

7. Substitutionary atonement
8. A literal bodily resurrection
9. A literal second coming
10. An eternal, literal heaven and hell

Allen wrote, “I consider these ten to be foundational first-order doctrines that constitute, at least in part, ‘the faith’ about which Jude speaks.” Perhaps you hold fast to other key, non-negotiable doctrines. Make sure you correctly differentiate between false teaching and personal preference. I’ve always believed it’s possible to embrace minor unscriptural things that may not completely line up with the Scriptures and still go to heaven. The false teachers in Jude’s day, however, were attacking the essentials of the Christian faith, and needed to be confronted. On this we agree! But it is never right to judge the motives of a man’s heart, or to participate in a character assassination because we either don’t agree with or like their ministry. God is the righteous judge.

I know two pastors whose methods and message I vehemently oppose; however, I will never voice my opinions on either a public or private platform, because I believe they mean well and are sincere in heart. My hesitation does not give me the right to say anything, but “*effectual fervent prayer avails much*” (James 5:6). And I would never classify them as false teachers. I continue to offer them ministerial courtesy, knowing that I too

have idiosyncrasies that others may deem unworthy of a minister of the gospel.

Oh, may true Christians everywhere vacate the critics corner and speak well of those who fall short of perceived or misperceived expectations. Allow the book of Jude to help you differentiate between scripturally determined false teachers versus imperfect men who are doing their best to advance God’s kingdom on earth. In the meantime, until I have won as many souls for Jesus Christ – like Maxwell and Osteen – I will refrain from any kind of criticism or judgment.



CONDITIONED TO CRITICIZE (PART 2)

Looking for the Worst in Others

Roger Loomis

CONDITIONED TO CRITICIZE, PT.2

(Continued from Part 1)

Jude 3 says, *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you that you should earnestly **contend for the faith** which was once delivered to the saints.”*

About whom was Jude referring? Jude directed his remark toward false teachers, who had infiltrated the Church, those who possessed an antiChrist spirit, and in their hearts had turned apostate. Jude emphatically deals with the dangers confronting the doctrines of the Church.

To whom was Jude contending? False teachers had risen up from within the church who denied the deity of the Lord and who had joined the church. They had crept in unawares. These intruders had begun to teach error (verses 3, 4, 8, 16 and 19). A leaven of evil was at work to destroy the work of God from the inside-out.

For whom was Jude contending? Christians then and now! False teachers and legalists still infiltrate unsuspecting churches today, and Jude’s letter continues to sound an alarm for pastors and teachers to maintain pure doctrine.

Perhaps it would be good to explain what the word contend means, and to whom Jude, the half-brother of our Lord is directing his remarks? When we rightly divide the Word, we perhaps find that much teaching in today’s American church may be unsubstantiated, imbalanced, and even misdirected. But this does not classify it as false teaching.

Could it be that we have created and justified a generation of saints who believe it their right, even responsibility to criticize and judge ministers and ministries in an unscriptural manner? Understand. We must differentiate between false teaching vs. church preferences, or false teaching vs. the non-essentials of our faith. The false teachers Jude exposed were attacking the non-negotiable doctrines of our faith. The writer points out that these intruders were godless or worldly, trying to change the grace of God into a license for immorality, denying that Jesus Christ is our only Sovereign and Lord, rejecting authority and slandering celestial beings, critics and fault-finders, flattering others for their own advantage, and following mere natural instincts and fleshly desires.

In contrast, Jude says that true followers of Christ lift high the cross of Christ (verses 2-23). They build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. They pray in the Holy Spirit (v. 20), stay in God’s love (v.21), wait for God’s mercy (v. 21), win

souls (vv. 22-23), and rest in His keeping power (v. 24).

Thank God for those who stay true to the faith, and who righteously discern between the real and the false. Christians who stay in the Word of God, who regularly sit at the feet of legitimate, though imperfect pastoral authority, and those who hold fast to good doctrine will one day be *“presented by the Lord Himself to the Father before His glorious presence with great joy”* (v. 24). What a day that will be!

Do we use pulpit time to preach the Word, or do we directly or indirectly bash others who perhaps do ministry another way?

Again, what does it mean to “contend for the faith?” False teachers had moved into the Church, and Jude sounds an alarm for pastors and teachers to maintain pure doctrine. What is considered to be sound doctrine? I agree with David L. Allen, who included the following non-negotiable doctrines in his article in the Southwestern Journal of Theology:

- 1.The inerrancy of Scripture
- 2.A literal Adam and Eve
- 3.The sinful nature of humanity
- 4.The deity of Christ
- 5.The virgin birth of Christ
- 6.The sinless life of Christ