

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**

184 How to Combat Heresy Part 20

WOSM Monday 07/21/08

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 notice here in verses 20&21 that Jude says that there are four ways that we can successfully combat heresy when it comes to us- and those four ways are:

- 1. Build yourselves up on your most holy faith**
- 2. Praying in the Holy Spirit**
- 3. Keep yourselves in the love of God**
- 4. Wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.**

And on today's broadcast- we are continuing to explore the first thing that Jude teaches that will help us combat heresy and that is:

Build Yourselves Up on Your Most Holy Faith

And as we have discovered- there are 10 Biblical keys that will help us to build ourselves up on our most holy faith- 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. Hope
9. Witnessing
10. Discernment

Now on the last broadcast, we were looking at the ninth key to becoming spiritual strong- Witnessing- and today, I want to look at number 10- Discernment.

Now I suppose Spiritual Discernment is one of the most important and least utilized aspects of Christian life that we have today. The word, "Discernment" is the act or process of exhibiting keen insight and sound judgment about a particular issue.

Every human on earth exercises discernment in one fashion or another. We all say, "*I like that*" and "*I don't like that*", or we say, "*I agree with that*" or we say, "*I disagree with that*". So, we all discern many things. The key question that we have to ask ourselves though is by what criteria do we discern- especially when it comes to spiritual matters?

In other words, even though we all exercise discernment to some extent- we must be careful on what we base that discernment. Proper Spiritual discernment is not based on human logic. Neither is it based on what we call "common sense". Spiritual discernment is not based upon what everyone else says or by the popularity of something or by how good something sounds. It is also not based on how you may "feel" about it.

I can't tell you how many people say to me that they believe something because they "feel" it is right. They say that they had an

“inner witness” about something that was taught or something that was said, and they accepted it based upon that witness. Beloved, I too am filled with the Holy Ghost and, Praise God, the Spirit can and does lead us- but we are never told to trust that “inner witness” to the exclusion of the other ways that we are utilize to **“test the Spirits to see if they are of God”**.

For example- it is not being spiritual to trust your inner witness to the exclusion of studying and knowing the Bible – because your inner witness is only as reliable as what you have been feeding on.

The long history of Man teaches us that the most horrible atrocities ever committed were done by intelligent people who had access to Truth- but who chose to ignore that Truth and believe a lie. If there is one thing that we can all say is true, dear friends, it is that our feelings are not always accurate. Our feelings are based upon any number of things- some of which are true- some false- and some *partially* true- which have no hope in and of themselves to bring wisdom and sound judgment to anyone.

Now when I say that- please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that the Holy Spirit is not reliable- not at all. The Holy Spirit is absolutely reliable and trustworthy- that is not in doubt at all. But what *is* in doubt and what should be questioned is the fact that we are not always correct and accurate in our ability to correctly interpret and understand just what the Holy Spirit is speaking. Human beings score very poorly in this area. Is not History filled with the stories of people who misunderstood and misappropriated what they *thought* the Spirit said to them- much to their own destruction?

Still others go by what they call their “conscience”- but that too is not always accurate. We must understand that the reliability of our consciences is only as good as what we have been feeding into our consciences. If you spend your days with Oprah and Dr. Phil and All My Children and the ways of the world- neither you nor your conscience has been feeding on what will cause wise and prudent and godly judgments that will glorify the Lord to come forth.

For example- God's Word says in **1Timothy 4:2** that some people's conscience have been **“seared”**... **“as with a branding iron”**. In other words, their conscience has been so misused and ignored and fed with so much junk that it is no longer reliable to guide that person in ways of righteousness.

It is popular today to tell people to “*follow their hearts*”- and that sounds so spiritual and so good- but look at what the Bible says about the human heart in **Jeremiah 17:9**:

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

If you believe the Word of God, my beloved, then you will see that the last thing that any of us can trust is our heart. But if we cannot rely on our consciences; our own common sense; or our heart or our human logic and if we misinterpret and misunderstand God’s Spirit all the time- then on what then *do* we base our judgment? What should we trust as being a reliable guide to gives us the clear distinction between what is holy and what is profane? I’m so glad you ask. There is left us only one authoritative source to base our judgment- the Holy Scriptures.

Spiritual Discernment is created and given By God’s Spirit, to every believer- it is part and parcel of the Holy Spirit- but Spiritual Discernment is honed and sharpened and made useful and effective and productive only through the diligent study of the Word of God.

