THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR STUDENTS

THE GOD WHO MAKES ALL THINGS NEW
SESSION 8

DEFENDING THE FAITH

Jude 1:3-4,17-25

The Point: God calls us to defend the faith against false teaching.

HIS STORY

Defend the Church's Faith

Jude's intention had been to write about the salvation they shared—salvation held by all who trust in Jesus Christ. While Jude only touched briefly on the gospel before moving on to the matter he felt compelled to address, the idea of shared salvation is critical to what followed. There is only one gospel—one way to be saved through the free gift of God through Jesus. And it is this gospel that serves as the foundation of the church and as the glue that holds every believer together as one.

This is the gospel that was delivered to all the saints, including the recipients of Jude's letter. And this same gospel was being threatened by false teachers in the church. Instead of writing more about this gospel, Jude reminded the readers that this priceless treasure was entrusted to them and needed their protection. It was time to contend for the faith.

- **What are some teachings in our world today that are clearly opposed to the gospel? How can you respond in truth and love?**

Defend the Church's Unity

Once again, Jude reminded the church of what they already knew—that false teachers would infiltrate the church. Jude called on the believers to remember what was previously told by the apostles. While we cannot be sure of what precisely Jude had in mind, there are several passages in the New Testament that warn against false teachers.

- **Refer to the following passages and discuss how they describe false teachers:**
  - **Acts 10:28-30**
  - **2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:14-18**
  - **1 Timothy 4:1-5**
  - **1 John 4:1-6**

Strengthen Each Other in the Faith

For the church to discern false teachers among them and contend for the faith, as important as that is, they have to know the faith. You cannot defend what you do not know. The church was not to stay on the defensive, but to be on the offensive too, growing in their faith.

Building yourself up in the faith sounds like difficult work, and it is. But we aren't the ones doing the work—our faith is. We can think of our faith as being the foundation upon which our lives are built. As God increases our faith, our lives will reflect this growth. We will trust Him more. We will love Him more. And we will serve Him more. We certainly have a role to play in this growth, but we are not responsible for it alone. It is God who is at work in us to complete the work that He began (Phil. 1:6).

Essential Doctrines

The World Opposed to God: *There are times in Scripture where the term world refers to more than the physical planet Earth or the collective human population. In many instances, the term refers to an active and evil spiritual force that is in direct conflict with God and His kingdom. This evil world force operates under Satan's control (John 14:30; Eph. 2:2), displaying the same self-centeredness and deceit that is found in his character. Christians are called to overcome this world of spiritual evil by faith in the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).*

Leader Note: *Because some content from the Personal Study Guide will not be available on the One Sheet, make sure to adapt the session based on how you use the material with your group.*

YOUR STORY

- **What threats does the gospel face today?**
- **What are the dangers of either only proclaiming the gospel and not living it, or living it and not proclaiming it?**
- **What are some ways we can protect ourselves from false teachings today?**
- **What are some ways churches should handle the wrong beliefs of church members today?**

YOUR MISSION

Head

When Jude described these false teachers, he mentioned that they turned the grace of God into an opportunity to behave in sexually immoral ways (v. 4). They intentionally lived in shameful ways and then defended their actions by claiming to be under God's grace. Of course, God's grace can cover all sin, but it doesn't give us license to sin (Rom. 6:15-16). This just goes to show that people, even today, are willing to manipulate biblical teaching in order to feel better about living immorally.

- **What is the connection between sinful actions and bad doctrine? Does one lead to the other? Explain.**
- **Can a person have right doctrine but still make sinful decisions? Why isn't just having right doctrine enough?**

Heart

This session challenges our hearts and the way we should feel toward certain things. For instance, we should feel a certain way toward false teaching and those who try to divide the church. We should feel a certain way toward once professing believers who have abandoned the faith for something other than the gospel. And we should feel a certain way toward those who waver or doubt, extending mercy in particular. Whether these feelings be protective/defensive or that of love and mercy, it is important that the gospel not only influences the way we act but also the way we feel.

- **How do you react emotionally when you see someone you care about fall into a pattern of sin?**
- **Why is it important for us to feel passionate about defending what we believe? What does it communicate to others if we are only indifferent about it?**

Hands

The gospel takes people who are opposites in many ways and joins them together as members of the same family. But remove the gospel, or compromise its purity, and this unity collapses. Unity of such a diverse people cannot be supported by anything apart from the gospel. And when the church's unity breaks, its witness to the world erodes.

- **How does the unity of your church or youth group appear to those outside your church?**
- **What are some things you can do better to increase unity around the gospel?**