

The Book of Jude (Part 21) – Building Up on Your Most Holy Faith

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The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/yszpny3/the-book-of-jude-part-21>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Shabbat Shalom, everyone. Well, we are getting to the end; we're almost to the finish line. Next week, we will finish out this series on the Book of Jude, and next week, I'll give you a little teaser of where we're going from there. I'm going to say that I think for some of you, you're really going to appreciate where we're going, but I'll share more about that next week.

Today, there's going to be a massive shift in the feel to Jude. Up till now, the entire thing has really been telling us what not to do, who not to emulate, and what examples not to follow. We don't want to be wolves in sheep's clothing. We don't want to be like these mockers and scoffers, these dreamers; we don't want to come into the church and turn the grace of God into lewdness. This has been the entirety, essentially from Verse 1 all the way to 19. Today, Jude is going to totally turn. He's going to shift gears and tell us who we need to be and what we need to do, so this is where we're going to pick it up.

We're going to pick it up in Jude 1:20—**But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith.** The first thing I want you to recognize is Jude is calling his brother, and by extension us. We are called to be builders, to be craftsmen, to actually build upon our faith. Now, when you look at that, you have to ask the question, what does that mean? What does it look like? I'm going to tell you, in Jude's epistle, which is very brief, he doesn't go into a discourse of what that would look like, and why doesn't he do that? Because several times I've already shown you that Jude's expectation for the recipients of this letter is that Jude is speaking at a very high level of expectation, so he will say certain things, but that statement has a world of understanding behind it, which Jude expects them to know. This tells us he really knows his audience well, so he doesn't go into this grand discourse about what it means to build on our holy faith; however, here's the beauty: Peter, who gives the same sermon, does. He goes into great detail. So, to truly appreciate what it really means to build on our faith, we're going to look at Peter's version of Jude's sermon, and we're going to glean from this.

With that said, let's jump into II Peter 1:5—**But also for this very reason, giving all diligence,** what does he say? **Add to your faith.** There's a lot here that we need to unpack. The first thing that I want to mention is that Peter is very specific about the manner in which you're to add to your faith. When you look at this, and I didn't put this in the Greek—I'm sorry—but when you look at this, **giving all diligence**, diligence is *spoudé* in the Greek or the inflected form *spoudēn* (σπουδῇν). It literally means to move with haste, to move quickly. This means you don't deliberate. This means you don't give in to complacency; you don't sit around looking at the four walls. This means it's go time; it is time to add to your faith. Specifically, that moment when you came into the confession, where you confessed with

your mouth the Lord Yeshua, you believed in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you got baptized. You accepted and received the Gospel. According to Jude and Peter, explicitly with Peter, now you are supposed to add to that and move with lightning speed. That sets the whole stage for what we're about to dig into, that we're to add to our faith.

Think about Christianity today. In Progressive Christianity they tell you that you can't add to your faith. What they do is formulate teachings to tell you that if you, in any way, are thinking that you're going to add to your faith, that you need to do something, then you are rejecting grace itself, and you're rejecting Christ. This is the mantra that's being peddled. It's interesting; here we have in the New Testament two individuals, and we'll look at others, Peter and Jude, both well informed on the Gospel, telling us the exact opposite of what the church is telling us today. We are to add to our faith and to do it with lightning speed.

The other thing I want to mention here before we dig into this is the context by which the statement is made. Think about the context of the statement that's made in Peter. Obviously, we know Peter warns us about false teachers; they're going to come in, and they're going to tear up the flock. Jude, same context, same exact context. The reason I bring this up is this statement is being made in a context where you have imposters coming into the church. What you need to understand is that all these imposters, these dreamers, these wolves in sheep's clothing—do you know what they don't do? They do not add to the faith; they will not build on the faith. That's what separates the sheep from the wolves; it's the building. You're going to see that today.

With that said, let's dig into this. What does it mean to build on our faith? Peter gets specific and tells us in II Peter 1:5, **Add to your faith ἀρετήν, virtue.** Areté (ἀρετή) in Greek means moral virtue, moral excellence, and sexual purity. Isn't it interesting? Let's just stop here for a second. This is Peter, and the first thing he said was "virtue." This wasn't an accident where he grabbed something beautiful out of Scripture and said "We'll just, you know, add to your faith. I like this, so let's just throw this thing here." Peter is very intentional; he was very specific about why he picked moral excellence first. Go back to Acts 15:29, where you have the Gentiles who came into the faith; they accepted the gospel. What was the first thing commanded to them that they had to do? To abstain from sexual immorality. Get your *areté*, your moral excellence, in order because we are the temple of the Living God. Add to your faith; it's the first thing they were told.

