

*But you, dear friends,
build yourselves up in your most holy faith,
and pray in the Holy Spirit.*

*Keep yourselves in God's love
as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ
to bring you to eternal life.*

*Be merciful to those who doubt,
snatch others from the fire and save them;
to others show mercy, mixed with fear,
hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.*

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

THE ONLY SAFE PLACE

KEEPING YOURSELF IN GOD'S LOVE

THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF YOUR FAITH

“However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

LUKE 18.8

- ▶ Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus told his disciples a story *“to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”* Your spiritual adversary is relentlessly seeking, 24/7, to distract and steal your faith from you. Knowing that so many will lose faith or abandon “the faith,” Jesus wondered what would be left when he returned. What are you proactively doing to strengthen your faith, fight for it, and ensure that you will be standing faithful at the end?

THIS ISN'T AUTOMATIC!

But you, dear friends,

➡ *by building yourselves up in your most holy faith,*

➡ *by praying in the Holy Spirit,*

keep yourselves in God's love (so that you do not fall under God's judgment)

as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

JUDE 20-21

- ▶ Neglect easily happens; the busyness and demands of life can cause us to leave other important but seemingly less urgent things undone. Neglect oil changes and you will eventually experience catastrophic engine failure. Neglect your faith and you may lose your soul.

KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD'S LOVE

*“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you **keep** my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have **kept** my Father’s commands and remain in His love.*

JOHN 15.9-10

“keep” (*tereo*):

- (1) to keep watch upon, guard
- (2) to watch over protectively
- (3) to mark attentively
- (4) to observe practically, keep strictly
- (5) to preserve and shield
- (6) to keep in the appropriate condition

*If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t **obey** God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who **obey** God’s word truly show how completely they love Him. That is how we know we are living in Him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.*

1 JOHN 2.4-6

Speaking about the final days before his return, Jesus said:

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.”

In A.D. 80, while ministering in Ephesus, the Apostle John wrote his first letter, emphasizing living in God’s love. Just fifteen years later, Jesus Christ dictated a letter to this church at Ephesus:

“You have forsaken the love you had at first. Repent!”

Remember: it’s a short step from faith to total loss.

THE MEASURE OF LOVE

I know you: I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.

JOHN 5.42

Our standards are subjective and preferential while God's are objective and specific. We have seen that obedience to God's commands is defining evidence of whether God's love is actually within us. There are further standards of measurement: Do I forgive others to the extent that God has forgiven me? ¹ Do I despise money ² and love God exclusively with all my heart and strength? ³ Do I love my enemies? ⁴ Am I willing to sacrifice my life in loving service for others, as Christ did for me? ⁵

¹ Ephesians 5.1-2 ² Matthew 6.24; ³ Matthew 22.37; ⁴ Luke 6.35; ⁵ I John 3.16-17

HOW DO WE KEEP OURSELVES IN GOD'S LOVE?

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 1.8-9

How do we keep ourselves in God's love: guarding, protecting, practicing, and maintaining His love in our hearts so that we do not fall under His judgment as those described by Jude?

(1) Pray that the Holy Spirit would increase God's love in your life.

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

2 THESSALONIANS 3.5

(2) Accept God's discipline in your life, in whatever form He may use.

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children.

HEBREWS 12.5-7

(3) Guard yourself against engaging with today's culture.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

1 JOHN 2.15

(4) Be deeply engaged in relationship and service with the church.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

JOHN 13.34-35

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2.2

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 PETER 4.8

(5) By faith, push your love to the extent and measure of God's love.

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

LUKE 6.36

(6) Keep your love connected to the hope of eternal life and in the condition that is ready for the return of Christ.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

1 JOHN 4.16-17