

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

THE ONLY WAY TO PRAY

IN OTHER WORDS, NOT ALL PRAYER COUNTS

THE CRITICAL ISSUE OF YOUR FAITH

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

1 TIMOTHY 4.1

- ▶ Whether or not you know it, your most valuable possession is your faith – your commitment to Christ. What you do with your faith will, in the end, determine your eternal destiny. Knowing this, our spiritual adversary attacks our faith, endeavors to distract our attentiveness to it, and seeks to erode and weaken it. Jude tells his readers that it is an intense struggle. What are you doing to ensure that you will win this fight?

JUDE'S BATTLE STRATEGY

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

- ▶ Jude began his letter by greeting those who are called and loved by God the Father and "kept for Jesus Christ." Now he writes: "keep yourselves in God's love." The believer in Christ must also take responsibility for their spiritual status and the outcome of their faith.

- ▶ Jude's first "how to" step in his combat directive to "struggle intensely for commitment to the faith (v. 3) is *"build yourselves up in your most holy faith."* The second step is: *"pray in the Holy Spirit."* What does Jude mean in specifying the necessity of praying in the Holy Spirit?
- ▶ Jude's second directive is in contrast to those described in verse 19, *"who do not have the Spirit but follow mere natural instinct."* When a person does not follow the Spirit of God, he is spiritually psychotic (*psychikos*). To be "desire driven"—following your own thinking, feelings, and desires, is to be "contrary to the Spirit" (Galatians 5.17).

IN THE SPIRIT

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5.25a

- ▶ Apart from the Holy Spirit, one is spiritually dead, incapable of knowing God or following His ways, dependent only on one's own instincts; in reality, that person is being manipulated by the "ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2.2-3).
- ▶ Only the Holy Spirit can make me aware of sin and judgment, reveal Jesus as Savior and Lord, make me spiritually alive, guide me into truth, cause me to long for Christ's return, and help me pray.

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GALATIANS 5.25a

- ▶ What do I need to do to keep in step with the Spirit?
 - ▶ Pray to be strengthened by the Spirit's power – Ephesians 3.16
 - ▶ Terminate (put to death) sinful desires – Romans 8.14
 - ▶ Focus on the desires and agenda of the Spirit – Romans 8.5
 - ▶ Be conscientious about not grieving the Spirit – Ephesians 4.30
 - ▶ Arm myself with the “sword of the Spirit” - Ephesians 6.17
 - ▶ Depend on the help of the Spirit – Philippians 1.19; 2 Timothy 1.14

PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . .

ROMANS 8.14-17

- One of the most important aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is affirming to us that we are children of God and that God is our “dearest” Father. If we are responsive children, He will lead us into this intimate relationship that is especially characterized by prayer.

- ▶ Restated and referenced: it is the Holy Spirit who causes us to know that we are God's children (Romans 8.16) and to relate to God, especially in prayer (Matthew 6.6, 8, 9) as our "Abba Father" (Romans 8.15; Galatians 4.6).
- ▶ Multiple times, Jesus warned against prayers that do not count (cf. Matthew 6.5, 7; Luke 18.10-14). Why? Because there is no evidence of Spirit-life in the one who is praying. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us access to God (Ephesians 2.18), who helps us know what to pray (Romans 8.26-27) and helps me know how to pray: relationally, humbly, and confidently (Matthew 6.6-9; Romans 8.15-17).

ARE YOU PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

EPHESIANS 4.18

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is the source of life and power. Every aspect of the Christian's life is to be lived with a Spirit-mindset and be done in the strength of the Holy Spirit. This means that we must cultivate a "Spiritual" lifestyle through the Word, prayer, and fellowship. We must consciously seek and depend on the Holy Spirit to help us live for Christ; we must saturate our prayers with the Scripture which He inspired.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT—

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

ROMANS 8.26

- ▶ When you are too weak, too confused, too depressed, too angry, or too apathetic to pray, do not assume that you can't pray. Instead, consciously look away from yourself to Christ and to the mercy of God in Christ, and trust Him to help you – even if it is only to produce groaning too deep for words. When we admit that we cannot “pray as we ought” and consciously depend on the Spirit to get us past our “mere natural instincts”, then we are praying “in the Holy Spirit.”