

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**

171 How to Combat Heresy Part 7

WOSM Wednesday 07/02/08

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 should all agree that if given a choice- it is far 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- just how do we become spiritually strong?

There are 10 separate Biblical keys for every believer to become spiritually strong; edified; mature; and equipped. So, let's go over the list:

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 before I go over these 10 keys with you, I want to say something. If a person is weak right now in his Faith and he desires to get strong- we must all agree that he is going to have to be willing to alter his life in order to become what he says that he wants to be. In other words, if what you are doing now has left you weak – then you sure don't want to keep doing what you are doing and you ought to be willing to change.

And if you are *not* willing to do whatever it takes to grow then don't be amazed that you remain weak. Rest assured, dear friends, that there are no shortcuts for growing in Grace- you grow God's Way, or you don't grow. And you can't sub this out to anyone else. You can't take a pill or have someone else lay hands on you after the service and impart spiritual strength to you. It doesn't work like that.

Gaining Spiritual strength is not a mystical experience either- it is real hard work and you have to *want* it more than you want to do other things. If you have no desire to do whatever it takes- you will never get strong and you will stay weak. That's just the way it is.

Now when I talk about spiritual growth please keep in mind that I am not talking about being justified. The Bible is clear that Justification is by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone- apart from any human works. But being sanctified or

“growing in Grace” after you are saved *does* involve human work- and a lot of it.

Now if you really love Jesus- the fact that spiritual growth takes a lot of real hard work shouldn't be a problem. But if you love sports or television or video games or other things more than you love Jesus; if the cares of this life have choked the Word; or if the lust of this world's goods has filled your heart and mind- then be assured you will remain weak and vulnerable and susceptible to heresy and false teaching and false prophets and growing in Grace really won't be attractive to you at all. So, let's examine these 10 keys of spiritual growth:

1. Prayer

To illustrate just how prayer assists your spiritual growth, read with me **Luke 18:1-8**:

1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

2 saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man.

3 "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'

4 "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,

5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'"

6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said;

7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Now notice in verse 1 the way that Jesus phrased His statement:

... that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

So spiritual weakness comes from a lack of prayer. When you don't pray- you lose heart, and you give in to temptation due to extreme

weakness. Prayer makes you strong and the lack of prayer keeps you weak. Praying a little gives you a little strength. Praying a lot gives you a lot of strength. Every believer should pray, and every believer should pray a lot and every believer should develop a life of prayer so that in effect- we are praying without ceasing.

Now even though this teaching about prayer is enormously popular in the Pentecostal and Charismatic worlds- I do have a disagreement with them about one aspect of prayer. There is no Scriptural basis to teach that *certain* people are called to pray while others are not. There is no such thing in the Bible that *some* people are called by God to be “intercessors” while others are not called to that. That is simply not true. All believers are told to pray- and we are all told to pray without ceasing.

Now I don't have the time in this broadcast to go over every aspect of prayer- but there are a few things that we need to know about prayer.

First of all- praying is not about reading off a laundry list of stuff that you want God to give you or do for you. Prayer is worship and if done properly- prayer takes time. Sometimes you can pray and touch God very quickly. But sometimes prayer takes hours; sometimes prayer takes all night; sometimes prayer should be accompanied with fasting, and you enter into season where your prayer time lasts for days- even weeks.

It was not unusual for Jesus to pray all night long. Daniel fasted and prayed for three weeks. And even though long protracted seasons of uninterrupted prayer will teach you many things about your walk with God- simply putting in the time is not the goal either.

Another truth about prayer is that the objective of prayer is not to get things- the objective of prayer is to learn how to trust and how to become totally dependent upon God. So, we are only to pray in accord with God's Will because those are the only prayers that God answers.

Now I don't really understand this- so please don't get angry with me about what I am going to say- but the Bible clearly teaches that praying very early in the morning has certain advantages. As I have said many times on these broadcasts- every person in the Bible that did anything meaningful for God rose up early in the morning and prayed- many of them while it was still dark. The Bible says in **Proverbs 8:17**:

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Now many have taken the pattern for prayer that Jesus gave us and called it “The Lord’s Prayer” and many of us have memorized that prayer and we repeat it often. But that is really not what Jesus told us to do. Jesus never said, “*Memorize these words and repeat them.*” Now there are several religious systems in the world today that teach their followers that by saying the Lord’s Prayer a certain number of times- that something magical happens or even that their sins will be forgiven or that the mother of Jesus will appear to them and show them something, but these teachings are false and cannot be found anywhere in Scripture.

Jesus gave us a pattern for prayer. Our Lord gave us clear instructions that we are to pray “**in this way.**” In other words, the subjects that Jesus deals within this pattern are the subjects that we should concentrate on as we pray. And as you go through this- you will notice- that most of the things that we concentrate on as we pray today are not found anywhere in the Lord’s pattern for prayer. The Apostle James tells us in **James 5:16:**

... The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

So, what does it mean to be “effective”? The word “effective” means “capable of producing.” So, our prayer should be the kind of prayer that is capable of producing. And this is where we have to be very careful. Many people have interpreted that to mean that unless *we* do something special- then God won’t hear us. But the Bible teaches that prayer like everything else about Christianity is about God- not about Man.

The volume of your prayer is not the issue because God is not deaf, and He already knows your heart. The length of prayer is also not the key to being effective because Jesus said to remember that we won’t be heard for our much speaking. We also must not think that by praying in great elaborate detail that it makes God hear us better. It doesn’t because your prayer didn’t give God one bit of information more than He already had. God knows more about what you are praying for than you do.- so don’t feel as though you need to inform God or to enlighten God about anything.

No, the key to praying effectively is to pray according to God’s Will. And that means that you must pray Biblically if you pray

correctly because the only way that anyone knows God's Will is through the Scriptures.

We must also know that praying is not about twisting God's Arm so that He will give you what you want- even if it is against His Will. You can pray until Jesus comes back but if what you are asking for is contrary to God's Word- He will not even listen to you. That is why Jesus gave us a pattern to follow when we pray.

Sometimes when you are in prayer- you will never get around to asking God for anything- and that is just fine because God already knows what you have need of before you ask.

So, it isn't about *us* making our prayer effective it is about us praying Biblically so that we align ourselves with God's Will. God always does what pleases Him- so effective prayer is prayer that is in accordance with God's Plan- even if that means that it is contrary to our plans.

Correct prayer will humble you. Biblical prayer will break the staff of your pride and wound your arrogant heart. Praying in God's Will will always bring honor and glory to God- even at your expense- and that is just fine to the soul who is born again and only lives to please Jesus Christ.

People who desire to grow in Grace should make time to pray and Churches who desire to see their people get strong need to move out the arcade games and push aside the carnal and worldly activities and call the people to prayer. Remember, the Church should be a House of Prayer.

So, the first key to spiritual growth is effective, Biblical prayer that follows the pattern that Jesus set for us, and which always brings honor and glory to God alone.

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.