If you want to be able to see heresy a mile off- you must spend time with God in prayer and in His Word. If you want to be able to know if Truth or error is being taught to you- you must spend time with God in prayer and in His Word. If you want to be able to guard your wife and the souls of your children from false teaching and apostasy- you must spend time in Prayer and in God’s Word.

There is no easier way; there are no shortcuts; there is no other method that God honors to build up Spiritual Discernment other than spending time with God in prayer and in the study of God’s Word.

One of the most horrific casualties of our materialistic and covetous society is that because we are all so busy chasing after money in order to buy bigger and nicer things- we have such little time any more to ever spend with God in prayer and in the study of His Word. With the advent of television and a myriad of other sources of entertainment- which make great demands on our time- we have precious little time left to spend with God in prayer and in the study of His Word. And because we have grown accustomed to being

entertained and not edified- we have very little inclination to spend time with God in prayer and in the study of His Word.

The modern Church has sought to appease this problem by adding more and more opportunities for God's people to be entertained- all at the expense of spending time with God in prayer and the study of God's Word. Church after Church today are so willing to cancel prayer meetings and Bible Studies to make room for pottery classes and to have more comedy acts.

We minimize the need for Sound Doctrine and then we wonder why we are deceived so easily. We marginalize Truth and then are so shocked at why we are so easily led astray. We seek to make it easier and easier for people to be saved- but then we are so disturbed that they do not walk with God. We fear making demands on people's lives- but then we wonder why they produce so little fruit. We just don't see the need to know what God has said- but then we wonder why we can't exercise Spiritual Discernment.

Now there is a lot of talk these days about things like "spiritual warfare". But one of the greatest areas of spiritual warfare is over our time. And I tell you that it is a premeditated effort by satan to keep God's people so busy and so entertained that no meaningful time is left for prayer or the study of God's Word- and nothing will change until and unless we begin to value prayer and value God's Word enough to make the conscious decision to cease from certain activities in order to spend time with God in prayer and the study of His precious Word. Until the things that God values become the very same things that we value- nothing will change, and spiritual discernment will remain weak and ineffective in our lives, and we will continue to be deceived and confused about issues that we don't have to be.

When a person never has time for prayer; when a person never has time for Bible Study- that person has already placed more value on whatever else he is doing than he does on God's Word. And that is idolatry and that is sin.

Beloved, Spiritual Discernment is not an entity of itself. Spiritual Discernment is the normal result of spending time with God in prayer and in the Study of the Word of God. It isn't magic; it isn't some emotional ecstasy; it is simply the automatic conclusion to a disciplined life of self denial and of picking up your cross daily and following Jesus.

All those who walk on the straight and narrow path exercise Spiritual Discernment. No one on the broad road has any access to it at all. It is impossible for a lost soul to exercise Spiritual Discernment and it is impossible for a saved man not to exercise Spiritual Discernment.

Spiritual Discernment tells you right from wrong; it makes a clear dividing line between that which is holy and that which is profane. It will always agree with God's Word; it will never tell you a lie; it will always speak Truth. It causes you to start some things while refraining from other things.

Spiritual Discernment is one of the most important aspects of the Christian life. It is invaluable for the believer. It is unconscionable for any believer not to feed his ability to Discern with a steady diet of inspired, infallible, inerrant words that come from the very Mind and the Heart and Mouth of Almighty God.

Untold millions of unsuspecting sheep could have avoided terrible pain and hurt if they had only known how to exercise Spiritual Discernment. Listen to what God said about the fact that His priests and His people didn't exercise Spiritual Discernment in **Ezekiel 22:25&26:**

25 "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.

26 "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

And again, in **Jeremiah 5:31:**

The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their *own* authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

I beg you to honestly judge whether prayer and Bible Study are boring to you or whether knowing God's Word thrills your heart. I beg you to honestly see if you get more out of an emotional service than you do dying to self and mortifying the deeds of your body.

I pray that you will be willing to move around whatever you have to in your life in order to make time for prayer and Bible Study this year. I pray that you will be more interested in building up your most holy faith than you are that you are blessed or wealthy this year. I pray that you are more interested in picking up your cross and denying yourself and following Jesus this year than you are of becoming more important.

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.