

Contend for the Faith
Fighting for the Gospel
Jude 1:1-7

Who Should Contend? (Jude 1:1-3) Jude, the half-brother of Jesus according to Matthew 13:55, has identified as something greater than a brother, He has conveyed himself as a bondservant of Christ! He addresses this letter to the Church, “those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.” In verse 3 he uses the word saints, those in Christ, not special super Christians. Summed up, this is everyone who has placed faith in Jesus Christ! If you are a Christian, there is no sideline to the battlefield. You cannot remain natural and claim or serve Christ. There is no way to be a spectator in the battle. You will be called to action. To take a stand, to contend for the faith! So the answer to who should do this is not the pastor, not the missionary, not the deacon only, but all in Christ Jesus. The theologian Aaron Tippin said: “You’ve got to stand for something or you’ll fall for anything.” Jude goes on further to say why we should contend for the faith in verse 4.

Why Should We Contend? (Jude 1:4) Queen Mary, had approximately 283 to 300 Protestants burned at the stake during her reign for refusing to convert to Catholicism. She claimed Christ, but denied Him with her life! Some are ok with adoration, claiming Christ, yet denying Him with their actions. The most dangerous, deceptive and destructive force are those who call themselves believers, yet deny Christ with their life! Paul warns us about these people. They are within churches internationally and in America! We call it “easy believism.” They preach the love, grace, and forgiveness of Jesus, which is true, but they forsake the mighty call towards transformation and repentance that the Holy Spirit brings about! Paul tells Timothy: ***“having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions. Always learning and near able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.”*** (2 Tim 3:5-7)

- a. We should contend because Jesus loves us. “Beloved” (John 3:16)
- b. We should contend because “ungodly people are perverting the gospel.” Jesus takes you how you are and transforms you! If you are the same as when you were baptized, you were baptized but not saved! The gospel is good news because we are horrible people. Jesus saves us and transforms us! The Holy Spirit does the work! Listen to Paul’s insight: ***“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.”*** (2 Tim 4:3) These

false teachers' way of life did not match the Word of God. They have distorted God's grace as a license to sin.

- c. We should contend because Jesus is worth it, our only Master and Lord. So "they" the false teachers within the church had used grace as an excuse to engage in sexual sin, sound familiar? That's America! This church sounds like an American church! Jesus is the master, not sin! Jesus is the freedom, not our self-centered desires! If the Word of God says it is wrong, run from it!

When Should We Contend? (Jude 1:5-7) Jude uses Old Testament references that a Jewish community would be familiar with: Israel's Wilderness Rebellion (Num 14), Rebellious Angels (Genesis 6), and Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 19). Jude is painting a picture of rebellion that can only be stopped, forgiven, and transformed by the Holy Spirit. The time to contend is now! You are to fight the good fight as Paul states, and as Peter conveys to give a reason for the hope that you have, with gentleness and love. Contend now!

How Should We Contend? You cannot go into battle without preparation, performance, and petitioning.

- a. Prepare defensively. (Ephesians 6:10-20) You cannot be in battle without a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of your identity in Him, you can fight! Make sure you are prepared defensively. Look at the first item to be put on, the belt of truth. The belt holds everything together. The truth of God's Word holds everything together.
- b. Perform offensively. (Eph 6:17, Rom 10:14-15, 17, 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17) Use the Word of God. Listen to 2 Tim 2:15: ***"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."*** Jesus battled Satan in the wilderness with the Word of God.
- c. Petition God directly. (Ephesians 6:18-19, Acts 4:31) In battle you must call in an airstrike! You want to cheat in battle as much as possible, meaning have the upper hand! It's debatable, but the truth is every military branch has a niche. The Air Force doesn't level the playing field, it decimates the battlefield! God's power decimates the hardest of hearts, and transforms them to His likeness! Listen to Acts 4:31: ***"And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."***

God's Grace Demands a Response With Our Lives