What that means in a practical way today is that it means different things for different people. You struggle with same-sex attraction; that's a real thing; it's a real fleshly emotion. We all have our struggles. Some of us don't struggle in that area, but we all have our struggles. That's a real emotion; it's a fleshly draw. What does it mean to erase it? What does it mean? You lock it down; you don't give in to that. Now it's time to go to war, people. You've entered into the faith, and now you war against the fleshly desires, against the emotions.

You struggle with porn; you struggle with looking at porn. You can't do this. I love what Job says in Job 31:1— **"I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?"** A covenant with his eyes. This is the first thing we're supposed to do when we add to the faith. David says in Psalm 101:3— **I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.** See, because we're the temple of God, we have to take every thought captive. For some of you, maybe you run a carnival of debauchery in your mind, of immorality, of immoral thoughts. Maybe you're lusting after somebody else's husband. Maybe you're lusting after somebody else's wife; take captive every thought, and get to moral excellence. This is the first thing that we have to get right in this building process. I'm going to tell you, all the things that

we look at today, guess what? They're not optional. You don't get to pick this one and this one, and you know what, that one I really don't want to do. Every single one of these that Peter is going to list out is life and death for you. It is the difference between whether you go to heaven or you go to hell. This could not be more serious than what we're looking at.

So, he says in II Peter 1:5—**But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue**, and then we continue **to virtue knowledge**, (emphasis added). We're going to spend some time on this because, again, this is the difference between heaven and hell. What kind of knowledge are we talking about here? Are we talking about the world's knowledge, man's wisdom? What knowledge do we need to add to our faith? The answer is the knowledge of God, obviously. What's not so obvious, which is apparent to me today looking at the church, is what is the knowledge of God? If we're supposed to add this to our faith, I need to know what the knowledge of God is. We're going to look at what the knowledge of God is. We're going to allow Scripture; God Himself—it's actually God speaking. We're going to allow God to define what He means when He says "knowledge" so that we can appreciate where Jude and Peter are coming from. The way I want to do this is to take you to Hosea. We're going to spend some time in Hosea, or we're going to be jumping back and forth, because there's a lot there.

We're going to begin in Hosea 4:6—**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge** (emphasis added). I'm going to say up front, if you wanted to know whether or not it's necessary for you to add knowledge to your faith, look no further; the Lord couldn't be clearer: it's as important as it gets; quite literally, life and death. If you don't do this, you're going to be destroyed. The thing that I love about this—look at this; I'm going to highlight it: *My people*, My church—think about this. My church is destroyed from lack of knowledge. This is the air that is plaguing progressive Christianity today. They're out peddling this nonsensical message that, no, sorry, any work that you're attempting to do, any commandment that you're putting yourself under, all that is your own selfishness, your own self-righteousness, and you're trying to earn salvation; this is what is being taught. You don't need to study the Torah; it's antiquated, it's outdated, and all you're doing is putting yourself into bondage. This is what's being taught today.

What's fascinating as we continue is, guess what the Lord is going to tell us? His knowledge is His law; it is His Torah. He goes on and says this in Hosea 4:6—**Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being Cohen, priest for Me**; we're supposed to be (Exodus 19:6) **a kingdom of priests**. This is what we're called to be, a kingdom of priests, and what He's saying is, when you reject My knowledge, I'm rejecting you; this is going to be the effect. Again, this is the Lord speaking. Then He says this: **Because you have forgotten the Torah, law of your God, I also will forget your children** (emphasis added). Notice to reject knowledge is synonymous with forgetting the law, with abandoning the law. It's the exact same statement said differently; these are transposable terms.

The Lord has just defined, so that you understand, so that I understand, what this knowledge is that we're supposed to be adding to the faith. It's supposed to be us giving ourselves over to the Torah, over to His Word. The knowledge of God, and it hints—the front part of it—look at what it says, K-N-O-W. Know, the knowledge of God is to know God; it's to know Him. We get to know Him through His Word, His personality, His characteristics, the things that provoke Him to anger, and the things that please Him; it is literally His personality. I think we forget that Yeshua is literally the Torah; He's the Torah made flesh. There's a very disturbing trend in Christianity, a perverted viewpoint of what the Torah is. The devil has flipped this thing up on its head and has convinced the church that it's a curse. He's convinced the church that it's only bondage, when in fact, it is the personality of Yeshua; it's literally Him. We're in trouble; I mean, we are in trouble these days.

