

## WHY DOES GOD ALLOW FALSE TEACHING TO COME INTO BIBLICAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH? REFLECTIONS ON JUDE 3-4.

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*<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>*

Because heretics and apostates have been infiltrating orthodox churches, i.e., communities where God's truth is proclaimed, the gospel of Jesus Christ declared, and lives are being impacted for the glory of God, Jude commands believers to earnestly contend for the truth (Jude 3). But why does God allow false teaching in our churches?

Surely, if the church is a community of believers who come together to glorify God and be a "light" unto the world, then why does an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God allow false teaching to enter into the church in the first place? Since He is sovereign, God could providentially guide circumstances whereby false teaching would never enter into God-honoring churches. Second, He could ban Satan, the father of lies, in order to minimize the spiritual forces against His truth. And third, God could prevent the success of false teaching. In other words, God could ensure that while they are there are in our midst, they would not be able to accomplish their destructive goals.

Perhaps some of the reasons why God allows us to face this on-going threat (immediately following the inception of the church) would include the following (some of these statements are related):

1. God uses false teaching to test our loyalties, to test our faith. It is adversity that God often uses to motivate us to know, meditate, and contend for biblical, doctrinal truth.
2. God uses false teaching to develop a passion for His truth that is greater than what others can offer or promise. In fact, because of the presence of false teaching, God is set apart as the one and only God of Truth; His distinctiveness from other "gods" or personalities is further realized.
3. The temptation to yield to false teaching is a vehicle for character development. We grow from adversity intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and even physically, both individually and collectively.
4. False teaching is a tool that is used to displace the temptation to be ignorant and/or lazy to know God's truth. In other words, because of the real possibility that we might yield to false teaching, the potential threat motivates us to rise up and know doctrinal truth in order to recognize and resist false teaching. This draws us closer to God.

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<sup>1</sup>The New King James Version. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jude 3-4.

5. God allows false teaching to enter into our churches to show us how faithful He is. All false ideas lead to empty promises, ruin, decadence, destruction, and chaos. God becomes more beautiful and worship is more meaningful in view of earnestly contending for the truth.
6. God allows false teaching to enter into our churches in order that we might unite under the banner of “true truth.” Potential threats and attacks often motivate us to let go of peripheral divisive issues and cling to what is most important, central, and vital. So many times we can become “*side-tracked*” with what is unimportant.
7. God allows false teaching to enter into our churches in order to reward us for resisting its allurements. When we resist temptation to follow false teaching we are saying “yes” to Him; the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers will be an occasion whereby God will reward the faithful (1 Corinthians 3; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 John 8).
8. God uses false teaching to show us that His truth is everlasting; no other idea, no matter how captivating, is strong enough to support sinful people, churches, and societies. The spirit of the world invades the church when it does not resist and thus loses its distinctiveness and becomes altogether divisive (cf. the Corinthian Church in 1 Corinthians).
9. God uses the possibility of false teaching to foster the need to build deeper relationships into lives of each other. We need to know people so well that we can discern and motivate them unto godliness. If we don’t know them, then how will we know if they are being led astray by false teaching? False teaching creates opportunities to build stronger ties with each other.
10. The possibility of false teaching keeps alive the need to take “*ownership*” of God’s truth. It is not enough to be familiar with doctrinal truth; we have to seize it in a way that is comprehensive in scope.
11. Since doctrinal biblical truth points us back to the God of the Bible, we become more mindful of Him.
12. The history of ideas points us to the fact that ideas have consequences. Biblical truth has good consequences and false teaching has bad consequences. Therefore, we have the witness of consequences to show us the importance of really taking ownership of God’s truth. What happens to a Christian when he or she embraces false teaching? It leads to despair.
13. Since no one is immune to false teaching, the potential threat of compromise nurtures spiritual dependency.
14. Since no one is immune to false teaching, false teaching develops the need for personal accountability-even among its leaders.
15. The threat of false teaching presses us as parents to truly educate our family members in God’s truth and not just hope someone else will do it-for false teachers will be (and are) warring for the minds and hearts of your children. In fact, I would suggest that it is the

- primary responsibility of the parents to disciple their children; the church by itself is insufficient to resist false teaching.
16. Relatedly, the personal education of our children with biblical, doctrinal truth can strengthen family relationships, spiritual values, family worship, and spiritual maturity.
  17. The threat of false teaching keeps alive an active prayer life and nurtures the need for personal meditation of Scripture. The end-result is an ever-growing, ever-deepening relationship with Him.
  18. Relatedly, the meditation of God's Word creates opportunities to study the Bible for oneself and experience the joy of personal discovery of even *other* truths about Him. In other words, the pursuit of doctrinal truth in view of the presence of false teaching, will foster other opportunities of growth and learning.
  19. Since no one is immune to false teaching, earnestly contending for truth will foster a skilled disposition that will help one interact with others with *wisdom*.
  20. Since we are under the threat of false teaching, evangelism is insufficient; we must make disciples. Making disciples leaves behind a God-honoring legacy.
  21. Seeing people we love fall into false teaching encourages an earnest desire to know biblical, doctrinal truth.
  22. We are able to learn from the mistakes of those who fall into false teaching. We are able to become ever more perceptive of the ways of false teachers, thus securing a base of knowledge from which others may glean (e.g., church history).
  23. Because of the threat of false teaching, believers across denominations or locations will interact with each other in ways they would perhaps not otherwise. An exchange of information and relationships takes place over a common theme.
  24. Since not one pastor (s), church, Christian leader, denomination, or Christian movement is beyond false teaching, not one particular person or party determines the direction of believers in Christ. In other words, since immunity from false teaching inherently *yields* authority, God is the only One who has possesses supreme authority for He is the only one who is infinitely perfect.
  25. The threat of false teaching produces thankfulness to God for the Truth He has disclosed.
  26. The threat of false teaching reminds us once again of our frailty and tendency to sin.
  27. The presence of false teaching offers us opportunities to share God's liberating truth.
  28. The presence of false teaching offers us opportunities to declare our allegiance to Jesus Christ before others.
  29. The threat of false teaching reminds us that not only are we to love God from out of the heart, soul, and strength, but also from out of the **mind**. **The mind is the ability to judge, think, and discern.**

30. There are blessings to be received in earnestly contending for the truth in view of the presence of false teaching (e.g., the joy of seeing disciples grow; the joy of a church united together; the joy of walking with God in fellowship; meeting new people who will impact your life unto the Lord and the opportunity you have to impact them).
31. Every time a false teacher is rejected, God is glory.
32. False teachers are going to be more common in the end-times. Thus, we are given practical assurance that prophecy is being fulfilled as we lead up to the Rapture.
33. False teaching is a back-door for evangelism.
34. By way of comparison, the presence of false teaching makes God's truth look more distinctive and beautiful to those who are seekers of that which is true, noble, good, and trustworthy.
35. The presence of false teaching inadvertently advances the distinctive qualities of God's truth and God's ways in the localized communities in which we live. By earnestly contending for the truth within our church, we are also being equipped to speak outside of the church-within the public square and marketplace of ideas.