

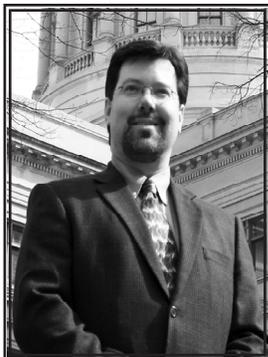
CHURCH NEWS

AN INSPIRING MOMENT WITH

Dr. Ron Bigalke

CONTEND EARNESTLY

The oath of office demands one to solemnly swear to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." The book of Jude could just as easily begin with such an assertion for it exhorts believers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." The vigorous appeal to "contend earnestly" means to protect that which an enemy is attempting to destroy. "The faith" has been given in a complete and final manner. God's Word contains all that is necessary for "life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3; cf. 2 Tim 2:12-14). God has given a sufficient revelation to his people for overcoming destructive teachings and lifestyles. Verse 4 of Jude indicates three characteristics of those who threaten the Christian faith: (1) ungodliness; (2) sensualness; and, (3) rebelliousness. "Certain persons" were "ungodly," which means they were irreverent; they had no reverence toward God, just like Cain (Jude 11; cf. Gen 4:1-8). Such individuals may believe the Bible is true, but do not



respect God enough to submit to it. Sensualness means the "ungodly persons" were self-centered, that is, practicing an ethic that was focused upon doing whatever made them "happy." They practiced hedonism, which is living for one's own pleasure as opposed to living for the glory of God. Christians are not saved by obedience to God's law, yet there is still a responsibility to live with moral purity (Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:16). Believers are compelled to

serve one another in obedience to the biblical command to "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" (Gal 5:13-15), which is possible as one walks and is led "by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16-18). The Holy Spirit continually works to transform believers into Christlikeness (Rom 8:29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 3:1, 7-10; Tit 2:11-12). Sensualness is "licentiousness," which is distorting genuine Christian liberty into a license to sin (cf. Rom 6:1-4; 1 Cor 8:1-10:33). Verse 4 of Jude communicates that such individuals pervert the grace of God into sensuality, that is, they pervert (distort and misuse) the Bible to defend their actions. Verses 8 and 16 of Jude states that such individuals "defile the flesh" by "following after their own lusts." Licentious-

ness is self-centered and selfish, and will culminate in condemnation (Jude 5-16). The individuals who threaten the Christian faith are also rebellious: they "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." They are just like the angels "who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode" (Jude 6). Those who hate obedience to God's authority and rule in their life are also characterized by denying their appointed positions, which may be evident in their despising their role in the home, society, and church. They "reject authority" (Jude 8), and are compared to "wandering stars" (Jude 13) because they rebel against their divinely

appointed position and purpose in creation. As opposed to submitting to authority, they dependent upon dreams (Jude 8), which allows them to formulate their own version of Christianity based upon their own imagination. They even blaspheme angels by assuming authority that even angels would reject (vv. 8-9). Such individuals act contrary to the will of God because they lack spiritual wisdom; therefore, they destroy themselves by acting "like unreasoning animals" (Jude. 10). Guard yourself against those who are ungodly, sensual, and rebellious. "Contend earnestly for the faith" by persevering with God's provision and revelation!

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First Lady Gwinnie Hatcher

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Wednesday Bible Study
7:00 p.m.

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552-7982

ESQUIRE FASHION SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31