

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

God is Love

I, II, III John
& Jude

WEEK 6

“If It Feels Good, Do It”

Study: Jude 1:8-10

Reading: I Corinthians 9:19-27, Romans 1:18-32

Memory: Isaiah 40:2

Several years ago, I was in the locker room changing for my men’s league hockey when I started talking to one of the guys who was engaged to be married. I told him that he will be glad he got married because it is wonderful being married. I was amazed at the reaction that I received from the other players in the dressing room. One of the guys said that I was the first person he had ever heard who said they enjoyed being married. I was shocked at how many of the married players said that they really didn’t like being married.

Today, we are going to see how our society has been corrupted with a feel good philosophy. Commitment, love, and loyalty have gone out the window and are often replaced with a desire for sensual things.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jude compared the false teachers to those whom he had written about in verses 5-7. The false teachers were guided by their dreams and their own desires. Because they were guided by their desires and not by the Word of God, their lives were full of sin. Their desire was to please themselves, and in order to do that, they had to reject authority. Whenever people start relying on themselves to make up rules about life, they are headed into deep trouble (vs 8).

The false teachers rejected authority to the extent that they even spoke out against the angels. Jude referred to a story that isn’t mentioned anywhere in Scripture, but is talked about in ancient Jewish literature. Michael is the head angel who was put in charge of watching over the children of Israel. According to Jewish tradition, Michael was given the responsibility to bury the body of Moses. If you recall, Moses was not allowed to go into the promise land, but died on the mountains that overlooked the promise land. At the time of his death, he was alone on the mountain with God. It is thought that Satan wanted to take and use the body of Moses as some type of idol. Satan and Michael contended for the body of Moses, and Michael won the contest by using the name of the Lord. The point that Jude was trying to make was that Michael didn’t deny the power

of Satan, a fallen angel, but recognized his abilities, and knew that the only way to defeat him was with the power of God. The false teachers that Jude was speaking out against failed to recognize the power of angels (vs 9).

If the false teachers didn't understand something or couldn't experience it then they claimed that it wasn't true. They would speak out against such things and even mock those who believed in them. Jude declared that the false teachers were acting like animals who weren't given the ability to know God and have a relationship with Him. They based everything upon what they could see, feel, and touch, just as animals do. They didn't use their heads to realize that there was a Creator over them whom they should love and obey (vs 10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What are you living for? Are you living for the "here and now"? Do you only live for things that you can see or things that you dream about? How do you treat the authority of God and the authorities that God has given you? Maybe you're thinking in your mind that you could never think the way that the false teachers in Jude's day thought, but the honest truth is that it happens to all of us more than we think. Our society today promotes the ideas that the false teachers did in those days. One of the themes of our society is, "If it feels good, do it." This philosophy can penetrate our minds on a daily basis because that is what the world lives for. There is also a disregard for authority that is constantly displayed by the world. People feel that they shouldn't have to live under any rules and should be able to do whatever they want, but that is not how God designed us. Search your heart to see if your life is centered around the here and now and doing what pleases you, or if your life is focused on eternity and what brings glory to God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to help you change areas that you need to change.
- * Thank God for designing you with a need for authority.
- * Praise God because He has power above all things.

Thought for the day

What had Jude just finished talking about in verses 5-7? Why is this important to know in order to understand what is said in verse 8?

What were the people relying on for their authority (vs 8)?

Why do you think it is dangerous to listen to authorities who rely on their dreams?

What are three things their dreams led them to do (vs 8)? Briefly define what these three things are.

1.

2.

3.

What did Michael do (vs 9)?

What do you know about Michael?

What did Michael choose not to do (vs 9)?

What did Michael say to the devil (vs 9)?

What point do you think Jude was making with this illustration?

What did these false teachers do when they couldn't understand something (vs 10)?

****The word "blaspheme" referred to the idea of someone speaking evil about something. It is often used in the New Testament when someone calls the working of God "evil."*

What are they destroyed by (vs 10)?