I want to build on this. If you think this is intense, I'm going to take it a step further and take you to Proverbs 1:23-28—²³ **Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.** I just want to stop there. Here we are in the days of repentance; we're in the 40 days of Teshuvah, from Elul one all the way to Yom Kippur. We're at this time, and here we are reading this; this is fascinating. God's promise, His promise to us, is (Proverbs 1:23), **Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you.** How many of you want His Holy Spirit, His power resting upon you? Listen to these words; turn at His rebuke. That's when we get that Holy Spirit; it's a heart thing. ²⁴ **Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,** ²⁵ **Because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke,** ²⁶ **I also will laugh at your calamity;** this is God. This is not one of your friends that is mocking you. **I will mock when your terror comes,** ²⁷ **When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.** ²⁸ **"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.** One of the scariest verses in all the Scriptures.

This is not what I'm expecting to read because I read in Psalm 50:15—**Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.**" And I can give you dozens and dozens and dozens of verses just like it. I can read all over Scripture, and now I come to this, and it tells me you can call upon Him, you can seek Him diligently, and He's not coming. He's not coming; He will not hear you. In fact, when you need Him most, when you're in that time of trial and calamity, He's going to mock at your calamity. One of the scariest passages, why? How is it possible that we can read certain passages like Psalm Chapter 50 Verse 15, but then I read something like Proverbs 1:28? Why? This is the answer—Proverbs 1:29—**Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD** (emphasis added).

Do you want to reject His Torah? Do you want to reject His Word? Again, do not marvel at the fact that the enemy would go after the Torah. Look at this; look at what happens. When you reject the Torah, you're rejecting Yeshua, and you're in a place that no matter how much you seek Him, you can seek Him until you're blue in the face; you can pray to Him all day long, but if you don't yield your heart to His voice, to His Word, you get nothing. This is terrifying, and this is why when I look at the Christian church today, it vexes me because we're talking about the difference between people going to heaven and hell.

Jumping back to Hosea 6:3—**Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD** (emphasis added). What we're called to do is we're called to go forth and pursue Him, His knowledge, His character, and His personality. He wants a relationship. He wants us to go on an investigation, seeking His character, not who we want Him to be, not who our flesh wants to design, where we create our own Jesuses, and those are the Jesuses that we're going to follow. Paul picks up on this and says in Ephesians 5:10—**finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.** We're to find out, we're to seek, and we're to know the difference between right and wrong, but that's not based on our own assessment; it's based on His Torah. It's based on His truth. I didn't put this up here, but a few verses before this, Paul warns in Ephesians 5:6—**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** Make no mistake, there's deception involved in that, specifically for the church. There's deception.

I'm going to take it to Hebrews Chapter 5. The writer in this passage is expressing his great displeasure with his brethren. He is upset; do you know why? They haven't added to their faith. They haven't grown in the faith because they've become stagnant; they've become complacent and spiritually lethargic, and he's angry. We'll pick it up here in Hebrews 5:13-14—¹³ **For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.** In other words, you're not progressing; you have not added to your faith. What? The knowledge of God; you have not done this. ¹⁴ **But solid food belongs**

to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use, oh, **have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil** (emphasis added). Do you understand when you grow in the knowledge of God, the ability that you're given? Now, you will be able to distinguish between good and evil in a generation that is wallowing in deception and a deception that is so scary that if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived. Yeah, this isn't a game. You need to add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge. You need to know Him; you need to have Him, His truth. Only then are you going to be able to weather the storm because I'm going to tell you, and I've told you this so many times, you're not equipped to go up against the enemy on your own. You are not equipped; you're going to get taken out. He will have you turned upside down in so many different ways you won't know up from down. Unless you've clothed yourself in the truth of God, unless you've clothed yourself in His Word, you've opened your heart to it.

Jumping back to Hosea, listen to what the Lord says—His words. Hosea 6:6—**For I desire mercy and not sacrifice**; I want to stop here. Multiple times, do we not see Yeshua actually quote this? This is His heart; He desires mercy, but in what context? He wants to give it; He wants you to receive His mercy. That's why when He came, He sat with tax collectors and sinners. He didn't come to save the righteous; He came to save the wicked. He would point out His mercy and His desire, His heart, received His grace, but that's not all He wants—**and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings** (emphasis added). This is what He wants for you: you are to receive the knowledge of God. Open your heart to His Torah. Let Him speak to you, whereas the devil is convincing Christians all over the place, “Don't you dare hear it, because you're abandoning grace.” It's the opposition to grace; it has nothing to say to you. Apparently God has nothing to say to me? Have we lost our minds?

I want to share with you just a couple of passages. A friend of mine sent this to me yesterday, as she was reading a book authored by a very, very well-known pastor, Andy Stanley. He governs like a 10,000-

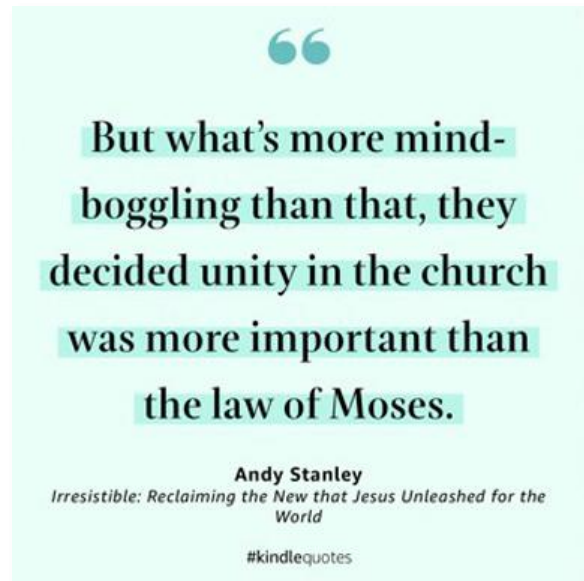
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Bottom line, if Paul had been around in the fourth century when the bishops and theologians were brainstorming titles for the major divisions of what would eventually be called the Bible, I'm pretty sure he would have opted for the term obsolete over old. Imagine that? The Obsolete Testament and the New Testament. It's not pithy, but it's accurate.

Andy Stanley
Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World
#kindlequotes

that I'm going to share with you is: —Andy Stanley, *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World*—**Bottom line, if Paul had been around in the fourth century when the bishops and theologians were brainstorming titles for the major divisions of what would eventually be called the Bible, I'm pretty sure he would have opted for the term obsolete over old.** As an Old Testament. **Imagine that? The Obsolete Testament and the New Testament. It's not pithy, but it's accurate.** It has nothing to say to you; this is what pastors of this progressive Christianity are saying, and how many pastors could we quote? That's what's scary. This is what thousands and thousands of Christians are being taught. They're throwing away the knowledge of God, and you will be destroyed.

Check out this one. —Andy Stanley, *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World*—But what's more mind-boggling than that, they decided unity in the church was more important than the law of Moses. As in the apostles. This guy is actually trying to convince his flock that the Apostle said, “We're going to put unity above the law of Moses,” and so he's totally degrading the law of Moses. News Flash, the Torah promotes unity; that's what it promotes. Do you remember Leviticus 19:18, where it says, **You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.** The heart of Torah is right there; it builds unity.



Do you know what it does? It tells you: you are to be your brother's keeper. When your brother's ox goes astray, you're not to hide yourself from it. No, no, you're to take it in because this is about unity; this is not about division. When the poor are in need (Deuteronomy 15:11), ... **'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'** The whole thing fosters love and unity; that's what it is. It's the knowledge of God; it is the mind of God. This is not the mind of Moses. This is not the mind of anyone else. It wasn't the mind of Joshua. Clearly it wasn't the mind of all the other ones that followed these beautiful men of God. It was the mind of God. We are His creation; you have one of two decisions. You can either say, “I'm going to seek after the mind of God because I want to become like Him and I want to please Him,” or you can reject Him outright and reject that knowledge.

With stuff like this, we shouldn't be surprised because this is what happened in the Garden of Eden. What did Satan do? Think about this and go home and read it. Satan went out and convinced Eve that she was being held back, that she needed to be liberated, and that she needed to progress. This is what he convinced her of saying, “No, no, no, no, no, you're not going to die; you should eat from this tree.” You need to eat from this tree because guess what? God knows the moment you experience that; you're going to be like Him. Liberate yourself, Eve. Set yourself free from the bondage of God's commandments. Of course, he lied, and she ended up dying and ended up being cursed and cast out of the garden. He's telling the exact same lie right now.

This is what we read in Philippians 1:9—**And this I pray**, this is Paul, **that your love may abound still more and more**—so you have Jude telling us, “Hey, you're to build up on your most holy faith.” You have Peter telling us, “You better add to your faith and do it with haste,” and now Paul comes on the scene and says the exact same thing in a little different wording. Your love is to abound more and more. What does that look like, Paul? Well, look at what Paul means **in knowledge and all discernment** (emphasis added). You're to grow in the knowledge of the Living God. This is the expectation.

