

# 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**

### 185 How to Combat Heresy Part 21

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WOSM Tuesday 07/22/08

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 as I have mentioned many times in this study- it is always better to be strong in the Lord than it is to be weak. Most everyone would agree that being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might is far better than being weak and faint and emaciated. Everybody would agree that Jesus wants his people and His Church to be strong and vibrant and fully alive and walking in the abundant life that Jesus promised.

The rub comes in with just exactly *how* do we get strong? How do we, as believers, obey Jude's command to us in verse 20 and build up ourselves on our most holy faith? Let me say to you that the pathway to strength in Jesus Christ is not mystical; nor is it hidden- it is very simple, and it is very clear- but make no mistake about it- although the

pathway to spiritual strength is simple- it absolutely does take discipline and self control. Becoming strong in God is not accomplished accidentally; nor is it going to happen haphazardly- you're not going to trip and fall into being strong in the Lord. Getting spiritually strong will require of you; it will cost you; it will demand of you; and you will have to sacrifice in order to achieve it. But sacrifice shouldn't be a problem if you genuinely love the Lord and desire to do His Will.

So, the real issue in us building up ourselves on our most holy faith is one of value. Is getting strong valuable enough to you for you to make the choices that you will need to make in order to achieve it? Do you love Jesus more than anything and more than anyone else- including yourself? If you do- then these steps will not be a problem to you. But if your love is divided; if your eye is not single; if your devotion is not focused on Jesus and on Him alone- these steps will seem draconian; they will seem to be harsh; they will seem to be crude and difficult.

Christianity is under assault today in this country like never before. Sound Doctrine and the vital need for believers to know *what* they believe and to know *why* they believe it is at an all time low. Truly we live in the hour when men cannot endure Sound Doctrine, but they heap to themselves teachers giving them what they want to hear rather than the whole counsel of God.

And sadly, many in the modern Church have adopted the ways of the world in discussing these issues. They view the entire purpose of Church as some great group therapy session in which God sits around waiting for His people to ask Him to provide whatever their hearts crave. And because this is true- the exalting of Man has become the highest form of spirituality. These people teach that whatever makes Man feel better must be from God. So, they teach a theology that has Man in the center. And they discuss things like physical health; material possessions; and financial prosperity as the primary means by which God's people get strong and become what God wants them to be. And nothing could be further from the Truth.

The Bible calls the exaltation of anything other than God- "idolatry." And that includes the exaltation of Man as well. We have to understand, dear friends, that to build up "self" is to put God in a lower place and that is textbook definition of idolatry. The highest form of spirituality is *not* the raising up of Man-but it is the lowering of Man

and the exaltation of Jesus Christ- to the exclusion of anything else and the exclusion of everyone else- including Man.

Listen, God is not necessarily glorified simply by physical healing or material possessions or financial prosperity. It is true that God *can* be glorified in all of those things- but simply because someone is healed or blessed or prospered- does not *automatically* bring glory to God. The Bible teaches from cover to cover that many times God is glorified when His saints suffer and when they are persecuted and when they go through trials and yet remain faithful or when they are unfairly treated and yet remain pure in heart.

You see, God is best glorified when we serve Him; when we obey Him; when we are in submission to Him; when we do what He says to do with gladness of heart; when we are faithful to Him- regardless of the cost to us personally - not simply because we got some new toy.

And it is not true that it is God's delight to always bless and heal and prosper everyone under all circumstances. To say that is to ignore many of the characters in the Bible; thousands of verses of Scripture; and six thousand years of human history.

In verse 20 of our study, Jude tells us to “**build yourselves up on your most holy faith**”. And Jesus said that there were three ingredients for accomplishing this. Let's read what the incarnate God said about how to be a disciple in **Mark 8:34-38**:

**34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.**

**35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.**

**36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?**

**37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

**38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."**

Today, many of our most popular teachers proclaim the exact opposite of what Jesus taught here in this passage, but it is clear from reading this passage that Jesus Himself put emphasis on three things

so that if we would do them- they would cause us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Jesus said that whosoever will come after Him had to do three things:

1. Deny Himself
2. Take up his Cross
3. Follow Me

How different are the words of Jesus from many of the famous preachers and teachers today. How diametrically opposite are their sayings. The modern Church emphasizes things like “how much” and “how big” and “how popular” and “how easy and nice”- but Jesus emphasized things like “how small” and “how low” and “how faithful” and “how obedient.”

So, when you read what Jesus said here in **Mark 8**, how do you respond? How do these inspired words of the Son of God impact you? Exactly what do the words, “deny yourself” mean? How is it possible to deny yourself and exalt yourself at the same time? Well, it isn’t. You have to do one or the other because you cannot do both at the same time. You are either involved in activities which are designed to exalt you, or you are involved in activities which are designed to cause you to deny yourself, but understand beloved, that you cannot do both at the same time.

