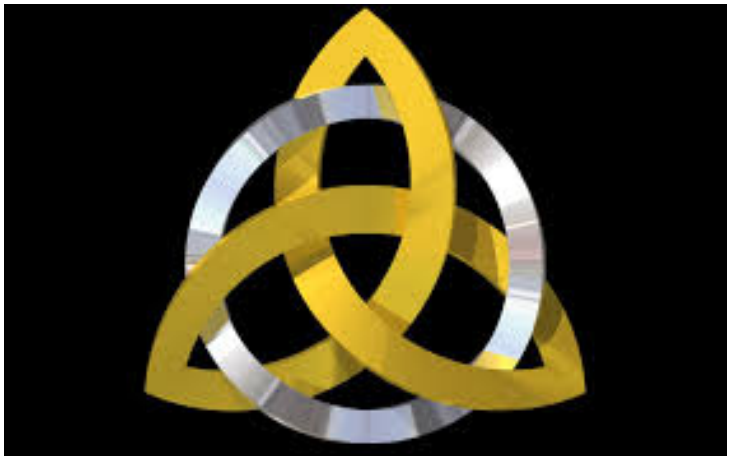
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Build Yourselves Up in Your Most Holy Faith Jude 20-21

Build yourselves up in your most holy faith DIG: What characteristics of righteousness do you see here? Where else in the Bible is the Trinity taught? Why is this such an important doctrine? Why do you think that cults start with the denial of the trinity?

REFLECT: Someone has said, "All it takes for evil to prevail is for a few good men and women to do nothing." What is one thing you could do this week to help keep this truism from becoming a reality where you live and work? What kind of spiritual "body building" plan could help you keep strong in God's love?



But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, and pray in union with the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life (Jude 20-21).

Jude 20-23 are arguably the most important verses in the entire book. It is here that **Jude** spells out exactly how he wants us to pursue the purpose for which he has written this letter: that we **contend for the faith that was once for all passed on to God's people (Jude 3).** So in addition to remembering what the

prophets and apostles had to say about **the apostates**, **Jude's** readers were to pay attention to themselves. Instead of wickedness, division, worldly thinking, we read of **faith**, **love** and **mercy**. **Jude** then presents **the twelfth triad, based upon the Trinity.**

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith (Jude 20a). Judah contrasts his **dear friends**, the righteous of the TaNaKh, with the ungodly **apostates** of **Jude 4-19**. Building **up** is *epoikodomeo*, which means *to build upon, to finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid.* **Jude's** readers are encouraged to **build up** their **holy faith** on the foundation of what **God** has done for them in salvation.

Faith here means, "What we believe," the doctrinal and ethical core of our identity as believers. This was exactly what the false teachers were threatening. Therefore, we must remain doctrinally strong so we can recognize error and effectively fight the battle for truth. The present, active participle translated **build yourselves up** has a sense of urgency associated with it, meaning it is not optional.

The metaphor of building **on the foundation** is used elsewhere in the New Covenant. Sha'ul said that the only f**oundation** of the Church is **Yeshua Messiah**, and people must **build on** that **foundation** rightly to **receive** a **reward (First Corinthians 3:10-15)**. **The foundation** upon which the Church is **built** in **Ephesians 2:20** is **the apostles and prophets**, with **Christ** being **the chief cornerstone**. **Peter** described believers as **living stones** that are **being built into a spiritual house (First Peter 2:5)**. What **Jude** said here does not contradict Paul but represents a fresh use of the metaphor. The **most holy faith** upon which the Church is **built** is the gospel of **Jesus Christ**, and this **faith** has **Yeshua Messiah** at its center.[113]

Practically speaking, this centers on studying **the Word of God** and learning to apply it. In **Acts 20:32**, Sha'ul tells the Ephesian elders: **Now I commit you to God and to the Word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ADONAI** gave the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/teachers to proclaim **His** Word, **that builds up the body of Messiah (Ephesians 4:11-12). Peter** wrote that believers should desire **the Word** for spiritual growth, just as babies desire milk for their physical nourishment. **Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation (First Peter 2:2).** Along those same lines, **John** wrote: **I write to you fathers, because you have known Him**

who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God lives in you and you have overcome the evil one (First John 2:14).[114]