Then he says this in Philippians 1:10—**that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere** (in the Greek, it's pure, you are to be holy), **and without offense till the day of Christ** (emphasis added). This very statement, and I never missed an opportunity to discuss what I have highlighted, exactly what Paul says, **you may approve the things that are excellent**. He makes the exact same statement in Romans 2:18, and do you know what he adds to it? You **approve the things that are**

excellent, and then he says, **being instructed out of the law**. This is how we approve the things that are excellent. We must be instructed out of the law. To do that, you actually have to study it, you have to believe it, and you have to submit to it. Only then will we add to our faith: knowledge.

Hebrews 4:12— **For the word of God is living and powerful**; the writer, what he has in mind here, is the Tanakh; it's the Torah; it's the Prophets, **and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, oh, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart** (emphasis added). Exactly what Paul wanted you to get from the Torah, the writer of Hebrews is confessing the same thing. This is the power of Torah; I have the ability that I don't have on my own to discern between good and evil. Again, what did Charles Spurgeon say? I just shared this, but Spurgeon shared specifically, **"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong; it is knowing the difference between right and almost right."** It looks exactly like what is right, and only through the knowledge of God are we going to be able to make the distinction. That's why I'm telling you; you're not equipped for this war. You, in and of yourself, are not equipped. The devil will tear you to shreds; you won't know what hit you. Then you'll be calling on God, and He's going to laugh and mock at your calamity because you hate Him and you rejected Him. You already rejected Him; you're rejecting His knowledge; you're rejecting His Word. Yes, these are sermons that nobody wants to hear. These are messages that nobody's going to invite me to come out and preach; I can assure you of that.

I was reading the other day in Deuteronomy Chapter 17, and I'll just give you an example of the beauty of Torah. I was reading there, and how many times have we read this? Thousands, who knows? We don't know; it's just a lot of times, but there are moments that you're captivated. There, where the Holy Spirit is, and I know you're with me on this, when you read something and the Holy Spirit just is on you. You're (Psalm 34:8) tasting and seeing that the LORD is good, and it's so precious, so I'll just give you an example of this.

I'm reading through Deuteronomy Chapter 17, and it's all about the king, the king of Israel. The king of Israel is supposed to do some things, and the king of Israel is not supposed to do some things. He's not supposed to make his people go back to Egypt. He's not supposed to multiply horses for himself. He's not supposed to multiply wives for himself. He's not supposed to multiply silver and gold. This is the king of Israel; he's not supposed to do any of that. What is he supposed to do? This is what's mind-blowing. He's supposed to get himself a copy of the Torah, and he is to read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the LORD God; that's what he is supposed to do. The very thing in the devil has convinced the church they don't need any of it. The King of Israel has been told, This is where you go; this is your happy place; this is where you stay.

Then it says one other thing in addition (Deuteronomy 17:19-20)—¹⁹... **that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes**. Oh, this is what captivated me; ²⁰ **that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren**. Think about it. When I go to the knowledge of God, to the Torah, I start reading about what it is to be in humility. Total humility even at the status of a king so that his heart is not lifted up. Why is that important? Because God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Do you want grace? You better be applying, studying, and taking in the Torah; it's going to bring you low; it will humble you. We need this, and yet I can tell you, I can look at churches all over the place with ridiculous sermons going out that, whether they know it or not, are filled with arrogance and pride. It's absolutely demonic. We need this; we need the knowledge of God.

I want to show you this principle in action in different parts of Scripture. What I'm about to show you is one of the most important biblical principles. What Judah is sharing and what Peter is sharing, that we're to add to our faith, is so central, but I'm going to bring this all together so that you understand there is a true biblical relationship between law and grace; there's a true relationship here.

Exodus 9:1—**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews:** And what does he say here, *Shallach ha'ivrim* (שְׁלַח הָעִבְרִים), **"Let My people go,** now pay attention. What does that mean? What is happening? What is God coming to do? He's coming to give grace and mercy to His people, to set them free, to redeem them, and they're going to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. This is grace; this is mercy; here we are. What is the LORD's expectation when His people receive the grace of God? The expectation is this: **that they may serve Me** (emphasis added). Serve Him. I challenge you to go home and read Romans Chapter 6. We are to become servants (Romans 6:18), **slaves of righteousness** because we've been forgiven. Because we've experienced grace, that is the expectation. This is why the writer of Hebrews is angry that his brethren are not progressing. This is why Jude brings this to the table in Jude 1:20: You better be **building yourselves up on your most holy faith**. Peter says (II Peter 1:5), You better **add to your faith**, and you better do it with lightning speed because this is a reality.

