



“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD	
Sunday Bible Study	24
Sunday AM Worship	39
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Wed. Bible Study	23
Offering	\$1681

James

A Simple Guide To Practical Christianity

Mark Ray

Christians Should Be...	
<u>P</u> atient, James 1	Your patience matures your faith, 1:3-4
<u>P</u> racticing, James 2	Your faith is shown by action, 2:18
<u>P</u> olite, James 3	Your righteousness is shown by your peace, 3:18
<u>P</u> rioritized, James 4	Draw near to God and he will be with you, 4:8
<u>P</u> rayerful, James 5	Your faithful prayers are effective, 5:16

James Destroys Hypocrisy

- Claiming to be religious without Christian living will never do, 1:26
- Claiming to have faith without living it out rejects the truth, 2:14-26
- Praising God while cursing people is pure hypocrisy, 3:9-12
- Claiming spiritual strength while refusing to obey is vanity, 4:17
- Rich people who oppress the poor will never enjoy spiritual wealth, 5:1-5

Key Verse: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” James 1:29

Back to the Bible

Minister:
Tim Canup
tim@wjchurchofchrist.org

Times of Services:
Sunday
Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
Sunday:.....7:30am
“Back to the Bible”
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

We Extend A Warm & Cordial Welcome To All Our Visitors!

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CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

Caleb C. Campbell

In the third verse of his inspired epistle, Jude sounds out the cry for Christians to “earnestly contend for the faith.” To contend is to strive, debate or fight. It is “literally, to wrestle” [Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude]. Jude was exhorting his audience of disciples to stand up and fight for the incomparable cause of Christ. They were to defend and proclaim their convictions regarding the Gospel of Christ.

The idea of fighting for and defending “the faith” is one that is unpopular in the “feel-good Christianity” of our day. It is deemed as un-Christ-like, and a mere sign of immaturity and maliciousness. Nevertheless, several times in the New Testament, various writers exhort Christians to do so. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, telling them to “put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). He told Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). He told Titus to rebuke false teachers “sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13). Peter told his readers to be ready to “give an answer to every man” that would inquire concerning Christianity (1 Peter 3:15).

Further, there are several inspired examples in days gone by of faithful prophets and preachers who contended for the cause of Jehovah. In the Old Testament, one can find

Continued Inside

Elijah challenging the damnable prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). Other prophets, such as Jeremiah, fought false teaching and pled with God's people to be faithful and obedient to Him. The New Testament tells of John the Baptizer fighting for the kingdom (Matt. 3:1-12). Stephen, the first faithful martyr of Christianity, was one who engaged in religious dispute (Acts 6:9). Even our Lord Jesus Christ verbally fought for His own cause, as on several occasions He warded off the attacks of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and others.

The fact is, if we as Christians are to show our love for the Lord by obeying His will, we must “contend for the faith.” It is just as much an inspired command as to sing songs of praise (Eph. 5:19) and to partake of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26) in worshipping God. It is just as clearly stated as the need to “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18) and “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25).

The Christian, however, is not simply to fight for the faith. He is to do so “earnestly.” The word “earnestly” is defined by Webster as being “serious and intense, zealous and sincere, with determination.” It comes from the Greek word agonidzomai which includes the idea of striving for a cause.

This should in no way surprise us, for all that the Christian does is to be with his entire being. Our Lord despises one who is a lukewarm follower and does not devote his entire self to His cause (Rev. 3:16). Indeed, we as Christians are to be a truly zealous people. The area of defending the Gospel demands a special zeal, as we are not fighting for our own cause, or any kind of carnal institution/teachings, but rather the cause of Christ.

Having stated the previous, it must also be stated that while we “contend earnestly,” we are to do so with the proper disposition, attitude and motive. While many in the church today err greatly by not standing up and fighting false teaching, there are others who have reacted with another extreme: that of contending and fighting in an arrogant and uncaring way that does nothing but inflame the personal ego. We are to answer others “with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). We are never to fail to speak the truth, but do so in love (Eph. 4:15). The ultimate goal in contending is not to promote strife, but rather to lead others to the truth of the saving Gospel of Christ.

Jude gives his readers a specific message to contend for: “the faith.” Faith is indeed one of the great themes of the New Testament, and for that matter, the entire Bible. The vast majority of the “Christian” world recognizes the importance of faith and its role in the salvation of man. Yet, the faith spoken of here by Jude is not one's personal faith that leads an individual to salvation (John 3:16; Rom. 5:1; Heb. 10:38). He is speaking rather of THE faith, the summation of the Gospel. He was not speaking of a vague, subjective thing that varied from person to person, but was exhorting Christians to unite behind the “one faith” of

Ephesians 4:5, the summation of the Gospel of Christ. It was the faith that priests had obeyed (Acts 6:7), that Paul had preached (Gal. 1:23) and that had arrived to replace the imperfect law of Moses (Gal. 3:23-25).

This faith had been “once for all” given to the saints (ASV). The clear meaning in light of the original Greek language is that the faith had been completely given in its complete form. Brother Guy N. Woods again stated, “The meaning is that truth is delivered for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, amended, or modified.”

The implications of the above are incredible in light of the state of the religious world today. First, it is clear that God has revealed His will to man. Those that believe and teach that man cannot know the will of God are obviously in blatant contradiction with Scripture (John 8:32). Second, the will of God has been completely revealed. If truth has been “once for all delivered,” then there is no new truth to be revealed! When someone today claims to have a new revelation from God, he is obviously mistaken and in danger of adding to the word which God has given (Rev. 22:18,19). Third, it is clear that since God has revealed His complete will for man, it is an objective standard that must be followed. Jesus Himself claimed that we have truth, and that it is the word of God (John 17:17).

The world has tried to make Christianity an abstract religion based on the subjective feelings and intuitions of individual human beings. Jude, however, reminds us that there is an objective standard -- a pattern -- that we are to follow in the realm of religion. This pattern is that which can save us (Rom. 1:16) and that which will one day judge us (John 12:48). Are you contending for the faith?

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"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:324-25).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- July 30 – Prayer Service
- Aug 6 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Aug 14-20 – Old-Fashioned Tent Meeting @ Greenfield Campground w/ David Irick
- Aug 20 – Preach & Eat & 1:30 Worship Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell