

## **YWJ Teen Devo: Learning from Jude's Dudes**

By Barry Shafer

### **The Word**

"Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

Think about how Jude described the recipients of this letter: called, loved and kept. Jude also called them "dear friends" who shared salvation with him. So it looks as if these folks had a pretty solid faith. Yet Jude had a very urgent concern about their faith community; it was so urgent that he didn't even address what he really wanted to write about—salvation!

### **The Backdrop**

Jude, one of the smallest books of the Bible, was a letter written by...well...Jude, to a group of his friends who were trying, probably as are you, to live the gospel in a culture that wasn't too conducive to living the gospel. Their situation has a lot to teach us today.

### **The What**

When reading a letter in the Bible, we can learn a lot about what God wants to say to us by uncovering the purpose of the letter along with any information about the first readers of the letter (in this case, Jude's dudes). The first four verses in Jude give us great info on both.

As you read Jude 1-4 below, note what you learn about:

1. Jude's dudes, the original recipients of the letter. (How are they described?)
2. The reason Jude wrote this letter. (Do you see anything that might resemble a purpose statement? What did Jude want to write about?)

### **The So What**

Meditate for a minute about what it means to be called, loved and kept. Each of these words touches on three of the most important themes of the gospel. Read the passages below from your Bible to help you experience being called, loved and kept. For some added insight, when you see the word *called*, picture this: being invited to a lavish party. That's one way the Greek culture of Jude's day used that word.

Romans 8:28-30

Ephesians 1:17-19

1 Corinthians 1:5-9

1 John 3:1-2

Jude 1:24-25

Despite how rock-solid Jude's dudes were in their faith, it was still possible for twisted truth to seep into their community and belief system. It's worth noting that given the urgency and severity of his warning to contend for the faith, Jude opened the letter by reminding his readers of who they were in their faith—called, loved and kept. The best defense against deception is simply Truth itself.

So what is God saying to you through these few verses from this short book of the Bible? (In fact, it's only 25 verses; you might want to read the entire book right now!) Spend some time thinking about what God is saying to you, and journal any thoughts that come to mind. Then try one or two of these application exercises derived from the information you've uncovered regarding Jude's first readers and the purpose of his letter.

### **Called, Loved, Kept:**

How can the knowledge that you are called, loved and kept help you face things such as:

- a. temptation
- b. frustration
- c. disappointment
- d. hurt and loss

Sometimes we just need a simple reminder about our position with God (called, loved and kept). Choose one of these ideas or create your own.

- a. Think of a bumper sticker phrase or use a word such as "CaLoKe" and create a wallpaper for your phone or screen saver for your computer.
- b. find someone with a "Badge-a-Minit" machine and create a badge that simply says:  
CALLED  
LOVED  
KEPT
- c. For the next seven days, complete one of these sentences and tweet it or post it as your status:  
Because I am called, loved and kept, I will \_\_\_\_\_ [an action].  
Because I am called, loved and kept, I am \_\_\_\_\_ [an emotion or frame of mind].

### **Contend for the Faith:**

The word *contend* means "to fight for." Using a boxing match as an analogy, which of these boxing match characters best describes your status as a faith contender?

- a. one of the fighters (I'm in the ring swinging and taking hits for the gospel.)
- b. a coach (I've been fighting, and I like to teach others how to fight.)
- c. a water boy/girl (I like to be close to the action, but don't ask me to step into the ring.)
- d. a bystander (I like that the fight is going on, but I'd rather not engage.)
- e. a referee (It's easier for me to judge others in the fight than to be in the fight.)
- f. a broadcaster (I like to talk the talk, but the walk is a different story.)

What can you do to be a better contender for the faith?

- a. Understand enough of the gospel message to recognize deceptive twists on the gospel message.
- b. Be more bold in living or sharing my faith.
- c. Help new believers understand the gospel message.