Going back to Hosea, I'm going to give you this principle in a really cool way. Hosea 3:1— **Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery;** how many times do you read stuff like that in the Bible? All the time? No, that's nuts; that is crazy. Why would the LORD command such a thing? Fortunately, we're told as we continue to read, **just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."** In other words, the LORD is coming on the scene, and He's saying, "My people, My bride, she's committing adultery against Me." So, Hosea, you are My prophet; I want you to go take a woman by harlotry.

Then we read this in Hosea 3:2—**So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.** If you want to talk about a verse sparking all sorts of discussion, this verse has done it. There are scholars who are perplexed as to why, and they offer potential solutions. Why would this guy give 15 shekels of silver and then have to pay the rest with barley? Is it because he wasn't wealthy? Maybe he just didn't have enough, or maybe the scholars are looking at it thinking this just shows that he had to scrape every penny he could in his arsenal to buy her. While that may be true, and actually I see the prophetic implication there, I see it's powerful because God Himself could not have given anything more costly than His Son to redeem us, and so I look at that, and I appreciate that.

The other thought here that is worth sharing is that there are some scholars who look at the amount of barley that's being measured out, and it would equal 15 shekels of silver. So now you don't have 15 shekels; you have 30 shekels. Isn't that interesting? That was the princely price they set on Yeshua. Then, of course, if you look at the fact that he's paying in barley, when is the barley harvest? It's during *Pesach*, Passover. There are all sorts of cool things here, but what I want you to take away is this: Hosea is coming to redeem her. He's coming to show her mercy and grace and to bring honor; this is what he's doing.

What follows this? This is what you see everywhere we look in the Bible; this is what you would expect to see. He says this in Hosea 3:3— **And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you."** (Emphasis added). In other words, stop sinning. I will purchase you; I will redeem you; I will bring honor to you. Knock it off, get in line, and be faithful to Me. This is exactly what the Lord's heartbeat is. That was the whole concept of

when He gave His Son: that the return would be faithfulness. Now we're being told that it's the exact opposite. If you can't be faithful, then you're rejecting grace. This is insane; these people are insane; they're spiritually deprived.

I'll take you to the Torah in Deuteronomy 6:20—"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, meaning the ten commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, all those other in-between parts we read in the Torah, which the LORD our God has commanded you?' Knowing that, hey, I'm preparing you; your children are going to ask you, "Why are we doing this?" Because here's what's going to happen: Israel goes into the land, and guess what? There are still pagans scattered throughout the land. Virtually everywhere you look, there are going to be pagans in all these different territories, and their children are going to rise up, and what are they going to see? Well, the pagans are doing something completely different; they seem to let their hair down a little bit more than we do. Wait a second, why are we doing these things? Why do we have to do these commandments? It's because He set them free. He's the LORD God that brought them out of Egypt, out of bondage; that's why. When we go to Deuteronomy 6:21—"then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. In other words, mercy. So put this together: why are we doing the commandments? Because God showed mercy and love. The expectation—that's God's expectation.

Then we move on to Deuteronomy 6:24-25—²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. ²⁵ 'Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.' (Emphasis added). In other words, do you understand that when God told Eve, "Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," that was for her life? The devil convinced Eve, No, that is actually for your bondage. It's absolutely insane that the church won't see this. Why? Because they won't read the Torah, they won't get the mind of God.

Psalms 119:88, our revival theme verse, says, *Kechasdecha chayyeni* (כַּחֲסֶדְךָ חַיֵּנִי), **Revive me according to Your lovingkindness**, then it says, *ve'eshmerah edut picha* (וְאֶשְׁמְרָה עֲדוּת פִּיךָ), **so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth** (emphasis added). Give us mercy; this is the heartbeat. We want mercy; for what purpose? The Psalmist is praying according to the will of God, to the mind of God. He knows, oh yes, bestow Your mercy on me because I know what I'm supposed to do. I'm supposed to keep the testimonies of Your mouth. We bring glory to Him, and we please Him when we do this.

