

# It's Not About Me

## Lesson 2—It's Not About Them

### OVERVIEW

Bible Passages: Jude 3-7, 10-25

Key Verse: Jude 3b—“...contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Consider how far you are willing to go to contend for your faith.
- Consider what it means to “keep yourself in God’s love” (Jude 21).
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed Sunday School.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Challenge students who have made recent decisions to continue following and growing in Christ.

### OPENING ACTIVITY

#### Activity—Face to Face

Choose two volunteers to stand toe to toe and to put the palms of their hands together. When you say “go,” they are to push against the other person’s hands. Whoever moves a foot, steps back, or is thrown off balance, their opponent wins the competition. Use several volunteers for this and try to establish your class champion.

*SAY:* In this competition you had to “contend” to keep your footing. You had to fight and struggle for it.

- *In what ways do Christians need to “contend” for their faith?*
- *What are some things believers can do to keep their footing and stand firm for Christ?* (Grow as a believer, pray, read and study their Bibles, go to church, etc.)

## BIBLE LESSON

**See who can find the book of Jude the fastest.**

While turning there, *SAY*:

The Book of Jude was written to early believers to challenge them to remain faithful to God despite the actions of ungodly men who were turning away from the faith. Jude explained the outcome of the ungodly and encouraged believers to contend for their faith and to persevere.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jude 3-7

- *Who is discussed in these verses?* (Godless men who had slipped in among them and perverted their faith—See verse 4.)
- *What examples from Israelite history are given here and what was the outcome of their actions?* (Three examples: (1) Egypt—A reminder that most of the Israelites who left Egypt were not faithful. An entire generation perished in the wilderness because of their unbelief. (2) Angels—who rebelled against God and have everlasting judgment waiting for them. (3) Sodom and Gomorrah—on which God sent fire from heaven to destroy them because of their immorality.)
- *What does this teach you about standing strong in your faith today?* (Stand strong—contend for your faith. Don't live in unfaithfulness like the Israelites in the wilderness. Don't rebel against God like the angels. Don't fall into immorality like those in Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jude 10-16

- *Who is discussed in these verses?* (The same godless men with their false teachings. Pay special attention to their actions listed in verse 16—they are grumblers and faultfinders who follow their own evil desires, boast about themselves and flatter others for gain, a perfect picture of the three stories referred to in verse 11.)
- *What stories did Jude use to describe these people in verse 11?* (Examples: (1) They have taken the way of Cain, who disobediently devised a way of worship that was unacceptable to God. (2) They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error, who under the guise of serving God, encouraged others to sin, while at the same time seeking profit from their error [Numbers 22:21-31]. (3) They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. Korah led a revolt against Moses and Aaron and the ground opened up and swallowed them alive [Numbers 16].)
- *What is God's response to those who speak against Him or His people?* (God stands up for His word and for those who follow Him. In each of the three stories mentioned in verse 11, there was a "good side" that God supported. (1) He accepted Abel's righteous offering. (2) He didn't let Balaam curse the Israelites. (3) He destroyed those who challenged Moses' and Aaron's authority. Those who fight against God's chosen ones are found to fight against God Himself. In each of these stories these people not only rebelled against God but against His people—Cain

murdered Abel, Balaam tried to curse the Israelites, and Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Always be careful not to fight or “contend” against those whom God has blessed or has put in authority over you, but the opposite is also true—When you follow God and do what is right, He fights on your behalf.)

- *What six word pictures in verses 12-13 does the Bible use to picture troublemakers? What are the significance of these picture? (They are: (1) blemishes [“stains”] at your love feasts. (2) Shepherds who feed only themselves, which is an unthinkable kind of leadership that is selfish, hardened, and deceptive. (3) Clouds without rain, with no water for thirsty souls, blown by the wind and as unstable as wind-blown clouds that soon go away. (4) Autumn trees, twice dead because they don’t bear fruit and because they are uprooted. Are you bearing fruit? Have you let something cut you off from Christ? (5) Wild waves of the sea, raging back and forth but producing nothing solid, edifying, helpful, nourishing, or lasting. (6) Wandering stars that move across the sky without giving either light or direction. Fixed stars helped guide navigators, but wandering stars were useless to them. If any shipmaster would be stupid enough to follow one, he would be led astray.)*
- *Why is it important for Christians to cling to their beliefs in Christ? (So that they are not led astray into false teachings and deceptive ways.)*
- *What does this teach you about standing strong in your faith today?*
- *How can you stand strong in your faith?*

## KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to re-read—Read Jude 3  
(Tell them to pay particular attention to the end of it.)