First, and pray in union with God the Holy Spirit (Jude 20b). This expression does not refer to speaking in tongues (see my commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click Fm – With Foreign Lips and Strange Tongues God Will Speak to This People**), but to praying for what is consistent to **the Spirit's** will, **His** desires, directives and decrees. The phrase **with the Holy Spirit** is locative of sphere. That is, all true prayer is exercised in the sphere of **the Holy Spirit**, motivated and empowered by **Him**. That means if we expect to really **pray**, we must be **Spirit**-filled, or **Spirit**-controlled.[115]

The essence of our faith is our *total dependence* on **ADONAI**. **Pray at all times, with all kinds of prayers and requests, in the Spirit, vigilantly and persistently, for all God's people (Ephesians 6:18 CJB).** Believers must be men and women of prayer for two reasons. First, we know that we must test everything by the will of **the LORD**, and, as a result, we must take everything to **God** for **His** approval. Second, we know that in ourselves we can do nothing, but **with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)** and, therefore, we must always be taking our weaknesses to **God's** strength.

Second, keep (*teresate* from the root *tereo*) **yourselves in the love of God the Father (Jude 21a).** This is also in the locative sphere; meaning, **keep** themselves in the sphere of **God's love**. In other words, they are *to watch out* that they live their lives within the circle of **God's** blessing **(Romans 5:5, 8:39; First John 4:16)**. We are not to read this caution as though it reads, "**Keep** on loving **God**," although we obviously need to do that. It is not our **love** for **Him** that is in view here, but **His love** for us. This passage is similar to **John 15:9** where we read: **As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love.** We bear the responsibility to **keep** ourselves **in** the sphere of **God's love** so **He** can bless us. The prodigal son (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Hu – The Parable of the Lost Son and His Jealous Brother**) was still loved by his father even when he went far away to another country. But the son had removed himself from the place where he could enjoy the benefits of his father's love to the fullest. He did not **keep** himself in his father's **love**.

How then do we follow this command? The answer is given to us by **John: If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My**

Father's commands and remain in His love (John 15:10). To **remain**, is to **keep** ourselves in the sunshine of **His love**. We **remain** when we **obey** the Word of **God**.

Third, as you wait (*prosdechomenoi,* or *looking expectantly*) **for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 21b).** Referring to **Messiah's** mercy is unusual in the New Covenant. Why did **Jude** speak of it here? Probably because **he** thought of believers as needing **mercy**, and not justice, on the last day when we **meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).** It is true that **grace** is the basis upon which we receive **eternal life**. **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). He** did not believe, however, that we will ever be perfect in this world, and therefore we will need **Yeshua's mercy** on the last day.[116] When **He** returns there will be judgment on **the rebels**, but **mercy** for us.

As you wait for the mercy of our Lord to bring you to eternal life (Jude 21c). This is the role of **God the Son**. The focus is on the return of **the Lord**, which is **the blessed hope** for all believers: **the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)**. This event is called the Rapture (see my commentary on **Revelation By – The Rapture of the Church**), through which **Messiah** will remove the believers from the coming days of the Great Tribulation. Then we will enjoy **eternal life** in the presence of **God (1 Peter 1:5-13).**

The question of **eternal life**, commonly called *the security of the believer*, is an important one. Once saved, Satan's goal is to have you become an *ineffective believer* by having you question your walk or your salvation itself (see *the Screwtape Letters*, by C. S. Lewis). The Adversary will come against you and say things like, "Believers don't talk like that," or "Believers don't look at those things," or "Believers wouldn't be caught dead doing that." That's when you need to be rock solid in the fact of your salvation, or the devil will rob your joy (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**).

This section began with an *inward* look at the character of the believer: we are to be building. It continued with an *outward* look at everything and everyone for whom we should intercede: we should by praying. Then we took an *upward* look at the one who loves us and who has made us **His** children: we are to keep ourselves in **God's love**. Lastly, we look forward to the return of our **Savior** and the beginning of **eternal life** with **Him**: we are looking for the final display of **His** mercy.[117]