Why did Jude compare them to animals (vs 10)?

How can you see our society act like this today?

“Powerful Leaders”

Study: Jude 1:11-13

Reading: Genesis 4:1-15, Numbers 22:21-31, Numbers 16

Memory: Isaiah 40:2

When Adolf Hitler took the leadership role in Germany, it was no accident. He gained power because of his great leadership ability. He took a plan that was purely evil and persuaded millions of people go to along with it. One of the reasons he was able to do this was because people are looking for leaders. Many people want leaders that they think they can trust. This often comes as leaders present themselves as strong and knowledgeable. The Germans thought that Hitler would be able to save their country from the terrible poverty and political corruptness that had characterized Germany for years. Little did they know of the end result of his rule over them.

Today, we are going to see how it is not uncommon for people to latch on to powerful leaders. We will also see how it is important for Christians to make sure their leader is acting according to God’s Word.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jude used very descriptive language to describe how the false teachers were like Old Testament characters who were judged by God. He first described how their actions were like the actions of Cain. According to Genesis 4:1-15, Cain and Abel were the first children born on the earth. Cain murdered Able because God accepted Abel’s sacrifice, but rejected Cain’s. Cain had devised his own way of worship, and the false teachers did the same. They despised those whom God blessed for doing things the right way.

Jude then compared the false teachers with the acts of Balaam. Balaam devised a plan that would allow Balak, the king of Moab, to trick Israel into an evil situation that would bring God’s judgement upon Israel. One of his main motivating factors was money. Basically, Balaam was selling out to Satan because of his desire for money (Numbers 22).

The third description he attributed to the false teachers is found in Numbers 16. Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron after the Israelites had been led out of Egypt. Two hundred and fifty leaders of Israel

rebelled with him against their God-given authorities. God judged Korah and the others who rebelled with him by causing the earth to open up under them and swallow them up (vs 11).

Jude also described these men as spots that destroy something beautiful. The believers would have love feasts together in which their hearts were drawn closer to Christ. The false teachers would attend these, but would be like spots on a brand new piece of clothing. They were like clouds without rain and trees without fruit. They gave some appearance of godliness, but they didn’t have God in their hearts. They were described as having a double death. Not only did they appear unfruitful, but they would never produce Christian fruit because they were not Christians (vs 12).

The false teachers were like strong waves in the sense that they promised great things and had short-term power, but false teachers never last. A shooting star is brilliant while it lasts, but it is short-lived. It is the permanent stars that made a difference to those who used them to navigate the sea (vs 13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you sometimes find yourself following a person rather than following God? It is easy to get caught up in emotional experiences or to follow someone who you think is a great teacher or a wonderful leader. There is nothing wrong with following leaders as long as they receive their wisdom and direction from the Word of God. Often, false teachers will start out teaching familiar truths that are found in Scripture, but will then teach things that aren’t in Scripture when they have built a loyal following. You might be thinking that something like that could never happen to you, but it can. You must constantly be on guard against the attacks of Satan. He will do whatever He can to keep you from being a witness for Christ.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Praise God because He never changes.
- * Ask God to help you know the truth found in His Word.
- * Thank God for giving you the ability to know what is right.

Thought for the day

What type of people had Jude been describing in verses 8-10?

How did he begin verse 11? Why do you think he began this way?

What three Old Testaman illustrations did Jude use? Describe what each of these men did (v 11)?

1.

2.

3.

Describe the fate of these three men.

1.

2.

3.

Why do you think Jude called them “hidden reefs” (vs 12)?

What were “love feasts” (vs 12)?

Why do you think they did their actions without fear (vs 12)?

What do you think it meant that they were shepherds feeding themselves (vs 12)?

What other illustrations did Jude use to describe these men (vs 12)?

What illustrations did Jude use for them in verse 13?

What point was Jude attempting to get across?

