"Contend for YOUR Faith and Contend for THE Faith"

By Cody T. McCain
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"I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people."
Jude 1:3

This scripture presents a two-fold meaning of contending for the faith. We must contend for OUR faith and we must contend for THE faith. But what does it mean to contend? The dictionary tells us that this word means "to strive against difficulties." That definitely provides an accurate depiction of this word, but the original Greek paints an even more detailed picture. The original word used in this verse is the word agonizomai (where we get our English words "agony" or "agonize") which not only refers to striving against difficulties but also refers to "competing for a prize" as in a game. Our very lives can be likened to a race! The scripture tells us in Hebrews 12:1, "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* The imagery here is that of a great relay race such as those seen in the Olympic Games (which took place during the time this very verse was written, suggesting that these games provided a backdrop for the writer to teach a spiritual principle!). To contend for OUR faith is to persevere through the various difficulties and temptations that come into our personal lives. Being that our fight is *"…is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:10), we can conclude that the adversaries against us are the various schemes and strategies of the enemy designed to promote UNBELIEF. Hebrews 4:11 states, "*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*" Unbelief here literally means OBSTINACY or a BLATANT OPPOSITION TO GOD'S DIVINE WILL (A.K.A. DISOBEDIENCE). Whatever the enemy has discovered to use against us to be effective in promoting disobedience and a rejection of God's perfect will for our lives – whether it be doubt, fear, idolatry, carnality, pride, lust, etc. – that is what he will indeed use! However, we are commanded to contend for OUR faith by resisting these tactics (James 4:7) through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word!

As we contend for OUR faith, we then effectively contend for THE faith. The faith according to scripture is the pure and unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ which tells us that Jesus is "*…the way, the truth, and the life: no man can come unto the Father but by Him*" (John 14:6). We are living in a day and time where the spirit of deception and error is running rampant not just in the world, but in the Body of Christ (the Church)! The scripture reminds us that 1 Timothy 4:1 "*…that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."* We are in fact witnessing this very occurrence in our present day and age. It has become unpopular to simply proclaim Jesus and uphold the standard of His Word! But we must strive against the external opposition that comes against THE faith! Despite the adversity facing the Church, even where much new age, conscious (a.k.a. "Woke" philosophy), spiritualist, and various other philosophies seek to make the church (the Body of Christ, not the building!) irrelevant and doomed to fall from existence, the Lord Jesus Himself declared that "*upon this rock (the rock being the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah and that salvation is found in none other) I will build my church, and THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT"* (Matthew 16:18 – emphasis added). We must purpose, despite ridicule and mockery to stand for and proclaim the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel brings about salvation, healing, deliverance, and peace for all who would dare to obey it!

I encourage all of us that as we contend for OUR faith in our personal walk with Jesus that we allow Holy Spirit to set us ablaze with a passion and endurance to persevere. As we persevere personally, we can persevere corporately by demonstrating the Biblical Jesus to a world that has not yet seen the "*fullness of Him who fills everything in every way"* (Ephesians 1:23), resulting in an EFFECTIVE contending for THE faith!

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