Jumping to the New Testament, this is not something that's just a principle stuck in the Tanakh. — Ephesians 2:8-9—⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. So simple, there's nothing complicated about this. There's nothing we did in this life to earn salvation, to earn or merit the coming of Yeshua, for Him to give us His life. Nothing; we achieved nothing. He didn't say, "Wow, you guys are so good; I have to come and die; you guys are amazing." Not true; it's the exact opposite. This is a very simple concept. Hence, why we read in 1 John 4:19— **We love Him because He first loved us**. This is why we read in Romans 5:8—**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. Okay, this is a simple concept; it's pure grace. This is called justification; we are justified by the blood of Yeshua through faith in Him, of course. But what does that mean? That now we're set free to walk according to the dictates of our own heart? What is the expectation?

Look at the very next verse that Paul gives us in Ephesians 2:10—**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, meaning righteousness, truth, and His commandments, **which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them** (emphasis added). Psalm 119:105— **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path**. We are to walk in it, and it was already established so that when grace comes upon us, guess what we do? We walk in His truth. We walk in His Torah; this is the expectation.

Paul says to Titus in Titus 1:15— **To the pure all things are pure**. It's important you understand what this means. What that means is that to those who are righteous and holy, to those who are faithful, when God speaks, **every word of God is pure**, as we read in Proverbs 30:5. You confess it; you accept that truth, so to the pure all things are pure. It's not saying to the pure, "You know what? Even sin is pure." This is not what it's saying. Things of God are pure to the pure; they identify with it. They don't say no; it's done away with. No, it's not for me. No, we're to unhitch from it. It doesn't say anything like that. Then he goes on and says, **but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled** (emphasis added). Did you get that? Defiled and unbelieving. They can go to the Word, and it will not resonate; they will not accept it. This is where they're at.

This is the scariest part; listen to what he says when it goes on in Titus 1:16—**They profess to know God**; they're confessing Yeshua. See, this is the whole concept of what Jude was conveying to us. This is how scary it is. These are Christians going out, professing to know God, **but in works**, their actions, and apparently, again, this progressive Christianity tells you it doesn't matter what you do because works aren't going to matter; they can't keep you out of heaven, but here we read Paul, and we can read Yeshua, who would tell this otherwise—**they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work** (emphasis added).

How do I know what an abomination is? There's only one way; I have to read. I have to get His knowledge; I have to get His mind and His definition of what is abominable. There are parts of Christianity where pastors are telling their people, "No, you can engage in the same-sex lifestyle; it's totally okay." Well, just go read the Torah, and the word "abomination" is literally used regarding that behavior. I'm not trying to pick on any type of sin, but this is something that's prevalent right now, and they're sending people to hell. All on the basis of, "That's not for you, doesn't apply to you, it doesn't matter anymore."

Getting back to Peter's discourse in II Peter 1:5-7—⁵ **But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,** ⁶ **to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,** ⁷ **to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love** (emphasis added).

You're to add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control. Do you see how systematic this is? You had virtue first, then you got the knowledge, which, by the way, is the exact order when you go back to Acts Chapter 15. Read Verse 20 and Verse 21; it talks about Moses being preached in the synagogues every Sabbath. So, get your moral virtue right, and now you're going to get the knowledge of God. You can't even make this stuff up; it's all consistent; this stuff's all there. Then it says, now add self-control. In other words, the stuff that I've received from the Torah, the Words of God that have come to me, now I move on them, and I practice them. I'm practicing what God is preaching: their self-control. Normally when you have someone that was given to a lustful eye, or maybe they have anger issues and they can't help blowing up. This is how they are; their flesh gets upset, and they just blow up. Self-control, the fruit of the Spirit, locks it down; it doesn't allow it to happen.

To self-control, we're to add perseverance. Again, unfortunately for every one of you, you will have the option to exercise this because everybody in this room is going to experience tribulation. Yeshua tells us, He makes it very clear in John 16:33—**In the world you will have tribulation.** In Acts 14:22 — **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."** 2 Timothy 3:12 — **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.** You are going to get the opportunity to endure or not to endure, to persevere or not to persevere. That's why Paul says in Romans 5:3-4—³ **...tribulation produces perseverance;** ⁴ **and perseverance, character; and character, hope.**

In essence, we see this is exactly where Peter goes in II Peter 1:6. He says, Add to perseverance, what? Godliness. Character. Again, not optional; this is where you're supposed to go in the faith. You're supposed to be taking on such an amazing character that people know that you're different. There's a radical change in you. You don't think the same way you used to think. You don't behave the same way you used to behave; there's a real change. This is the beautiful character of God; this is when holiness sets in. This is when you step back and you realize, without even realizing at the time, that you come to a place and you're saying, "I'm practicing righteousness on a consistent basis. I'm immersed in prayer, I'm immersed in the Word, and I'm talking to people about the Lord, and I'm praying with other people." This is when you start to know there's godliness in here. As a husband, I'm taking the spiritual head and the authority in the house, and I'm leading my house in diligence with the Lord. This is all part of the character, all part of this development. Awesome.