“Complain, Complain”

Study: Jude 1:14-19

Reading: Numbers 14:1-45

Memory: Isaiah 40:2

Several years ago, I was touring a camp that I was planning to use for a winter retreat, and I struck up a conversation with the camp director. I found out that he was the president of the local hockey association. He described how the summer before some of the parents became disgruntled with some of his decisions and started a slander campaign against him which led to his being removed from his position. One of the greatest complaints against him was his choice for a high school hockey coach. The people who complained got the coach they wanted, but they caused such a stir that the high school team disbanded.

Today, we are going to see how complaining can cause great confusion and great problems.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jude referred to an interesting quote in verse 14. He quotes something that Enoch had said several thousands of years before. Enoch was one of two men who never died because he was taken up to heaven by God. There is a book of Enoch that is part of the apocrypha which mentions the judgement of God, but it is likely that this book was not written by Enoch since it isn't referred to anywhere else in Scripture. God, through the Holy Spirit, inspired Jude to write about the prophecy of judgement that Enoch made (vs 14).

Jude referred to the prophecy to describe how God would judge the false teachers who were trying to destroy the church (vs 15). Jude then referred to some of the specific sins that the false teachers were guilty of. They had become complainers who found fault in everything that wasn't done their way. They spoke as if they knew better than the godly teachers that were in place in the church. People who are self-centered will be characterized by a complaining attitude. Satan knew that nothing could destroy a church quicker than an atmosphere of griping and complaining. Not only does complaining hurt the people who are doing it, but it hurts all those who hear their complaints (vs 15-16).

As do many other New Testament writers, Jude calls the time period that he was writing in the “last times.” We have seen before that that phrase refers to the time period between the first coming and second coming of Christ. He reminded his readers that the apostles had warned about men who will seek what is best for them and not what is best for God (vs 17-18).

Jude wanted his readers to know that Satan would use these false teachers to cause great division in the church if nothing was done about them. The false teachers were only focused on themselves and what they could get out of the church. One of the reasons that they were the way they were was because they don’t have the Holy Spirit living inside of them to guide them into what is right. (vs 19).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Is your life characterized by complaining? Do you help build the church by your positive attitude and love, or do you cause problems and divisions because of your selfish complaining? Whether you like to admit it or not, you are guilty at times of causing problems because of your selfish complaining. Every time you are tempted to complain, you need to remember that your attitude not only affects you, but affects others who are around you. Negativity and complaining are a result of selfishness. Complaining normally occurs when you don’t get your way or you don’t think things are being done the way you think they should be done. Sometimes you need to speak out when things aren’t being done right, but you need to speak to proper people and speak in a spirit of love and wisdom. You also need to remember that your way isn’t always best.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to help you be a positive person.*
- * *Praise God because He isn’t the author of confusion.*

Thought for the day

Who was Enoch (vs 14)?

How do you think Jude knew what Enoch said?

What had Enoch said about the coming of God (vs 14)?

What did Enoch say about the judgement of God (vs 145)?

Why do you think this verse emphasized the ungodly things that were spoken (vs 15)?

What does it mean to be a grumbler (vs 16)?

How does grumbling and complaining show you are following your own sinful desires (vs 16)?

How are grumblers often boasters (vs 16)?

What is the ultimate desire of the people described in these verses?

Describe times where you have fit into this category.

What can you do to avoid this happening to you?

What did Jude want them to remember (vs 18)?

What did the apostles say (vs 18)?

Why do you think the desire to follow ungodly passions is such a strong temptation?

What happens when you seek after your own passions (vs 19)?

What do you think it means to be “devoid of the Spirit” (vs 19 - ESV)?

What does this reveal about your actions when you complain or seek after your own selfish desires?