SAY: The word “contend” here literally means, “to contend as a combatant,” as if one is in a contest of a competition. It’s also an intensive word that could be translated “to contend earnestly.” In other words, earnestly fight for your faith. Contend for it, like a boxer who is both aggressive, striking out, but also defensive to protect oneself. Strike out against false teachings and those who defy the truth, but at the same time, protect and defend your faith, both in how you live and in what you say.

- Answer the following silently to yourself:  
*On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you contend for your faith?*  
*How far are you willing to go to contend for your faith?*  
*How far are you willing to go follow Christ?*  
*Would you follow Him if it meant giving up your dreams?*  
*If it meant losing friends?*  
*If it meant being teased?*  
*If it meant being embarrassed?*

SAY: Listen to the following story:

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For those of you who don't know Beth Moore, she is an outstanding Bible teacher, writer of Bible Studies, and a married mother of 2 daughters. She is a member of First Baptist, Houston. In April of 2005 Beth Moore was at the Knoxville Airport, waiting to board a plane. Listen to what happened:

I had the Bible on my lap and was very intent upon what I was doing. I'd had a marvelous morning with the Lord. I say that because I want to tell you it is a scary thing to have the Spirit of God really working in you. You could end up doing some things you never would have done otherwise. Life in the Spirit can be dangerous for a thousand reasons not the least of which is your ego.

I tried to keep from staring but he was such a strange sight. Humped over in a wheelchair, he was skin and bones, dressed in clothes that obviously fit when he was at least twenty pounds heavier. His knees protruded from his trousers, and his shoulders looked like the coat hanger was still in his shirt. His hands looked like tangled masses of veins and bones. The strangest part of him was his hair and nails. Stringy gray hair hung well over his shoulders and down part of his back. His fingernails were long. Clean, but strangely out of place on an old man.

I looked down at my Bible as fast as I could, discomfort burning my face...There I sat trying to concentrate on the Word to keep from being concerned about a thin slice of humanity served on a wheelchair only a few seats from me. All the while my heart was growing more and more overwhelmed with a feeling for him. Let's admit it. Curiosity is a heap more comfortable than true concern, and suddenly I was awash with aching emotion for this bizarre-looking old man.

I had walked with God long enough to see the handwriting on the wall. I've learned that when I begin to feel what God feels, something so contrary to my natural feelings, something dramatic is bound to happen. And it may be embarrassing. I immediately began to resist because I could feel God working on my spirit and I started arguing with God in my mind.

"Oh no, God please no." I looked up at the ceiling as if I could stare straight through it into heaven and said, "Don't make me witness to this man. Not right here and now. Please. I'll do anything. Put me on the same plane, but don't make me get up here and witness to this man in front of this gawking audience. Please, Lord!"...

There I sat in the blue vinyl chair begging His Highness, "Please don't make me witness to this man. Not now. I'll do it on the plane."

Then I heard it..."I don't want you to witness to him. I want you to brush his hair."

The words were so clear, my heart leapt into my throat, and my thoughts spun like a top. Do I witness to the man or brush his hair? No brainer. I looked straight back up at the ceiling and said, "God, as I live and breathe, I want you to know I am ready to witness to this man. I'm on this Lord. I'm you're girl! You've never seen a woman witness to a man faster in your life. What difference does it make if his hair is a mess if he is not redeemed? I am on him. I am going to witness to this man."

Again as clearly as I've ever heard an audible word, God seemed to write this statement across the wall of my mind. "That is not what I said, Beth. I don't want you to witness to him. I want you to go brush his hair."

I looked up at God and quipped, "I don't have a hairbrush. It's in my suitcase on the plane. How am I supposed to brush his hair without a hairbrush?"

God was so insistent that I almost involuntarily began to walk toward him as these thoughts came to me from God's word: "I will thoroughly furnish you unto all good works." (2 Tim 3:17) I stumbled over to the wheelchair thinking I could use one myself. Even as I retell this story my pulse quickens and I feel those same butterflies.

I knelt down in front of the man, and asked as demurely as possible, "Sir, may I have the pleasure of brushing your hair?"

He looked back at me and said, "What did you say?"

"May I have the pleasure of brushing your hair? To which he responded in volume ten, "Little lady, if you expect me to hear you, you're going to have to talk louder than that. At this point, I took a deep breath and blurted out, "SIR, MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF BRUSHING YOUR HAIR?"

At which point every eye in the place darted right at me. I was the only thing in the room looking more peculiar than old Mr. Longlocks. Face crimson and forehead breaking out in a sweat, I watched him look up at me with absolute shock on his face, and say, "If you really want to."

