

Keep Yourselves

by Fred DeRuvo – Study-Grow-Know Ministries

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” Jude 1:20-21

The sense of Jude’s words here is that authentic believers are not at all like apostates, and because of that, should make sure that they do not begin to *act* like them. In our insecurities, we have a tendency to fear what we don’t understand, or fear the change that an apostate may be trying to foist upon a group.

Instead of fearing, we should go to the Lord in prayer. Jude says we should pray in the Holy Spirit. I don’t believe he is telling people to pray in tongues as some tend to think. I believe Jude is speaking of our prayer time when we communicate with the Father through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The most important thing a Christian can do is to pray unceasingly for God’s will to be accomplished.

The pattern for this type of prayer is found in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed what He wanted to occur but quickly *affirmed* the Father’s will. In other words, Jesus prayed, “*not mine, but thy will be done*” (cf. Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; see also John 6:38). This should be the hallmark of the Christian’s life, wanting nothing but God’s will to be accomplished.

We see in the Garden of Gethsemane how difficult this was for our Lord, with Luke describing blood flowing from Jesus’ brow because of the tremendous pressure of the situation. Jesus saw what was ahead of Him, with the pain, the torture, and the thirst. Most of all, He saw the fact that the Father would have to turn His back on His own Son because He would need to pour out wrath on Jesus, since Jesus had literally become sin for us. Paul tells us this when he states, “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus, who was without even the *hint* of sin, *became* sin – *was seen as if He had sinned* – and because of this, became our propitiation. God poured out His wrath on Jesus instead of pouring it out on us. Jesus willingly succumbed to that fate because it was the reason He came in the first place.

Jesus prayed all the time that He would only perform the Father’s will. He did this in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what we are to do. Jude is not talking about some ecstatic prayer language but an overwhelming desire to do only that which the Father wants us to

do. This can only be accomplished through prayer, which is seeking the Lord's face, that His will would be our food.

Jude tells us that if this was how Jesus did it, how much more do we need to follow His example? This is what builds us up in our mutual holy faith. As we pray for His will only, we wind up submitting ourselves to Him for that purpose. Instead of wanting our own desires filled (like the apostate), we learn to give up our wants in exchange for *His* will in *our* life.

Whether we understand His will at the time is not the point. By trusting Him that what happens in our life is His will, our *faith* will be strengthened and therefore will *increase*. That increase in faith will build us up *spiritually*.

Interestingly enough, Jude tells us to keep ourselves in the love of God. This does not mean that we can lose our salvation. It means that we should – through prayer – come to Him for everything. As we spend time praying for His will, not only will our faith increase as we see Him accomplish things in our life, but our love for Him will grow as well. One works off the other.

In 2009, my family and I experienced something that was very difficult for us, and we entered onto a path that seemed like the correct path. However, at every turn, we were buffeted. We felt as if there was a wall against us.

It wasn't until two years later that we realized why we had experienced all the frustration. God was getting us ready to move in a different direction, so He did not allow us to get comfortable in the previous path.

Looking back over the past two years, I can see exactly why things happened as they did. It's absolutely perfect! His timing is uncanny. However, remembering what things were like at the beginning, back in 2009, we really had little clue. We knew we should move in the situation so we did, but it was only later that we realized what it was all about.

As I look back, I can see that my faith has grown. Not only this, but my love for Him has grown as well. It would not be what it is now had He not taken us through the situation He took us through. It was that situation that brought about the growth that God intended for us, and I am glad for it. As I say, though, when we were going through it, it was difficult at best to see where we were going.

I'm sure you've had situations like this, and hopefully, as you look back at them, you realize what you have gained because of those situations. God is extremely good, and while we understand this fact *intellectually*, the only way we learn it *experientially* is when we submit ourselves to Him, trusting Him to accomplish what He sets out to do, whether the end is in sight or not.

Jude finishes up this section with the statement that we are waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. This is a very heady truth. We are in the world, but not of the world. While here, we are to complete the will He has given us to complete.

Yet because we are in this world and can only vaguely “see” the coming eternity, we live by a faith that defies natural explanation. It is that faith that brings us closer to God as we exercise it, and as stated, our love for Him grows as well.

Living here tends to make us anxious. We become anxious over many things. We may be experiencing poor health, a recent death of a loved one, a job loss, or any number of things. God is with us and will help us overcome.

That’s our show for today. Please join me next time as we continue in Jude. Until then, I pray that God will open your eyes so that you will come to know how blessed you are in Him!