“Building A Defense”

Study: Jude 1:20-21

Reading: II Thessalonians 5:1-10, Mark 13:28-37

Memory: Isaiah 40:2

When I was young, our house was broken into a couple of times. In an attempt to distract burglars from invading our home, my dad bought an alarm system. We didn't have a lot of money for an elaborate system, so he bought a little burglar alarm. It was a small box about ten inches wide and 5 inches tall that had a siren attached to it. Once it was turned on, any abnormal noises in the house would set off the alarm. One of the memories I still laugh about today was watching my dad attempt to turn the alarm off without setting off the alarm. He was a large 250 pound man and would attempt to “tip toe” on the wood floor to reach the alarm. I remember the alarm going off many times and seeing my dad run to it to shut it off.

Today, we are going to see how we need to build a defense that will protect us from the “fiery darts” of Satan.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jude spent the first part of his letter describing the false teachers and the problems they causes in the church. He then used the end of the letter to describe how the church can defeat the false teachers that had crept into the church. In verses 17-19, he reminded the church to think about how the apostles told them that Satan would try to defeat the church through deception. He then gave them a list of things that they needed to do if they wanted to stand strong against Satan.

First of all, he told them to build themselves up in their faith. Just as a building needs a good foundation, our faith needs a good foundation. There is no other foundation for a person to build their faith on than Jesus Christ. We need to have a desire to know Him and to be like Him. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Spending time in the Word and having a desire to know more about the God of the Word is the best way to build your faith.

Next, Jude told the believers to “pray in the Holy Spirit.” Simply put, that means praying for God's will to be done. The more time we spend with

God and the more we know Him, the more we will know what His will is and the more we will want to see His will accomplished (vs 20).

Jude then reminded his readers to make an effort to stay in the love of God. Each believer has to choose on a regular basis to allow God's love to show through them. When a believer is in fellowship with God, his relationship with God will grow. This often involves choosing to do what God wants us to do over the things that our natural flesh desires. In John 14:15 Jesus told his followers, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

A believer also needs to joyfully expect the coming of Christ. When we think about the fact that Jesus will come again and will carry out His promise of eternal life, it will help us to keep our focus off the things of this world. It will also help us to think about the great mercy of God. God will give us something we don't deserve and that is eternal life with Him (vs 21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you doing the things that Jude mentioned in this passage? Are you taking time to get to know the God of the Bible by spending time with Him? Do you eagerly listen in church during the preaching time and think about the things that are said? Do you pray for the will of God to be done, or is your praying focused upon you? Are you establishing a wonderful relationship with God? Often people read the Bible and pray, but never get to know God. They don't think about what they are reading when they read, and they don't talk to Him like they would a close friend. Are you looking for the coming of Christ? Do you eagerly await His return, or are you so involved in earthly things that you don't want Him to come back yet? Many of the believers in the early church thought far more about the return of Christ than most of us do today. When you live your life expecting Christ to return at any moment, it will often change the way that you think and act everyday. You will begin to realize what is important in life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for telling us how to defeat Satan.*
- * *Ask God to help you do the things that Jude mentioned.*
- * *Praise God because He has the power to give eternal life.*

Thought for the day

Why type of people had Jude been warning about in verses 17-19?

Why do you think Jude emphasized becoming the opposite of what is found in those verses?

How does he address the believers (vs 20)?

What are you told to do in verse 20?

What do you think it means to “build yourselves up” (vs 20)?

How do you think this building occurs?

What do you think it means to pray “in the Holy Spirit” (vs 20)?

Why do you think this is so important?

Describe how you can put verse 20 into practice in a practical way in your life?

What are you commanded to do in the beginning of verse 21?

What do you think this means?

How do you think you can do this?

What are you to be waiting for (vs 21)?

How is God going to show His great mercy (vs 21)?

What does the mercy of God lead to (vs 21)?

Why do you think Jude used the term “mercy” in this context (vs 21)?

Why is the understanding of eternal life a central theme in the Gospel?

Describe how your life shows that you are living for eternal things rather than the temporal things of this world?

