

Week 3 – Jude – Apostasy Proofing – Bible Study Helps

Title: Apostasy Proofing: Guarding Against the Great Falling Away

Sermon Summary: This sermon addresses the urgent need for believers to protect themselves from the apostasy prophesied in Scripture for the last days. Building on the previous week's history lesson about those who fell away from God throughout biblical history, the message provides practical guidance for remaining faithful as we approach the rapture. The pastor emphasizes that while the spiritual battle is real, God has given believers everything needed to stand firm. The core message centers on five essential practices: remembering God's Word, continually growing in faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping oneself in God's love, and looking expectantly for Christ's return. The sermon challenges comfortable Christianity and warns against pride, complacency, and the subtle drift away from God that characterizes apostasy.

Key Points:

- History repeats itself - the falling away happening today follows the same pattern seen throughout biblical history with unbelieving Israel, fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and apostate individuals
- The greatest danger facing Bible-believing Christians is pride and complacency, thinking "we've got it" and don't need daily dependence on God
- Remember the words - Scripture is more sure than eyewitness testimony and contains everything pertaining to life and godliness
- Build up yourselves - Christians must never stop growing; you are either growing or backsliding
- Pray in the Holy Ghost - living in the flesh without constant prayer is the opposite of spiritual warfare readiness
- Keep yourselves in the love of God - stay in the place of blessing through obedience and close fellowship with Him
- Look for Christ's return - maintaining an expectant attitude prevents becoming too comfortable with this world
- Our flesh naturally follows the same apostate pattern unless we mortify it daily
- The safest place to be is in the center of God's will, close to Him

Scripture Reference:

- Jude 17-21 (primary passage)
- 2 Peter 1:3-4, 16-21; 2 Peter 3:1-9
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

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- Romans 5, 8
- Ephesians 4, 6
- Philippians 3:14
- Hebrews 3:1
- Lamentations 3:22-33
- John 15
- Acts 11
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 John

Stories:

- The missionary testimony about underground church believers in Southeast Asia (possibly China) who memorized Scripture rapidly when given pages of the Bible in prison, facing punishment for possessing God's Word
- The pastor's personal testimony of being discipled as a new believer, memorizing 48 verses through index cards, and other Christians being amazed at his dedication
- Street preaching encounters with mockers - a man yelling "liar" from his car and guys at lunch mocking across the street, fulfilling the prophecy of last days scoffers
- The parable of the prodigal son used to illustrate keeping ourselves in the love of God versus stepping away from the place of blessing
- Reference to Caleb who "wholly followed the Lord" when others fell away at the edge of the Promised Land
- Personal anecdotes about family members and Christians who say "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian" as examples of the sliding away process

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Discipleship Questions

How does the pattern of apostasy throughout biblical history challenge us to examine our own faithfulness, and what specific areas of our lives might be vulnerable to falling away?

The sermon emphasizes that our flesh naturally wants to murmur, complain, and lust. How can we practically 'mortify our flesh' daily while relying on God's grace rather than our own strength?

When comparing the underground church believers who memorized Scripture under persecution to our own Bible engagement, what does this reveal about how we value God's Word in our comfortable circumstances?

Peter said the written Word is 'more sure' than even his eyewitness experience of Christ's transfiguration. How should this truth transform our approach to Bible reading and study?

The sermon warns that saying 'I got this' is the wrong answer, while 'God help me' is right. In what areas of life are you most tempted to rely on yourself rather than depend on God?

How does the concept of 'keeping yourself in the love of God' relate to staying in the place of blessing, and what does stepping away from that place look like in practical terms?

The prodigal son illustration shows how we can leave the place of blessing while still being God's children. What are the warning signs that we are beginning to step away from close fellowship with God?

If Caleb's defining characteristic was that he 'wholly followed the Lord' when everyone else fell away, what would it look like for you to wholly follow God in your current circumstances?

The sermon states that if we stop looking for Christ's return, we stop talking about it. How does actively anticipating the rapture affect our priorities, conversations, and daily choices?

Considering that the biggest risk for Bible-believing Christians might be pride in thinking we have it all figured out, how can we cultivate humility and recognize our ongoing need for spiritual growth?

Small Group Guide: Apostasy Proofing

Based on Jude 17-21

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and help each person apply these truths practically.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share about a time when you had to follow instructions carefully to protect yourself from danger or avoid a mistake. What happened when you followed (or didn't follow) those instructions?

Key Scripture

Jude 17-21 *"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."*

Main Takeaways

1. Remember the Words

The Bible is our most valuable resource—perfectly prophetic, historically accurate, and life-changing. God gave us His Word so we wouldn't repeat the mistakes of history.

2. Build Up Yourselves

Christians must continually grow. We're either growing or backsliding—there's no neutral ground.

3. Pray in the Holy Ghost

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Prayer is essential spiritual warfare. Living without constant prayer is living in the flesh rather than yielding to the Spirit.

4. Keep Yourselves in the Love of God

Stay in the place of blessing by remaining close to God, keeping His commandments, and walking in fellowship with Him.

5. Look for Christ's Return

Keeping an eternal perspective prevents us from becoming too comfortable with this world.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Sermon (15 minutes)

1. **The pastor mentioned that apostasy (falling away) has been happening throughout history.** What examples from the sermon stood out to you most? Why?
2. **What does it mean that the Bible is "more sure" than even Peter's firsthand experience with Jesus?** (2 Peter 1:19) How should this affect how we treat Scripture?
3. **The sermon stated that our biggest risk as Bible believers might be pride—thinking "we've got it."** Do you agree? Why or why not?

Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

4. **Be honest: How much time did you actually spend in God's Word this past week?** What obstacles keep you from consistent Bible reading? How can the group pray for you?
5. **The pastor said, "You are either growing or falling away."** Which direction would you honestly say you're moving right now? What evidence supports your answer?
6. **Consider the five ways to guard against apostasy:**
 - Remember the words (Bible reading)
 - Build up yourselves (spiritual growth)
 - Pray in the Holy Ghost (constant prayer)
 - Keep in God's love (close fellowship)
 - Look for Christ's return (eternal perspective)

Which of these five is strongest in your life? Which needs the most attention?

7. **The illustration of the prodigal son showed how we can step away from "the place of blessing."** Have you ever experienced stepping out of God's will? What brought you back?

Confronting Reality (15 minutes)

8. **The sermon mentioned mockers and scoffers are increasing as prophesied.** Have you personally experienced mockery for your faith? How did you respond?
9. **"It would be sinful for me not to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).** If not praying for others is sin, how much sin are we committing? How can we change this?
10. **The pastor challenged us about "light duty" devotions—quick, surface-level Bible reading.** What's the difference between reading the Bible out of duty versus reading it out of love and genuine need?

Application (15 minutes)

11. **What specific changes do you need to make this week to:**
 - Increase your time in God's Word?
 - Grow spiritually rather than stagnate?
 - Develop a more consistent prayer life?
 - Stay closer to God's will?
 - Keep an eternal perspective?
 12. **The sermon emphasized that "God help me" is better than "I got this."** Where in your life are you trying to handle things in your own strength rather than depending on God?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to focus on this week:

Option 1: Bible Engagement

- Read your Bible for at least 15 minutes daily (set a specific time)
- Memorize one verse from Jude 17-21
- Journal one thing God teaches you each day

Option 2: Prayer Development

- Set three specific times daily to pray (morning, midday, evening)
- Start a prayer list for people God brings to mind
- Practice "praying always" by talking to God throughout your day

Option 3: Accountability Partnership

- Find one person in the group to check in with daily

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- Share honestly about your spiritual temperature
- Pray together at least once this week (in person, phone, or video)

Option 4: Spiritual Growth Assessment

- List the seven things to add to your faith (2 Peter 1:5-7)
 - Rate yourself honestly on each (1-10 scale)
 - Create a specific plan to grow in your weakest area
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Group Accountability

Share your choice with the group and commit to reporting back next week.

Accountability partner(s): _____

My specific goal: _____

How the group can pray for me: _____

Closing Reflection

Read together: "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Discuss: How does God's faithfulness and mercy motivate you to stay close to Him this week?

