we have such wonderful tools available to us today to make this process so nice.

The most common thing that I hear is that most people simply do not have the time to study the Bible. But of course, they always have time to go fishing, camping, or gardening; and they always have time to watch television or watch sports or play video games.

The fact of the matter is- and this may sound harsh- but it is true- that the Bible is simply not viewed today by any sizeable majority to be important enough to study on an ongoing basis- and that is both shameful and tragic.

Part of the problem is the fact that our modern culture is both entertainment oriented and designed to feed our own self-centeredness. Even the Church has become more and more like the world and has adopted a “psychological gospel” comprised of more and more things that do not matter combined with “feel good” preaching which cannot convict the heart or save the soul.

Christianity has been “remade” and “repackaged” so much and we have all gotten “out of the box” for so long that we don’t even remember what the box is. In my lifetime- the glorious Gospel that should produce people who hate materialism and covetousness and greed- has been remade to being nothing more than a tool that we can use to get more of this world’s goods out of God- and beloved that isn’t Christianity- that is blasphemy.

Bible Study today is almost universally looked at as some search for “special keys” and “hidden secrets” that will allow us to have a better life right now down here- rather than as a way to honor God and to prepare us for the next life. Bible Study far too often resembles a search for the next bumper sticker or clever slogan that we can put on at-shirt or a ball cap or that we can quote rather than as Object Propositional Absolute Truth to which we will all be held accountable. And that is why the last thing on anybody’s list today is a serious, in depth; line upon line; and precept upon precept examination of the Scriptures.

But regardless of how unpopular this becomes, by God’s Grace, I will remain faithful to preach the Truth about this issue.

I will tell you that it is simply unconscionable for anyone who has been saved for any length of time to be ignorant of Scripture. Now this might be understandable if God has not gone to great lengths to give us His Word- but God did go to unimaginable length to give us His Word and for a believer who has been saved for any length of time

to not be involved in a serious, deep, ongoing Bible Study is sinful. And it is sinful for the leaders of the modern Church to not emphasize Bible Study and to not hold regular Bible Studies at the Church on an ongoing basis.

But it's not like the leaders don't hold any meetings at all. No, the modern Church is filled with concerts and comedy acts and puppet shows, and sporting events and all kinds of meetings. But as those things increase- the Bible sits on the shelf gathering dust and God's people remain ignorant of what God has said.

We must understand, dear friends, that there is simply no way for anyone to know God's Will without having a thorough knowledge of Scripture because Scripture is God's revealed Will to Man.

We have to realize that the Holy Bible is not only God's Word in the world- but it is also God's Voice in the world. When the Bible speaks- God speaks. So, if you desire to know the Word of God- read the Bible and if you desire to hear the audible Voice of God- read the Bible out loud.

But the Bible is also God's Will. We learn about God's Will in general and for our lives specifically by studying the Bible. It is frightening to me to see how many people today go from one meeting to the other trying to get some visiting minister to lay hands on them and give them a word of Knowledge or a prophetic utterance to inform them what God's Will for their life is. Anyone who holds themselves out as being able to do that is a false teacher, dear friends and should not be believed or received into your church. God has not subcontracted the ability to tell other people what God's Will is to any man- but He has strictly reserved that ability to His Own Word.

Asking someone else to give you a word about Gods' Will for your life shows a fundamental disregard for the Word of God that God has already given, and it reveals an inherent laziness on the part of the individual to study the Book to find out for himself.

Almost everyone that I meet today says that the Bible is God's Word- yet so few actually treat the Bible with the respect that God's Word should require. What good is Divine Truth if God's people don't know it? And how do we expect people who don't know the Lord to live in accord with Scripture if the very people of God don't honor God's Word by obeying it? Why do you want the 10 Commandments to be in your school when the 10 Commandments are not in your home

and in your heart? Why do you want the American culture to return to Biblical Standards when the people of the Church don't even know what those Standards are?

So, what are we to make of this glaring inconsistency? If the Bible *is* the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word of the living God- then we are compelled to understand what it says. But not only do we need to know what the Bible says- but we must also learn what it *means* by what it says. However, knowing what the Bible says will do us little good unless we learn how to interpret it correctly.

What I find to be fantastic is how little time the leadership in the average Church spends in teaching their people *how* to study and *how* to correctly interpret the Bible. No wonder so many people are being fooled by ancient heresies that are rehashed and repackaged in our day. No wonder the Mormons are growing by double digits every year.