Are you kidding? Of course I didn't want to. But God didn't seem interested in my personal preference right about then. He pressed on my heart until I could utter the words, "Yes, sir, I would be pleased. But I have one little problem. I don't have a hairbrush."

"I have one in my bag," he responded. I went around to the back of that wheelchair, and I got on my hands and knees and unzipped the stranger's old carry-on hardly believing what I was doing. I stood up and started brushing the old man's hair. It was perfectly clean, but it was tangled and matted. I don't do many things well, but I must admit I've had notable experience untangling knotted hair mothering two little girls.

Like I'd done with either Amanda or Melissa in such a condition, I began brushing at the very bottom of the strands, remembering to take my time not to pull. A miraculous thing happened to me as I started brushing that old man's hair. Everybody else in the room disappeared. There was no one alive for those moments except that old man and me. I brushed and I brushed and I brushed until every tangle was out of that hair.

I know this sounds so strange but I've never felt that kind of love for another soul in my entire life. I believe with all my heart, I - for that few minutes - felt a portion of the very love of God. That He had overtaken my heart for a little while like someone renting a room and making Himself at home for a short while. The emotions were so strong and so pure that I knew they had to be God's.

His hair was finally as soft and smooth as an infant's. I slipped the brush back in the bag, went around the chair to face him. I got back down on my knees, put my hands on his knees, and said, "Sir, do you know my Jesus?"

He said, "Yes, I do." Well, that figures, I thought. He explained, "I've known Him since I married my bride. She wouldn't marry me until I got to know the Savior." He said, "You

see, the problem is, I haven't seen my bride in months. I've had open-heart surgery, and she's been too ill to come see me. I was sitting here thinking to myself, what a mess I must be for my bride."

Only God knows how often He allows us to be part of a divine moment when we're completely unaware of the significance. This, on the other hand, was one of those rare encounters when I knew God had intervened in details only He could have known. It was a God moment, and I'll never forget it. Our time came to board, and we were not on the same plane. I was deeply ashamed of how I'd acted earlier and would have been so proud to have accompanied him on that aircraft.

I still had a few minutes, and as I gathered my things to board, the airline hostess returned from the corridor, tears streaming down her cheeks. She said, "That old man's sitting on the plane, sobbing. Why did you do that? What made you do that?"

I said, "Do you know Jesus?" And we got to share. I learned something about God that day. He knows if you're exhausted because you're hungry, you're serving in the wrong place or it is time to move on but you feel too responsible to budge. He knows if you're hurting or feeling rejected. He knows if you're sick or drowning under a wave of temptation. Or He knows if you just need your hair brushed. He sees you as an individual. Tell Him your need!

I got on my own flight, sobs choking my throat, wondering how many opportunities just like that one had I missed along the way... all because I didn't want people to think I was strange. God didn't send me to that old man. He sent that old man to me.<sup>3</sup>

SAY: Today we've been talking about "contending" for your faith and not falling way. The only way to truly not fall away from Christ is to every day make the commitment to say, "Yes, Lord Jesus, I give my all to you and I say 'yes' already to anything You ask me to do. I will live my life in complete and total surrender to you."

## WRAP IT UP

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jude 20-23

- *Without saying names, raise your hand if you know of anyone who had "fallen" away from the faith—Perhaps they've fallen away from a decision they made at camp. Perhaps it's even a family member or a parent?*
- *How important is it for Christians to continue to love those who fall away?*
- *What can you do to help bring these people back into a right relationship with God? What does verse 22 and 23 say?*

SAY: Here are some suggestions:

- *Pray for them and pray with them, if they'll let you.*
- *Talk to them about the decisions they have made in the past.*
- *Ask them what has happened for them to fall away.*
- *Encourage them to return to Christ and to begin to grow with Him.*

- *Speak the truth in love, as the Bible says, but be careful not to lean to either extreme—Some people speak so much in love, they cheapen the truth (i.e., of the outcome of falling away from Christ and living without Him or of God's discipline); Others speak in truth, and, yes, the truth can hurt, but they speak it without love. Their intention is to hurt, not to restore. Love and truth should be balanced.*

## **Prayer Time**

*Pray today specifically that your students will effectively contend for their faith and stand strong in Christ.*

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

<sup>1</sup>Based in part on following lesson: *Lifetrack 5.3*, “That Was Then, This is Now” series, lesson one, “It’s Not About Them.” (Nashville: Lifeway, 2005), 92-99.

<sup>2</sup>Based in part on following commentary: John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications, 2000, ) 920-922.

<sup>3</sup>Online story—original source not listed.