Prayer Time (15 minutes)

Pray specifically for:

- Forgiveness for areas where we've been neglecting God's Word
 - Strength to break patterns of spiritual laziness
 - Protection from the apostasy happening around us
 - Each person's specific application goal for the week
 - Anyone who may not know Christ as Savior
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Before Next Week

- Complete your chosen practical application
 - Be ready to share one way God spoke to you through His Word
 - Bring specific prayer requests related to spiritual growth
 - Read Jude 22-25 in preparation for the next study
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Leader Notes

- **Be vulnerable first.** Share your own struggles with consistency in Bible reading, prayer, or spiritual growth.
- **Avoid condemnation.** The goal is conviction that leads to change, not guilt that paralyzes.
- **Celebrate small victories.** If someone shares progress, affirm them!
- **Follow up midweek.** Send a text or email checking on people's application goals.
- **Remember:** The spiritual battle is real, but God provides everything we need to stand strong.

5-Day Devotional Guide: Guarding Against Apostasy

Day 1: Remember the Words

Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Devotional: Peter declares that Scripture is more certain than even hearing God's audible voice. Think about that—the Bible in your hands carries more authority than any experience. The apostles didn't follow "cunningly devised fables" but gave us eyewitness testimony confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Yet how often do we treat this treasure casually? The first defense against falling away is remembering God's Word. Not just reading it, but memorizing it, meditating on it, letting it transform you. When missionaries in prison memorized Scripture before guards confiscated it, they understood what we often forget: these words are life itself. Today, don't just read—remember. Hide God's Word in your heart where nothing can take it away.

Day 2: Build Yourself Up

Reading: 2 Peter 1:3-11

Devotional: God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Everything. Yet we often live as spiritual paupers, ignoring the riches available to us. Peter commands us to add to our faith—virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. This isn't optional; it's essential growth. You're either growing or backsliding—there's no neutral ground. The Christian who says "I've learned enough" has already begun to fall. Consider Caleb, who "wholly followed the Lord" when everyone else rebelled. That's our calling. Don't settle for spiritual mediocrity. Build yourself up daily in God's Word. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. The foundation is laid in Christ; now keep building.

Day 3: Pray in the Holy Spirit

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

Devotional: After describing the full armor of God, Paul concludes with one essential practice: praying always. This isn't about eloquent words or lengthy prayers—it's about constant dependence on God. Samuel said it would be sinful for him to stop praying for God's people. How much sin are we committing through prayerlessness? Living without prayer is living in the flesh, declaring "I don't need God today." But spiritual warfare demands spiritual weapons. Praying in the Holy Spirit means yielding to Him continually, asking for guidance in every conversation, every decision, every moment. It's walking with God rather than trudging through life alone. Today, don't just pray—pray always. Let every breath become a conversation with your Father who loves you.

Day 4: Keep Yourself in God's Love

Reading: John 15:1-11

Devotional: Nothing can separate you from God's love—but you can step out of the place of blessing. Think of the prodigal son who left his father's house. The father's love never changed, but the son chose the pigpen over paradise. Jesus says if you keep His commandments, you'll abide in His love. This isn't about earning salvation; it's about experiencing intimacy. Every sin is a step away from fellowship, away from blessing, away from the safest place you could be. God will chasten you because He loves you too much to let you wander. Stay close. Cleave to the Lord. Don't trade the Father's embrace for the world's empty promises. The will of God isn't mysterious when you're walking close to Him—He guides those who stay near.

Day 5: Look for His Coming

Reading: Lamentations 3:19-26; Titus 2:11-14

Devotional: Jeremiah wept over Israel's rebellion, yet declared: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed... They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness." Even in judgment, there's hope—looking to God's mercy and His return. Our blessed hope is the appearing of Jesus Christ. When we stop looking for His return, we grow too comfortable with this world. We stop proclaiming "the Lord is coming with ten thousands of His saints!" The early church lived with urgency because they expected Christ any moment. Do you? Looking for Jesus keeps us faithful, keeps us witnessing, keeps us holy. Today might be the day. Live like it. Love like it. Serve like it. He's coming soon—perhaps today.

As you complete this devotional guide, remember: you have a high and heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. Stay in God's Word, keep growing, pray continually, remain in His love, and look expectantly for His return. The safest place to be is in the center of God's will.