So let me ask some questions. Is the Doctrine that you are being taught encouraging you to deny yourself or is it encouraging you to exalt yourself? You need to know the answer to that question.

*“But if Jesus loves us, why would He be interested in telling us to deny ourselves, Brother Blair? Isn’t the act of denying ourselves counter productive to causing us to become strong”?*

No, in fact the very opposite is true. And this goes to very heart of the matter. You see, even though many in the modern Church teach today that the sole purpose of God is to give us what we want- that is *not* the sole purpose of God and never has been.

Our entire purpose for existence on this earth is to bring honor and praise and glory to God through Jesus Christ. We have no other function in life but that and anything else we are doing is actually in competition with God’s Will.

So, it isn't simply about God blessing us- it is about God providing what we need in order that we may do God's Will. It is God providing everything that we have need of so that we may be obedient to what God has called us to do and value Him above all else. It is about God furnishing all of our needs so that we may bring God the glory and honor that He so richly deserves.

The emphasis in the modern Church is for Man to use God to achieve what Man wants. But the emphasis in the Bible is for God to use Man to achieve what God wants.

So, we have to understand that the greatest hindrance to God's Will being done in the earth is not the devil- it is people who are not submitted to God- but who are operating as their own "god"- living according to their own desires and doing what is right in their own eyes.

As long as we operate in our own devices- as long as people are in league with satan about their destiny- as long as Man tries to use God to achieve his own ends- make no mistake about this- Man is in competition with God and that makes him a rebel and that means that he is weak and is unable to bring glory to God. Only by denying himself; by decreasing; by dying to self can Man come into a right position so that God may use him to bring glory to Himself.

So, the strong Man is the one who is weak in himself and strong in the Lord and the weak Man is the one who is strong in himself and weak in the Lord.

Now let's consider this for a moment. If Jesus commanded us to deny ourselves- why would any truly save person object to that? So, let's go through this together. Did Jesus command every single soul who would come after Him to deny himself? Is that true? I don't think anyone who can read English could possibly say that Jesus didn't command us to deny ourselves after reading **Mark 8:34**.

Now some will say at this point that Jesus was only talking to His disciples and that this command to deny ourselves doesn't apply to us today. But a close examination of this verse clearly shows us that Jesus was not just talking to his disciples but was addressing "**whoever will come after me.**"

So, are you endeavoring to come after Jesus? Then this applies to you. So, all who come after Jesus must deny themselves.

But what exactly does it mean to deny ourselves and why is this such an important requirement for us if we hope to get strong in our faith?

In order to fully understand why denying ourselves is so important, we must comprehend just how opposed to God we really are. It is not the earth that is at odds with God, beloved- it is Man. The mountains and trees and birds and animals and even the hurricanes and volcanoes and earthquakes are all totally and completely subject to the Sovereign Hand of Almighty God. Man stands alone as the very center of open rebellion to God. It is the human nature and the human spirit that we celebrate so much that is at war with God. We are not subject to Christ by nature- no, the Bible says that we are in hostile and open rebellion to Jesus Christ by nature.

And to prove this point- look at your own children. Do you have to teach your children to rebel against your authority? Do we as parents ever have to spend five minutes teaching our children to rebel against us? No. Our own children- that we love and provide for and would die for- rebel against us to our face without any training or assistance from anyone. Now why is that? The Fallen Nature of Adam is in them. This is Original Sin. It is natural and normal for all those born after Adam to rebel. It is their nature.

Now while it is true that we don't have to teach our children to rebel- we *do* have to teach them to obey, don't we? We warn them, spank them punish them; raise our voices at them; pull our hair out and otherwise go nuts trying to teach our very own children to respect and obey our authority. And that is if we have good children.

So good parents; responsible parents; Christian parents must set rules; they must set up boundaries; they must establish order in the home or else you have complete chaos and lawlessness. And you may have already found this out- but rules without the certainty of swift and clear punishment- is a waste of time. And why is that? It is in the very nature of human beings to rebel.

To give a child unearned authority and power is to doom that child to a life of selfishness. To spoil a child is to doom that child to a life of thinking that everyone owes him something. This nation is reeling, and we are watching the total dismantling of our culture right before our eyes in large part because self- centered and cowardly parents refuse to discipline their own children. Lawlessness and sin abounds when there is no discipline.

Now most people would agree with what I have just said about children in principle, but we must understand, brothers and sisters that

what is true in the natural is also true in the Spirit. Without clear spiritual rules, without clearly identified spiritual boundaries- liberty quickly becomes anarchy and freedom in the Spirit quickly disintegrates into a license to sin.

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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