

# Contending for the Faith!

How many of you reading this newsletter have ever grown weary in waiting for the promise of God. Waiting to see the manifestation of what you are believing. Perhaps it is for healing in your body; or the salvation of a loved one, or the deliverance of a child from drugs or alcohol. Maybe it is to be out of debt and defeat poverty once and for all. Each of us has a dream or vision for those things that are so dear to our hearts. Waiting is tough, waiting is hard, waiting is contending, and contending is to fight.

Jude 3 says, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints". (NKJV)

What does contending mean? Contend means, to strive or vie in contest. It means rivalry against difficulties, to fail to agree; take exception, to fight, to endeavor with strenuous zeal to obtain something.

If in 2005 we are contending for the faith, just what is it that we are contending against?

I believe you will agree as a nation our Christian values and morals have been attacked as never before. Our nation needs help when it applauds and awards television shows that promote fornication, adultery, and perversion of so called desperate women. It is time to change the channel from this filth, stop participating in and with this type of program. This type of input into our lives is a direct attack against our faith in God. We must check what programs, movies, books etc. we allow into our homes and into the minds of our children and ourselves. Televisions programs and movies that promote sin and present ungodly lifestyles cannot be tolerated in the Christian home any longer. Because we have not been diligent in contending for the faith and keeping our selves pure before God, the acceptance of sin, sex outside of marriage, fornication, adultery, witchcraft and many more like activities has become acceptable in the lives of many "Christians". As we are contending for, we are also contending against.

It is time to stand up and say enough is enough. We must purpose in our hearts as Christian's that we will give the enemy "NO GROUND". Ephesians 4:27 commands us, "Give no place to the devil." A wise person once said if you give the devil an inch he will become your ruler.

Our stand, our contending, is done by doing and keeping the Word of God. We withstand and contend by the following things:

\* The words we speak - Proverbs 18:21

"Death and Life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit".

The force of faith released through our words will enable us to stand and begin to push back against that which is contending against us whatever the circumstance. This is not through soulish or mental power; but through the power of the Holy Spirit; in the life of every believer.

II Corinthians 4:13 reminds us, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed and therefore I have spoken; we also believe, and therefore we speak".

\* Our lives must line up with the Word of God; there is no room for compromise.

\* Obeying God's Word

Both the Logos, the written word and the revealed (spoken to us), the Rhema word.

II Corinthians 10:3-6 (NASV) -Verse 6 says, "And we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete".

Through long conflicts and the waiting, the enemy will try and wear us down, so we become weary. If not checked, our weariness leads to weak faith and eventually we move into doubt and unbelief. And then the enemy will get his way, we will stop contending against him and he will

win the battle. Not so, Galatians 3:9 (NKJV) says, "And let us not grow weary while doing good; for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart."

During these attacks there is always the opportunity to disconnect from our life source, Jesus. The disappointment, discouragement or disillusionment pushes us towards this action, Do not disconnect! John 15:5 (NKJV) says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing."

We cannot allow anything to cause us to disconnect from the vine; God is our life source, His Word, power and the fellowship with Jesus. Many times we will also disconnect from one another and build walls of protection around our heart and minds. This position is to protect ourselves from further disappointments, embarrassment, or shame. These can become paramount in our activities as we move further and further away from the very things we need.

Another aspect of not contending is to zone out in the flesh. We find safety in this seclusion and we comfort ourselves with food, television, shopping, entertainment and so forth. This will not get rid of the contending, but will only delay it and make it harder when we restart the fight. I am sure none of us are guilty of ever indulging the flesh, but just in case you know someone who needs a little reminder, the flesh profits nothing, but the spirit gives and brings forth life.

It is His joy in us that give us strength in the battles, Nehemiah 8:10b (NKJV), "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Isaiah 40:29-31 (NKJV) tells us, "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength." Verse 31 (NKJV) relates the power of contending (waiting) for it declares loudly, "But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew [their] strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." We find that even the youth can faint and become weary, and utterly fall, if they do not wait upon the Lord.

Paul told Timothy, "I have fought a good fight and I have kept the faith". Paul was talking about contending for the faith, contending for relationship with Jesus, contending for excellence, contending to obey, contending to trust and contending to believe.

Jesus made us contenders, Jesus has given us the ability and the power to contend, but we each by faith have to choose to contend, choose to fight, and choose to take a stand.

I hope you are encouraged and uplifted by this teaching and it has helped in keeping you keeping on for Jesus. Fight the good fight, for we win.

**God bless you all.**