“Have Mercy”

Study: Jude 1:22-25

Reading: I Corinthians 10:1-14, James 1:1-8

Memory: Isaiah 40:2

When I was a young father I found that one of the hardest things about parenting was maintaining a balance in the way I disciplined my children. It was often difficult to know when I should have mercy on them and not punish them or when I should put my foot down and discipline them. I knew I couldn't punish them for every little thing, but I also knew I couldn't let them get away with everything. I found that I needed to continually make a conscious effort to be wise and maintain a balance when disciplining my children.

Today, we are going to see how we need to avoid the false teaching of the teachers, but love those who are affected by their false teaching. We have to do this with a conscious effort to be wise and to be able to discern what we should and should not be involved in.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jude mentioned three different types of people and how each should be treated. The first group he mentioned were the doubters. False teachers stir up doubt in the people whom they try to deceive. Many times it is easier to put down others who outwardly stray away from God and cast condemnation their way. When people stray from God it is often a result of an inward doubt about God and His love for them. We need to show great mercy on those who have doubts about their faith. This involves reaching out to them and doing whatever we can to bring them back into fellowship with God (vs 22).

Jude encouraged his readers to save others and snatch them out of the grip of hell. One of the responsibilities of a Christian is to share the Gospel with those who don't know it. This includes the people who have been led astray by false teachers. This could easily describe many of the people that are involved in the main-stream religions of our society. They are often taught a religion of good works, but don't realize their great need for Christ.

The third group of people that Jude wanted his readers to show mercy towards were the false teachers themselves. He warned that false teachers

should be approached with fear. He wanted his readers to take every precaution when dealing with false teachers so that they wouldn't fall into the same sins that the false teachers were in. Jude wanted them to love the people but hate every bit of sin that they were involved in (vs 23).

Jude closed his letter by letting his readers know that God has the power to keep them from falling into sin. God has given each one of His children the ability to know right from wrong and the power to resist evil and live in righteousness. The believers who follow the Word of God will not only experience joy here on earth, but will one day stand before God with great joy because of what they allowed Him to accomplish through them (vs 24).

One of the reasons we should serve God is because He is the King of Kings. We should glorify God in all that we do. He has power over all things because He created all things. Though false teachers will come and go, God will be around forever (vs 25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How do you treat those who might not be that smart or as spiritually mature as you are? Do you put them down, or do you show love towards them which encourages them to come back to God? How have you been a witness for Jesus Christ? When was the last time that you tried to tell someone about your faith in Christ? When you try to help others do you take precautions so that you don't fall into sin yourself? God wants you to be pure and holy, and at the same time, to be loving and merciful. You might be thinking that you can't do some of the things that you know God wants you to do, but you can. The Holy Spirit will help you do whatever God wants you to do. Remember that God is the ruler of all and has unlimited powers. You just have to make the choice to obey Him and He will do the rest through you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for using you to bring Him glory.
- * Ask God to help you be more loving and merciful.
- * Praise God because He is the King of Kings.

Thought for the day

Who are you told to show mercy towards (vs 22)?

Who do you think a person doubts?

Why is it important to have mercy on the person who is doubting (vs 23)?

What do you think it means to snatch some out of the fire (vs 23)?

What type of person do you think Jude is referring to in this passage?

What does it mean to show mercy to others (vs 23)?

Why do you think he says to "show mercy with fear" (vs 23)?

What are you told to hate (vs 23)?

Why do you think he says this?

****You have probably heard the phrase, "Hate the sin and love the sinner" (or something like that). In being compassionate and merciful it is very easy to start accepting the sin of sinners as normal. You need to be very cautious that you don't fall in love with the sin while loving the sinner.*

What is God able to do (vs 24)?

What do you think it means that God is going to "present you blameless" (vs 24 - ESV)?

Why do you think he is going to do this with great joy (vs 24)?

What four things should we praise God for (vs 25)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4

How long should we praise Him for these things?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.