Beloved, Bible Study is required by God to all who are saved. Lost sinners are not required to study the Bible but all who are saved are in blatant rebellion by ignoring Bible Study. People who are born again should have an insatiable hunger for the Words that came from the Mind and Heart and Mind and Mouth of Almighty God. So, if a person has no desire at all to study God's Word- I have no reason to believe that they have been truly born again.

Now it is true that you can be saved without reading the Bible or knowing anything at all about Scripture. When I first came to know the Lord- I didn't know any verses of Scripture at all- I never even knew **John 3:16**. But once you are saved; once you are born again- part of the new divine nature within you *causes* you to desire to read and study and know God's Word. It is patently false to say that *some* saved people hunger for God's Word while others- who are equally saved- don't. All saved people have an inner craving to know God and to love and obey God and to enjoy God forever. And if you don't have that craving- it is because you are probably unsaved.

Now we must realize that effective Bible Study should be systematic and not haphazard. Believers should not approach the Bible in a "every once in a while way." We need to study God's Word for the same reason that we need to eat. If you don't eat- you get weak and you will eventually die. If you do not eat the Bread of God- you will get weak and you will eventually die.

Most people that I know- eat two or three meals every day. Sadly, some of us eat more than that. So, Bible Study should be done on that basis also. A comprehensive and systematic; verse by verse; chapter by chapter; Book by Book approach to Bible Study is the best way to learn God's Word. Any other method will not serve to make you wise in God's Word.

I also recommend that you not engage in those little "Precious Promise" cards which have been sanitized to take out all verses which hold judgment and punishment against sinful behavior. We need to read *all* of the Bible- not just the parts that promise blessings. To read only part of the Bible and not read the parts that speak of wrath and judgment causes you to be self- deceived and will lull you into a spiritual slumber and give you a false sense of security.

All Scripture was given by inspiration of God – even the parts of horrific cataclysmic disaster and eternal retribution; even the parts that contain long drawn out lists of names and activities- even the Old Testament; even the long difficult passages in Ezekiel and Leviticus- *all* of Scripture is inspired and all of Scripture is profitable and all of Scripture was given as a gift from God to us and we are insulting God to His Face by picking and choosing which parts of the Bible we deem to be important by reading them while we deem others to not be as important and we skip over those. God authored all of Scripture and He gave it all to us and He expects us to value what He gave enough to read and study and to know it all.

Now another myth that must be put down is that believers always have this great emotional ecstasy about Bible Study. You don't. Bible Study isn't about us getting high- it is about us loving God enough and valuing His Book enough to want to know what He said.

Sometimes Bible Study is a very wonderful experience while other times it is like plowing through a field full of rocks. Sometimes when I study the Bible two or three hours go by and it seems like fifteen minutes. Other times each second is slow and agonizing. But this isn't about having fun- it is about love. Everything you do with people you love is not always thrilling to you at that very moment. But you do it because you love them.

Studying God's Word is the same thing as sitting at Jesus' Feet. Mary sat at Jesus' Feet because she valued what He had to say.

Martha was too busy to sit and listen and learn. Are you a Mary or a Martha?

You study God's Word because you love Jesus, and you study God's Word because you place a high value on what He has to say. Or you don't study God's Word because you value other things more than you value the Words of your Creator.

Studying God's Word is worship; it is obedience; it is love; it is service and the discipline that you accomplish by a systematic approach to Bible Study is extremely valuable to your walk with God.

There are many hundreds of Bible Study Plans out there that are good and reliable. But I have found that an aggressive approach is the best approach. I have developed a Bible Study Plan in which you go through the entire Old Testament and about one third of the New Testament every year. In 2-1/2 years- you will have read the entire Old Testament more than twice and you will have read the New Testament over 20 times!

Each workday- Monday through Friday, I read four chapters of the Old Testament while reading all of a small New Testament Book or a portion of a larger New Testament Book. I set aside my first early morning hours to this Study and Bible Study. In my almost 4 decades of serving Christ- this plan has allowed me to read the Bible through from cover to cover hundreds of times. If you would like a free copy of this Plan just write or call or E-mail me and I will be happy to send one to you.

This Plan gets the Word of God from the pages of the Bible into my heart and mind. This is the very same Plan that many people have used throughout history. George Washington used a Bible Study Plan very similar to this one and then after his study- he would spend two hours writing his prayers down.

So, the second way to become spiritually strong is engaging in a systematic and ongoing, serious, adult, line upon line precept upon precept study of the only Book that God gave to Man.

Well, I have to stop right here but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of Jude. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.