II Peter 1:7—**... to godliness brotherly kindness** (emphasis added). To godliness, what do we add? Brotherly kindness. See, we're to weep with those who weep and mourn with those who mourn. This is when you add to your faith and start developing character and godliness. You're going to put the interest of others above your own; you're not so selfish anymore. You will realize, "Oh, wait a second, I am my brother's keeper." The very things that the Torah teaches you will embrace. You will not take vengeance against your neighbor, but you will love your neighbor as yourself. Proverbs 19:22 says, **What is desired in a man is chesed (חֶסֶד), loving kindness,** to think about others; it's a beautiful thing.

II Peter 1:7—**... and to brotherly kindness love** (emphasis added). Then you hit the crescendo, adding to brotherly kindness: love—that's the summit. You talk about building all this; the summit is love, and it is no surprise because what is God described as? He's literally described as love; God is love. John makes the point to bring it across.

What does this look like? —I Corinthians 13:4-6—⁴ **Love suffers long,** so when I hit the summit, when I've added to my faith properly, and I've come to this point, that means I will be patient; I will have patience I never had before—**and is kind; love does not envy;** as the Pharisees envied Yeshua and put him on a cross, it doesn't envy; **love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;** pride is gone. They've taken on the knowledge of God. They've learned; God has brought them down and sown humility in them. ⁵ **does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked;** in those moments where you used to lose it on people, when love is abiding, when the Spirit of God abides in you, you're settled—**thinks no evil;** ⁶ **does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.**

When you hit that marker in love, guess what? Those sins that used to appeal to you, you despise. Are you there? The sins that were so drawing to you, that used to appeal to you—do you despise them now? When love reigns in your heart, when the Spirit of God has filled you up, you will hate your past sins. They will be an anathema to you, a total offense. The sins that are going on in the world will crush

you. You will mourn them like Lot, mourning seeing and hearing of their lawless deeds. You'll be overcome by that. This is a real thing.

One quick thing: I shouldn't blow past this, but where it says **thinks no evil**, when you go to the Greek, do you know what it means? Listen to me: it means that you do not hold an account of those who sinned against you. You do not retain bitterness. So, I'm going to tell you right now, you can tell me all you want that you are following Jesus and you read the Word every day, but if you're retaining bitterness, you are deceived; you are not walking in love. It does not hold an account of people who have sinned against you. Now, this can be startling because when you struggle with bitterness, and I have. In my past? Oh, yeah. I mean, I'll come out. Now, I'm not proud of this; I'm just telling you I can come out and be vulnerable and say, "Yeah, this is a struggle." It shakes me to the core when I realize that if I give in to that, no, I'm not walking in love, and that's where I'm supposed to be. That's the essence of the summit of what we're supposed to be.

Then he says in I Corinthians 13:7—⁷ **bears all things, believes all things**; it has endurance and the reason I'm taking you through this love chapter, do you understand? Do you notice anything? All the things that we just went through that Peter laid out are all encompassed in love; you'll find them all. It's absolutely amazing. So, it bears all things, believes all things, **hopes all things, endures all things**. And then he says, ⁸ **Love never fails** (emphasis added).

How many times have you failed in your life? You can't count them, can you? You can't. How many times have you done things you regret, and you look back and you mourn it? Now, I'm going to tell you something. Love: when you act in love, you will never fail. You will never go back and regret whatever you said or whatever you did; when you do it in love, there's no regret. It's the most powerful thing in the universe. And when you want to walk in the power of God, this is where we're supposed to be. This, as a flock, is where we're supposed to go. This is the goal. You read this as you go through this love chapter. How are you doing? How are you measuring up? I think it's time we move with lightning speed to start adding to our faith. What do we add? We add, well, I'll get to that in a second, but I want to finish out here.

II Peter 1:8—⁸ **For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** ⁹ **For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.**



All of these things that Peter mentions here—the faith, the virtue, the knowledge, the self-control, the perseverance, the godliness, the brotherly kindness, and the love—all of these things, if you lack them, Peter says you are blind, and we know what happens to those who are blind. They're going to fall off a cliff. Yeshua says in Matthew 15:14—**Let them alone. They are**

blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Go through these things; it's time for self-assessment to say, "How am I measuring up? Where do I lack? Where have I failed to build on my faith?" So that challenge is put out to you for this week, because this is where we need to be, amen?