

“Strategies for Contending for the Faith”

- **Stand your ground on the theological hills of our church’s statement of faith.**

** Since fighting is hazardous, make sure to fight on firm ground:*

1. Don’t get caught flat-footed (17-19)

2. Be spiritually fortified (20-21)

(1) Build upon _____

(2) _____ with God

(3) _____ the Father

(4) Have eternal _____

3. Have mercy on frenemies (22-23)

Community Group Study Guide

For the week of May 21-26

Getting Started

1. Think about a time you played sports, or maybe times you watched sports. Were you or a team ever unprepared for or totally surprised by the opposing team? What was that like? What is it like to react to others and keep trying to play catch up?

Context

2. Jude wrote the letter to “contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” What faith was he referring to? Review Jude 5-16. What was the point of Jude’s Old Covenant illustrations as he applied it to his audience’s day?

Observations and Meaning

3. What are key words or phrases in this passage?
4. The Apostles predicted ungodly scoffers would come. Read of Jesus’ prediction in Mt 7:15-20, Peter’s prediction in 2 Peter 3:2, John’s in 1 John 2:18-27, and Paul’s prediction in Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim 4:1-5; 2 Tim 3:1-5. If you lived in the first century, what should you have expected? Now read Psalm 1. What can we expect today?

5. How does Scripture describe the scoffer? Consider Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 1:22; 9:7-8; 13:1; 14:6; 15:12; 19:25, 29; 20:1; 21:11, 24; 22:10; 24:9; 29:8; 2 Peter 3:1-7.

6. Jude communicates his proactive strategy of contending for the faith in verses 20 to 21. Unpack each of these four phrases to develop a positive game-plan:
 - a. Build yourselves up (Eph 2:10; 19-22; 1 Cor 3:10-17; Col 2:6-7; Mt 16:18; Ac 20:32; 1 Pt 2:4-8)

 - b. Pray in the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18; Jn 4:23-24; Rom 8:9-11, 15-16, 26-27; Gal 4:6; 5:16-26;

 - c. Keep yourself in the love of God (*God's responsibility* — see Jude 1; Jn 17:6, 11, 12, 15; *Our responsibility* — see Jn 15:9-10; 1 Jn 2:3-5; 3:24; 4:7-12; 5:3)

 - d. Wait for God's saving mercy & eternal life (*OT expectation*: Hab 2:2-3; Is 30:18; 49:23; Micah 7:7 *Ist coming of Jesus*: Lk 2:25; 23:51; Titus 2:11-12; 3:4-5; 1 Pet 1:3; *Future mercy*: Lk 12:35ff; Titus 2:13-14; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Heb 9:28; Php 3:30)

7. Jesus said in Mt 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Jude expounds what it means to be merciful in verses 22 to 23... What should we do before showing mercy to others (note: Think verses 20 to 21)? To whom are we to show mercy? How are we to show mercy? What are the dangers of being merciful to others?

8. Jude is most likely drawing on Zechariah 3:1-5 in verses 22 to 23. What do we learn about the nature of contending for the faith of souls in danger of Satan and eternal fire? How does Jude apply that illustration to his audience?

Application

9. Have there been times when you were surprised at false teachers in the midst of the church community? What were the issues at play? How did they “creep in”? What have you learned to look out for?

10. Pick one of the four ways to be spiritually fortified. What will you do this week to grow those spiritual “muscles”?

11. Do you know anyone in your sphere of influence who needs to be rescued from the influence of false teachers? How will you pursue rescuing them from the fire? Pray for each other that you will be firm in the faith and not risk being tainted by the filth of sin as you pursue them.