

Series: Truth and Perseverance

Study 1: A Vigilant Faith (Jude 1–4)

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

1. Have you ever thought you were completely safe in a situation, only to realize later that you were inches away from unseen danger? What happened, and how did you feel when you realized it?
2. In our modern culture, what are some popular slogans or ideas about God, love, or freedom that sound peaceful and appealing on the surface, but might actually conflict with Scripture?

DISCOVERING THE TEXT

Read Jude 1–4 aloud as a group.

3. Look at Jude's original intention in verse 3 compared to what he actually wrote. What prompted him to change his plan, and what does this tell us about the urgency of the situation facing his readers?
4. Jude urges believers to "*contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.*" What is the difference between *faith* as a personal act of trusting God and "*the faith*" as used here in verse 3?
5. In verse 4, Jude notes that certain individuals had "*secretly slipped in.*" Why is subtle compromise or false teaching inside a community often far more dangerous than open opposition from the outside?
6. Verse 4 highlights two specific ways these individuals twisted the truth:
 - How were they perverting the grace of God?
 - How were they denying Jesus Christ as our only Sovereign and Lord?

APPLYING THE TRUTH

7. It's common today to hear people say, "*If God is a God of love, He just wants me to be happy.*" How does this mindset turn God's grace into a permission slip for sin rather than a power for holiness?
8. What is the difference between acknowledging Jesus as your *Savior* and surrendering to Him as your *Master and Lord*? In what practical areas of daily life (e.g., finances, relationships, entertainment) are Christians most tempted to keep control rather than

yield to His Lordship?

9. Jude calls us to *contend* for the faith, but later in verses 22–23 he instructs believers to *"be merciful to those who doubt."* How can we stand firmly for biblical truth without becoming argumentative, hostile, or contentious?
10. Consider the four markers of a healthy, vigilant faith mentioned in the sermon:
 - **Community Anchored** (walking life-on-life with other believers)
 - **Bible Centered** (testing every teaching against Scripture, like the Bereans in Acts 17:11)
 - **Righteousness Promoting** (pursuing holiness rather than excusing sin)
 - **Historically Consistent** (holding fast to historic Christian truth rather than spiritual novelties)
11. Which of these four areas is strongest in your spiritual walk right now, and which one needs more intentional growth?

PRAYER & RESPONSE

- **Confession:** Spend a moment in silent reflection asking the Lord to reveal any area of your life where you have treated His grace as permission to compromise rather than a call to holiness.
- **Petition:** Pray for your church family—that God would protect your fellowship from subtle deception, grant your leaders wisdom, and give every member a vigilant, courageous, and gracious faith.
- **Witness:** Ask God for grace and gentleness in your conversations with friends, co-workers, and neighbors, that you may represent both His absolute truth and His radical love.

LEADER'S NOTES & FACILITATOR GUIDE

Primary Focus

Jude 1–4 sounds a vital alarm for the church: the true gospel is constantly at risk of being quietly replaced by a counterfeit. Small group leaders should guide the discussion so members understand that contending for the faith is not about being angry "cultural warriors," but about cultivating a vigilant, Bible-anchored life that honors Jesus as both Savior and Master.

Question 3 & Background

- **Context:** Jude initially intended to write a warm, encouraging letter about "our common salvation." However, urgent reports of false teachers compelled him to write a urgent call to arms instead.
- **Insight:** False teaching rarely announces itself loudly; it quietly creeps into the church through ungodly practices and subtle twists on core doctrine.

Question 4 & Key Definitions

- **Contend (*Epagōnizomai*):** An athletic and military term implying intense, active exertion to protect and promote what is valuable.
- **The Faith:** A noun referring to the objective body of apostolic teaching—the core truths of Scripture fulfilled in Christ and handed down through the centuries. It is "once for all entrusted," meaning it cannot be reinvented or upgraded by modern culture.

Question 5 & The Stealth of Compromise

- **The Metaphor:** Recall the carbon monoxide story or Swindoll's water moccasin illustration. The greatest danger isn't the threat you see coming; it's the toxicity that enters quietly while everyone feels safe and comfortable.
- **William Barclay's Insight:** The phrase "secretly slipped in" (*pareisdynō*) describes subtle infiltration—like an outlaw sneaking back into a country or a clever lawyer gradually seeping persuasive lies into the minds of a jury.

Questions 6 & 7 — Perverting Grace

- **The Core Error:** Antinomianism (lawlessness). The false teachers argued that because salvation is by grace, Christians are free from moral constraints, particularly regarding sexual ethics.
- **Modern Parallel:** Today, "love" is often substituted for "grace," leading to the belief: "*If God loves me, He accepts my choices and wants me to be happy.*" Help the group see that God's ultimate goal for us is **holiness**, not self-indulgent happiness, and that true grace transforms us away from sin (Titus 2:11–12).

Question 8 — Jesus as Master

- **Key Terms:** *Sovereign* (*despotēs* / Master) and *Lord* (*kyrios*).
- **Application:** These false teachers weren't necessarily denying that Jesus existed or saved people; they were denying His authority over their moral lives. A person who claims Jesus as Savior while stubbornly refusing His command over their body,

relationships, or money is practicing practical denial of His Lordship.

Question 9 — Contending vs. Contentious

- **Crucial Balance:** Ensure the group does not leave feeling empowered to be harsh, argumentative, or aggressive on social media. Refer to Jude 22–23: contending for the faith requires deep mercy toward doubters, gentle persuasion, and loving hospitality combined with clear, uncompromised boundaries.