

THE BIG IDEA: The faith is worth the fight.

The Take-Off

We live in an awesome time - a time when there are many options available through technology for many daily routines. Through Siri and Alexa, all of us have can have personal assistants. With the right types of outlets, we can command lights and coffee makers to turn on and off at the sound of our voices. Alarms and alarm clocks are no exception - these things have really changed over the years!

Maybe you remember the little clocks that would ding the bells on top when it was time to get up.

Or remember when the first versions came out that allowed you to set a radio station to play - revolutionary!

Now our phones can wake us with any number of alarm choices, but the ones that fascinate me the most are called "gentle-wake" alarm clocks.

Some of them wake you by using increasing light to simulate a sunrise, or they play the sounds of nature like birds chirping, or they emit aromas like green apple (wait - why not bacon??!).

One isn't even a clock - it's a bed that vibrates and then slowly raises you into a seated position!

As nice as those are, some of us - in fact, most of us - would never be woken up by them.

We need something more like this one.

[VIDEO - Loud Alarm]

That alarm is the book of Jude and it's a strong alarm because the call is a strong one.

We find it in **Jude 1:3 (NIV)**: "I urge you to **CONTEND** for the faith"

We'll look more deeply at this verse shortly, but for now, know that Jude is saying to the church: "Hey!! There's a time to eat and fellowship and then there's a time to FIGHT and this is the time to fight because **the faith is worth the fight!**"

Over the next 4 weeks, we're going to learn from Jude about contending for the faith, and this morning my goal is to take Jude's introduction in the first 4 verses and show us what we need to know in order to contend well.

So here we go - 5 things we need to know in order to contend:

1. WHO

- Look at all the relational truths packed into **Jude 1:1 (NIV)**
- Jude talks about WHO he is, he talks about WHO he's with, and he talks about WHO we're loved by
- If we're going to step in battle and contend, we've got to know the same 3 things about ourselves:
 - WHO we are / Jude's relationship with Jesus as Lord was greater than his relationship as brother
 - WHO we're with / "those who have been called" / not just invited, but invited and accepted / this letter is written to the Church / we contend together with believers
 - WHO we're loved by / the Father / we're sons and daughters
- Just because this was written to believers doesn't mean that unbelievers can't learn from it
- The point is that **when it's time for you to fight, it's not time to wonder who will fight with you**

2. WHERE

- By where I don't mean location as much as environment
- Jude 1:2 (NIV)** should help clear up the difference
- Before Jude really starts contending in the letter, he writes about mercy, peace and love being multiplied
- That is the environment that is necessary to truly contend for the faith: one where those are being multiplied and not subtracted
- If we aren't careful, contending for can turn into fighting against, and when we fight we often subtract from the relationship the very things Jude tells us to multiply
- In essence, Jude says we should **MULTIPLY THE GOOD before we CRITICIZE THE BAD**
- What if there is no good in the arena where we're contending? It's in YOU, so bring it with you.

3. WHAT

- If we're going to contend, it might be good to know what it means to contend, right?
- The Greek word used for contend in **Jude 1:3 (NIV)** is only used here in the NT and it has a rich meaning:
 - Related to the word from which we get "agonize" - suggests pain almost too intense to bear

- It was commonly used in connection with wrestling matches in the Greek stadium
- It also has the flavor of one standing on top of something that an adversary is trying to take away
- In other words, we are fighting to keep what we have not get what we don't
- In one word, Jude dispels the myth of an easy "kicked back in my recliner waiting for Jesus" faith
- c. The what that we're called to can be uncomfortable for another reason: fighting can feel "unChristian"
- d. The challenge to get PRCS kids to be aggressive in athletics
- e. We are called to contend, to give everything we've got in defense of the faith we've been given
- f. Let me point out, as well, that we are called to **contend FOR the faith, not to contend ABOUT the faith**, or to contend OVER our preference or our traditions or our methods.
- g. We contend for the message. Period.

4. WHY

- a. I love that Jude gives us a purpose for the fight
- b. He isn't the coach telling us to do seemingly random drills because he can
- c. In **Jude 1:4 (NIV)** we find the WHY: godless men have slipped in among us
- d. Not only that, but over the rest of the letter Jude is going to give us even more detail about that
- e. He's going to show us that we need to contend for the faith because there are false teachers and because there are lost people caught in the crossfire of those teachers
- f. **If we don't know the WHY, we'll eventually stop doing the WHAT.**

5. WHEN

- a. Finally, Jude gets practical.
- b. He ends **Jude 1:4 (NIV)** by giving the reader a very practical checklist of times to contend.
- c. It's almost like he could hear the reader asking, "But, Jude, when do I contend for the faith?"
- d. Jude gives 2 specific times that we should be ready and willing to fight for the faith:
 - **When people misunderstand the grace of Jesus**, and
 - When people misunderstand the Lordship of Jesus

The Landing

I'm not sure where you land on the "snooze button" spectrum, but I recognize that answering the bell can be difficult if we want to stay comfortable.

But as we'll see over the rest of this series, snoozing on this alarm can have eternal consequences, and so my appeal to you as we close is the same as the one Jude made: the faith is worth the fight, and it's time to fight.

Let's pray.